

God Does Not Remember our Past Sins

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the concept of the New Covenant, contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament and highlighting the shift from the old agreement with Israel to the new agreement through Jesus Christ. It emphasizes the victory over sin in the new covenant and the importance of living under God's grace rather than the law. The message stresses the significance of God's forgiveness in blotting out past sins and the necessity of forgiving others as a condition for receiving God's forgiveness, drawing from passages in Hebrews, Romans, Matthew, and 1 John.

Scripture: Hebrews 8:8, Romans 6:14, 1 John 1:9, Matthew 6:15, Matthew 18:34, Matthew 5:1, 1 Kings 2:8, Isaiah 43:25, Matthew 6:15

Topics: "New Covenant", "Forgiveness"

Description

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Transcript

So, last Sunday, or Sunday before that, we began a study on the New Covenant, and since this church is called New Covenant Christian Fellowship, you should know exactly what it stands for. The Bible is divided into two parts, as you know, Old Testament and New Testament, and the word covenant and testament mean the same thing, or a word that is used more frequently in our today is agreement. The Old Covenant is the old agreement that God made with Israel, and there were certain conditions and all those things were listed in the Ten Commandments, and in more than 600 other commandments that the Lord gave through Moses, which are in the first five books of the Bible, Exodus onwards, but there was no knowledge of God as a father there.

There was no assurance that God won't remember our sins anymore. There were many limitations in that old agreement. Then Jesus came and made a new agreement.

So, in Hebrews, it says in chapter 3 that the old agreement was through Moses. Chapter 3, verse 5, Moses was faithful in his house as a servant, and the new agreement is contrast Moses with Christ in

verse 6. So, one of the main differences is this. In the Old Testament, there was no victory over sin, as we mentioned last time.

In the new agreement, sin cannot rule over you. So from that, we come to this conclusion, and I want to repeat what I said last time because this is one of the most important parts of the new covenant. Romans 6, 14.

Let me repeat it. Even a child can answer this question. Sin will not be master over you because of one reason.

You're not under the old covenant law, but you're under the new covenant grace. So, the question is, if you are constantly defeated by sin, whether you know it or not, you are living under the old covenant, under the agreement God made with Israel. It's like I've heard here in the United States, around 1861 or 62 or somewhere, when the president proclaimed liberty for all the slaves in the southern part of the United States.

It was proclaimed on a certain date. But the people down there in the south, there were no television, or those slaves did not read newspapers. They never knew.

And for years and years and years, they remained slaves. Freedom from slavery had been proclaimed in the capital, but they never heard about it. And so they remained slaves for years, for many, many years.

Now, the devil does not want us to know that on the cross of Calvary and through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God has made provision for you to be free from every known sin in your life. But do you think the devil wants you to know it? No. He'll keep you ignorant of it.

And even if you hear it in a meeting like this, he will not permit you to experience it in your life, because somehow or the other, he will explain it away for you and say, well, you actually got it, or when you haven't got it. So it's very important for us to understand. So let's begin with our past life.

I want to make it very simple. What is God's provision for our past life? Return with me to Hebrews in chapter 8, where he specifically speaks about the new covenant. Hebrews in chapter 8. In the earlier chapters, he says, in the old covenant, there's a constant remembrance of sin, because they're always offering, every year they had to come and bring an offering.

And there's a remembrance. You're a sinner. You're a sinner.

But in the new covenant, he says here in verse 8, Hebrews 8, verse 8, behold, the days are coming when I'll effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah, and that house of Israel and Judah today is the church. And what is the new covenant? And if you read in the succeeding verses, verses 9 onwards to 12, there are basically three things mentioned there. And verse 13, when he says a new covenant, the first is made obsolete.

So, the old covenant is not existing today, as far as God is concerned. He wants every single Christian to live under the new covenant, which means he wants every single Christian to be under grace, not under law, and he wants every single Christian to experience sin will not rule over you. In your thoughts, in your words, in your deeds, in your attitudes to people, and even in your motives, thought, word, deed, attitude, motive, these are the areas where sin is.

