

Forgiveness And Restoration

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon delves into the journey of forgiveness and restoration with God after sinning, emphasizing the importance of true repentance and full restoration with God. It explores the steps of repentance, confessing sins, forsaking transgressions, and immersing oneself in the name of Jesus to walk in the light. The key component highlighted is the deep love for Jesus above all else, seeking full restoration and union with Him.

Duration: 17:24

Scripture: Acts 2:38, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13, Luke 15:7, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 11:29, Matthew 11:30

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Restoration with God"

Description

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Transcript

I wanted to share with you about forgiveness. I've been meditating about the forgiveness of God. What happens when we sin? What happens when we intentionally disobey God? What do you do then? How do you get from that place where you did something you knew you or you find yourself in a place where you've done something you shouldn't have done to where you want to be? It's a very important journey to make and I find that a lot of Christians can stumble over that, can think that they can just forget about it or worse still, I don't know if it's worse still or could think that this is something that takes months and months or years of penance to do.

So I want to share a couple of thoughts that I've had in reflecting on this. If we sin and we're a Christian, we should feel badly about it and we should ask God to forgive us. But then we don't want it to be hollow.

We want it, we want to truly be sorry and what we're looking for, at least what I'm looking for, is full restoration with God. That's the end point. I want it to be as it was before, before I sinned.

So what's that pathway? And I want to share some of the thoughts that I've learned because hopefully it can be of help to you and I know that it's been something that I just didn't, it automatically didn't come to me so I want to share a couple of things that I've learned. I want to start from Acts chapter 2 verse 38, 37

through 39. This is after the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and they preached the first sermon.

Peter preaches the very first sermon and he tells these people about Jesus who was crucified and who is there to save them from their sins and these people are affected in their conscience. They know that they've done something wrong. They know that they're sinners and they ask Peter, what should I do? That's in verse 37.

They were wounded in their conscience. That's what it says in the margin of my Bible. Verse 37, when they heard this they were pierced to their heart.

They were wounded in their conscience. That can be very similar to us as Christians too. We do something wrong and we're wounded in our conscience and then we go to God and say, what should I do? And the words of Peter remain true for the non-Christians but also for us.

He says, repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So Peter says two things that I ought to do. Very simply, I've got to repent and I've got to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ.

I've got to repent and I've got to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. And those are two things that I've realized as I've been remembering, as I was thinking about this. It's true for the non-Christian but it is also true for me as a Christian.

When I find that I have sinned, do I just say sorry and move on? I have to repent and I have to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. So let me explain what I've thought about it means. And it's very, I want to also say if you turn to 1 John chapter 1, I'm going to go to a couple of verses.

1 John chapter 1. John also says two things, very similar, uses slightly different words but he uses the same two principles. The two things we have got to do when we sin. 1 John chapter 1 verse 7. The episode of John chapter 1 verse 7, he says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

So here he is talking about being cleansed from all sin and walking in the light. So walking in the light is one thing. And then in verse 9 he says, if we confess our sins, he will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So we see two things again there. Confessing our sins, Peter called it repentance. And walking in the light, Peter calls it being immersed in the name of Jesus.

Very similar things. Repentance. Repentance is not just saying I'm sorry.

Repentance is saying I'm sorry and forsaking it. Rejecting it. There's a wonderful verse, one of the best verses on repentance in Proverbs chapter 28 verse 13.

Proverbs chapter 28 verse 13, he gives this wonderful verse about repentance. He who conceals his sins, pretends that it doesn't happen, acts like it didn't happen, will not prosper. He's not going to get anywhere.

But he who confesses and forsakes his transgressions, his sins, will find compassion. There you get a good definition, a wonderful new covenant definition of repentance. Confessing your sin and forsaking it.

I remember Brother Bobby sharing many years ago, a good way to understand true repentance is, if God, if you were to wind back time and you want to give me the opportunity to go through the very same

situation, I would not do it the same way. I would choose a different way. That's what forsaking it means.

