



Forgiveness

Lesson 1

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This is a professional theology Bible Study for mature Christians. The first part is Scripture study. Group discussion is next, with questions creating application as the study progresses. Students are asked to complete each question in the privacy of their leadings by the LORD God, then share those ideas with the discussion group the next week. Each week the student should make a journal with reflections upon what truths they have learned during that week's study; numbering them with statements of fact are the most helpful. This allows key points to be shared with Bible Teacher to help structure the learning environment and serves as an important reference to deeper studies later on.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's Word

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12, KJV 1900)

³⁴ Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. (Luke 23:34, KJV 1900)

1. Forgive means "pardon" in both these instances.¹ Note the other meanings of the Greek word ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*). Not all definitions apply in these cases.

¹ **918** ἀφίημι (*aphiēmi*): vb.; ≡ Str 863; TDNT 1.509—**1.** LN 15.43 **dismiss**, have go away (Mt 13:36); **2.** LN 15.48 **depart from**, leave (Mt 18:12; Jn 4:3; 1Ti 6:5 v.r.); **3.** LN 85.45 **leave behind**, abandon (Mt 4:20); **4.** LN 85.62 **leave in a place**, let remain (Mt 24:2); **5.** LN 34.78 **divorce** (1Co 7:11, 13); **6.** LN 40.8 **forgive**, pardon (Mt 6:12; Lk 23:34 v.r.); **7.** LN 57.223 **cancel a debt** (Mt 18:27, 32); **8.** LN 31.63 **reject**, refuse to listen to (Mk 7:8); **9.** LN 68.43 **stop**, an activity implying complete cessation, forsake (Rev 2:4); **10.** LN 13.37 **stop**, for a state to cease (Lk 4:39); **11.** LN 13.140 **allow**, let, permit (Mt 7:4); **12.** LN 90.50 **produce**, make, give (Mk 15:37); **13.** LN 23.109 **die**, formally, send away the spirit (Mt 27:50+); **14.** LN 33.137 **that is not the issue** (Mt 8:22; Lk 9:60+), see

2. Both cases of Scripture reference involve the request to the LORD God to pardon the transgressors
3. The LORD God limits his forgiveness of our transgressions based upon the degree we forgive those that transgress upon us according to the prayer of Christ (Matt 6:12)
4. Therefore, when Christ asks His Father to forgive them that crucified Him, the LORD God forgives fully those transgressors because the Lord Jesus Christ forgives them fully while on the cross.
5. Christ's example on the cross teaches us to ask the LORD God to forgive specific spiritually blind and deaf for their transgressions because they do not know what they do. Our forgiveness is given through personal desire to reflect Christ's teachings.

And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. ²And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; **Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.** ³And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. ⁴And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, **Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? ⁵For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and walk?* ⁶But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) **Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.** ⁷And he arose, and departed to his house. ⁸But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. (Matthew 9:1–8, KJV 1900)**

6. Every time the Lord Jesus Christ heals someone sick of the palsy while He was upon the earth, it is for the purpose of "that you know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.
7. When Jesus heals the man sick of palsy, he first observed the man's faithful surety that he could be forgiven by Him.
8. When Christ forgives sin, it makes the recipient happy.
9. When a sinner is forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ, he is able to arise from his sinful condition and walk with Him.
10. When a sinner is forgiven by the Christian victim that is transgressed upon, then then the sinner may be guided towards the Lord Jesus Christ to receive full forgiveness of sins, (especially when a Christian uses the example of Christ that

2507 last; James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 918; ἀφίημι (aphiēmi): vb.; ≡ Str 863; TDNT 1.509.

prompts the forgiveness). Often it makes the forgiven sinner curious to how forgiveness could be granted so gracefully, and stirs them forward to Christ. Possibly, this is one of the most important acts of evangelism, when a Christian forgives personal transgressions, that potentially stirs the sinner to crawl to Christ with hope and awe. Once sins are fully forgiven by Christ through faith in Him, the past sinner can ARISE, and WALK with Christ from that moment.

11. When a Christian forgives a person's sins of personal transgressions, it does not bring the forgiveness of Christ. We have not been given the power on earth to forgive sins. If a sinner wants full forgiveness of spiritual and physical and mental sins, faith in Jesus Christ is the only salvation through forgiveness that will be given. It is the Lord Jesus Christ alone that is solely given this power of forgiveness by His Father, the LORD God.
12. Jesus Christ was given the power to forgive sins on earth by His Father BEFORE He was put upon the cross.
13. Note how the Scribes, the Jewish writers, declared that Christ commits blasphemy against the LORD God when He forgives sins on the earth, a power that is limited to the LORD God alone. Jesus recognized the wrong-thinking of the Scribes and corrects them with an important lesson that reveals Christ's powers to forgive humans on earth.

Discussion Questions

1. What does pardon mean? (Hint: Define the act of pardon as understood by your lawful society)
2. Why does the Lord Jesus Christ direct us to ask the LORD God for forgiveness when later in Scripture, Christ is given power to forgive sin on earth?
3. Can you locate the other Gospel Scripture that shows Christ healing palsy to illustrate His power to forgive sin on earth?
4. Is unknowledge of a sin a reason to forgive according to the example of Christ?
5. Who is forgiving sins on earth, the LORD God or the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Protestant belief?
6. According to Roman Catholic belief, who is forgiving sin, the LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ, or someone else?
7. According to Universalism belief, who is forgiving sin, the LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ, or something else?

8. According to Jewish belief, who will forgive their sins and how is forgiveness obtained?
9. According to Islam belief, who will forgive their sins and how is forgiveness obtained?
10. According to Buddhist belief, who will forgive their sins and how is forgiveness obtained?
11. If a person is unaware that a transgression has been committed against a Christian, what good can come from an empty forgiveness?
12. Can a person receive forgiveness, if there is no repentance for the known transgression?
13. If a person feels personally justified or unaware of their sins, can they stand and walk to Christ without addressing the need for forgiveness?
14. Do you think a Christian is obligated to forgive personal sins when the transgressor is repentant and asks for forgiveness?
15. How can a Christian give personal forgiveness and redirect to Christ so that transgressor might become curious or needful of the Lord?
16. What is necessary for a person to be forgiven by Christ?
17. What can be discerned if the mood of a recent convert is not joy, but regret and sadness?
18. What is typological about Christ's injunction to "take up they bed" and "go unto thine house"?
19. What does "arise" and "walk" typologically symbolize?

Summary

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One given the authority to forgive sins on this earth. No other religion that excludes Christ has that authority. You cannot approach God unclean. Thus, to have active relationship with the LORD God requires you to receive forgiveness of your sin, and a cleansing of your blood through your faith in Jesus Christ.

Individual Christians are encouraged to forgive those that sin against them with the pattern of Christ. This is not a forgiveness of sin or a cleansing of blood that only Christ can accomplish. It is merely a forgiveness of individual transgressions to aid relationship.

Bibliography

Strong, James. *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible*.
Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009.

Kathy L. McFarland is an independent scholar and theologian, Becker Bible Studies teacher and author of Guided Bible Studies for Hungry Christians. She has received her Bachelor of Science degree in Religious Studies from Liberty University and the Master of Divinity (Professional Ministries Track) degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary & Graduate School. She is Founder and President of Becker Bible Ministries, Inc., the curriculum developer for Becker Professional Theology Academy, and a teaching faculty member. She also performs duties as Chaplain, and is an endorser for Chaplains at Becker Bible Ministries, Inc.

Kathy's favorite studies to teach include the connections between Old Testament exegesis, Christian apologetics, and Bible typology and mysteries.