And in all those areas, God wants us to be free. Now, if you see what God has provided for you, then we can go and say, Lord, how can I get it? So, the first thing God wants to do with us is blot out the past, because many of us can be harassed by the memory of our past failures. We've all failed in some way or the other, some to a greater degree or less degree.

But God's forgiveness is so complete that the person who's committed just a few sins and the person who's committed millions of sins are both on the same level, because God says, I won't remember it. That's the first thing in the New Covenant, Hebrews 8, verse 12. I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

Very important for all of us to understand it. Are you sure this is true in your life? How can we know whether our past sins are really forgiven? Just ask yourself, number one, have you confessed it to the Lord? I'm not saying every single sin we did in our past, when the prodigal son came back to the father, there must have been hundreds of sins he committed, but all he said is, Father, I have sinned. One sentence, and he was accepted.

How in the world can we confess every single sin that we did in our life? Impossible. Don't let anyone or the devil or anyone torment you with that. You come to the Lord.

The first time you come, you say, Lord, I am a sinner. I have sinned. I don't justify anything I have done.

I've done lots and lots of wrong things, dishonored you. I want you to please forgive me. I believe that Jesus Christ paid the price for all my sins on the cross.

But from that moment onwards, well, first of all, what does God do at that moment? He says, I will be merciful. Mercy refers to the past forgiveness. Grace refers to the future overcoming sin.

Remember that. Mercy refers to the forgiveness of our sins. That's why the Old Testament is full of the word mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy.

In the New Testament also it's there because we need mercy till the end of our life. But in the New Testament, we have a new word called grace, which is not found in the Old Testament because it's a new covenant word. But to begin with, I will be merciful to their past life.

And here's the important thing. I will not remember their sins anymore. That's what I want to ask you.

Let's make it practical. Do you remember your past sins? You can't help it because it's in your memory. But do you know that God says, I will not hold that against you? That's the meaning.

It's not that God's got a worse memory than me. God doesn't have a worse memory. He remembers every single thing I did.

And in fact, there is a warning in the Gospels where Jesus said, you know the story of a man who was forgiven, let's say, a million dollars by his master. And he says, it's blotted out. I don't want you to pay it back.

And that man went out and caught a fellow who owed him \$10, caught him by the throat and said, pay up or I'll take you to court. And he took him to court and got him locked up. And the master called the servant back, hey, I forgave you a million dollars.

And you couldn't forgive that guy \$10? You put him in jail? No, I'm going to put you in jail and not only jail. You read that in the end of Matthew 18, I'm going to send the torturers to torture you. Those are the demons.

Now, what I learned from that is when God has forgiven you and you don't forgive one person. If there's one person anywhere in the world whom you have not forgiven, you literally you don't physically catch him by the throat, but you hold him. You say, I won't, I won't, I won't forgive him.

You have a grudge against him. I'll tell you something. The demons will be allowed to attack you.

I'm not scaring you. It's what Jesus said in Matthew 18. He was handed over to the torturers because he would not forgive somebody else.

So there's a condition for our forgiveness. It's not just that we confess our sins to the Lord, which is important. If we confess our sins, 1 John 1, 9, he's faithful and righteous to forgive all our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But as I said, if we don't forgive others, see what Jesus said in Matthew 6. Is this a condition only for unbelievers or believers? It's very important to see that. Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are the Sermon on the Mount preached to disciples. In fact, you see that right at the beginning in Matthew 5, verse 1, his disciples came to him and he taught them.

He wasn't teaching the crowd. The crowd heard it, but it says he was teaching his disciples, the people who had forsaken everything to follow him. And what did he tell his disciples? Matthew 6, verse 9, when you pray, don't say, Oh God, like they did in the old covenant, say our Father who is in heaven, talk to him as your Father.