You're saying I completely reject the way I spoke to my spouse. Lord Jesus, I'm sorry for the way I spoke to my spouse, but I forsake it. Otherwise we've not repented.

We just felt bad about it. And that's not true repentance. The repentance which gives us the forgiveness from sins is an attitude of our mind.

It's a changing of our mind to say, you know, the way I spoke was wrong. So if I were to go back and do it, I would say it very differently. And going forward, I'm going to say it very differently.

That's the person who has repented of their sin. That if they were to do it over again, they would say it differently. They would write that email differently.

They would have a different thought. They would have a different action. That is a person who as they look at a situation, they say, Lord, I would do it differently.

That is repentance. And the other thing that it says there, so repentance is forsaking our sin. And the other one that Jesus Peter said is be baptized in the name of Jesus.

Another word for baptism is immersion. Now for non-believers, we ask them to do the physical act of baptism, where they actually go into the water and they show that they want to do it. But what about for us who Christians who've been baptized already? We can continue to be baptized spiritually, which means we can continue to be immersed in the name of Jesus.

John calls it walking in the light. And I want to explain that thought because that thought has really blessed me too, to understand what does it mean to be immersed in the name of Jesus? What does it mean to walk in the light? Remember I'm talking about how to get out of this area where I felt that I've sinned and I say, Lord, how do I come back to full restoration? How do I have the assurance based on your word, not based on the feeling? How do I know based on your word that not only have you forgiven me, but that I've been completely restored to be one with you again? One important part is repentance, which I talked about, which is I confess it to the Lord saying I made a sin and I forsake it. That's the first part about repentance.

But then I need to be immersed in the name of Jesus. I need to walk in the light. What does that mean? I see this in John chapter 21 by a very simple question that Jesus asked.

This is what it means to be immersed in the name of Jesus. This is what it means to walk in the light. This, dear brothers and sisters, is the final step, the key component to experiencing the full restoration of Jesus, to fellowship with him.

Now John chapter 21 talks about Peter. It's the end of the book of John, so John has talked about the life of Peter, the life of Jesus. Peter denies Jesus three times, a horrible sin, not once, not twice, three times.

Because of that, not because of that, I'm sorry, part of that Peter sees Jesus being crucified. Jesus rises from the dead and comes and visits him and says, I'm alive. It's okay.

And the previous chapter, John chapter 20, Jesus breathes on Peter and says, receive the Holy Spirit. So Peter now has also received the Holy Spirit. Peter saw Thomas put his hands in the side of Jesus and said, you're real.

But yet after all of that, you find that Peter is not fully restored. Jesus has forgiven Peter, but Peter is still stuck. Jesus breathed on him and said, receive the Holy Spirit.

But you see in John chapter 21, verse three, Peter says, I'm going back fishing. Here's Peter, having received the Holy Spirit from Jesus himself, seeing Jesus after he is raised from the dead, but Peter's not gripped with the full restoration of himself to Jesus. He says, I think I belong as a fisherman.

I'm not cut out to be a disciple. That can be like many of us. We've been filled with the Holy Spirit.

We've been baptized in water. We were walking with the Lord. And then we had a massive fall thing.

We never thought we would do after we were converted. After we were born again, after we were filled with the Holy Spirit, we had a massive fall like Peter did. And Jesus comes and breathes on us and said, receive the Holy Spirit.

And I have a great time at church on Sunday. I receive something from the Lord, but something's missing. I don't have a restoration that I want.

And Jesus comes and gets him and says, look, the life of fishing is not for you. I called you to be an apostle. But he asks one question to Peter in verse 15 and 16 and 17.

He doesn't have three questions. He has one question, but he repeats it three times. And his question is very simple.

Do you love me more than everything else? Do you love me more than everything else? That's what it means to be immersed in the name of Jesus. Jesus, your name is more valuable to me than anybody else's. You alone matter.

You're the most important person in my life. What you think about me matters, and that's all that matters. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the way you can have full restoration.

And I know that I've struggled with this so many times, gotten to so much discouragement, because after I was born again, after I was filled with the Holy Spirit, after I was ministering, I have a fall. And I don't know the way back. Not the way back just to go to heaven, not the way back into the kingdom of heaven.

I want full restoration with God. I want a first love. I want a firing hot love for God that I used to have.

And I thought I repented. I said I'm sorry. I think I've forsaken it.

I asked God to fill me with the Holy Spirit, and God says on his word that if you come like a child, he'll give you the Holy Spirit. But something's missing. And God showed me this passage many years ago, but he keeps reminding me of this.

This, Sandeep, is the point you need to answer. Do you love me more than everybody else? Do you love me more than anything else? If I were to take everything else away, will you still love me? And I preached about these messages in many different ways. Jesus, you must be the only thing that matters in my life.

Jesus must be Lord of your life. But when I can come to that point, dear brothers and sisters, when you have sinned, and you believe you've repented, you believe you've confessed and you've forsaken the sin, have this encounter with the Lord. Go to him in private.

Go to him alone and say, Lord Jesus, I want to tell you that I love you more than anybody else. I love you more than anything else. I blew I sinned in a way I shouldn't have.

But I want to tell you again, Lord, I want to reset the reset button. I want to tell you right now that there's nobody else who matters. You alone, Lord Jesus, is what matters.

Not my mother, not my brother, not my sister, not my father, not my wife, not my children. Anyone who loves them more than me is unworthy of me, is what Jesus said. So Lord Jesus, I want to tell you, as I remember the past of my sin that I just committed five minutes ago, I want to confess and forsake it.

But Lord, Lord Jesus, I want to tell you, my actions didn't prove that five minutes ago, but I want to tell you right now, nobody else matters. I love you more than this. I love you more than the fish.

I love you more than fishing. I love you more than whatever is in my life. I love you more than my failure.

I want to stand here before you and tell you, Lord, you're the only one who matters. It says in Luke chapter 15, when he talks about the lost sheep, he uses an interesting phrase at the end of that story. He says, there's more joy in heaven when a sinner repents than for the 99 who need no repentance.

What does that phrase mean? People who need no repentance. I believe that the people who can honestly say that God is their number one and only priority need no repentance. They are in that state where they need no repentance because Jesus is the only one who matters.

When you can honestly say that Jesus is your most favorite person in the world, not the internet, not Facebook, not your wife, not your children, but that Jesus is the most favorite person for you to talk to. When I can say that, I've been fully restored to God. If I can't say that, I need to keep seeking him for that.

I need to say, Lord, I want a full restoration. I want a union with you. I remember when I was first baptized, how I had that union with you.

I remember 10 years ago when I had that union with you. It didn't matter what happened in my life. I was willing to say, you alone, Lord Jesus matters, but I've lost it.

I've become lukewarm. Something's happened. Lord, I want that.

When I can say, you're my most favorite person. You're the only one who matters. And dear brothers and sisters, this is not a one-time decision.

This ought to be the steady state of a Christian. This is the life of rest. The rest that God has promised to every Christian and it is a wonderful yoke that Jesus offers.

It's a yoke where Jesus says, it's only me. Nobody else matters. Just you and me plowing the fields.

Come to me and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon me because it's easy. My burden is light.

Forget the opinions of what your father told you all these years. Forget the opinions of what the world tells you based on the way you look, the way that your looks have changed or based on which your resume has changed or based on your job situation. Forget all of that.

Those yokes and burdens are heavy based on what the doctor told you, based on what your medical condition told you. Those yokes are heavy. Throw it off.

Come to me and I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you where my yoke is only what do I think about you? That's what Jesus says. I'll give you rest.

You'll find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy. My burden is light.

I pray dear brothers and sisters that we will all move from sin to repentance to full restoration. That all of us will seek to be fully restored to fellowship with God. Amen.

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