There's the clear proof that this is a message for God's children. Only they can call him Father. What does he tell God's children? They're not talking about the unbelievers now.

He is your Father, but if you do not, verse 15, but if you don't forgive somebody else, your heavenly Father, yes, he's your Father, will not forgive you. Do you know that it's not enough to confess our sins to the Lord to have our sins forgiven? That is 1 John 1, 9. It is also written, you remember when the devil said to God, to the Lord Jesus, jump off the roof. It is written, you know, the devil can quote scripture, it is written his angels will take care of you.

And Jesus said, it is also written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God. So you say it is written, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us. I say it is also written that if you don't forgive others, you will not be forgiven.

So don't go by one scripture. It is also written, Matthew 6, 15, your heavenly Father, he's your heavenly Father, but he will not forgive you. Now tell me, supposing you die in that condition without forgiving somebody, where will you go? Is there some place after death where you can still confess your sin? It's a terrible thing to die without forgiving somebody.

In the Old Testament, we read about David when he was on his deathbed. You read that in 1 Kings chapter 2. He called Solomon and said, do you remember that guy, Shimei, who cursed me? I told him I won't harm him, but Solomon, you never made that promise. Make sure his gray hair goes down with blood to the grave.

Those are the words of David. And you know what's the next sentence there? I don't have time to show it to you. The next sentence is, and David died.

His last words, but don't spare that guy, Shimei, I haven't forgiven him. Where is David today? Is he in heaven or in hell? I have no doubt he's in heaven. Why? Because this condition was not there in the Old Covenant.

This is a new covenant condition. David did not have a heavenly father like we have. To whom more is given, more is required.

If your company sent you to the market to purchase something for \$10, you've got to bring back only \$10 worth of stuff. But if they gave you \$100,000, you've got to bring back \$100,000 worth of stuff. To whom more is given, more is required.

It's exactly like that here. When God has forgiven us so much and says, I won't even remember it, you've got to bring back a little more. You've got to forgive others.

It's very, very, very important. And the condition is not only if you confess your sins, but Matthew 6, 14, if you forgive others, your father will forgive you. So I want to emphasize that to all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, because it is not sufficiently taught in Christendom.

And I fear that many people go to hell because their preachers do not preach the whole truth. They leave out the things that are uncomfortable. So I always ask people, when you go to prayer, are you absolutely sure you don't have anything in your heart against anybody who did harm to you or to your children or to your family now or 10 years ago or cheated you of your property or ruined your reputation? It doesn't matter what it is.

Have you forgiven them? You say, how do I know whether I've forgiven them? Get before God and say, Lord, before you I say this, I forgive that person and I forgive that person and I forgive that person. And if you want to be sure of it, say, Lord, I pray you will bless him. I wish him well.

I hope I hear good news that it went well with him and I will rejoice when I hear it. That will be the proof that you've really forgiven him. But if tomorrow you hear that he got blessed in some way and you feel a little uneasy, God's trying to tell you, you haven't forgiven him.

Or tomorrow if you hear something bad happen to him and you say, ah, you feel a little happy, that's God telling you, you have not forgiven him. That's very practical. It's very, very important.

I don't want to lower the standard and fool you. And you wake up at the judgment seat of Christ and discover that the truth was not told to you. So that's it.

But if you come like that, here's God's promise in Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 12, God says, I will not remember your sins anymore. You stand before God as if Jesus is standing before God. I believe that.

That's the meaning of coming in the name of Jesus Christ. You know the meaning of coming into prayer in the name of Christ? Lord, I cannot come in my name. I am in Christ and Christ is in me.

And it's as if Christ is standing before the Father and asking. I believe it's like that. For me, it's like that anyway.

In the name of Jesus Christ. There's an authority there. I'm going to the Father.

And God holds nothing against Christ, and he holds nothing against me. It's a wonderful way to come to God in prayer, and so you can be absolute certain every day when you pray that he's listening to you. So that's the first thing.

The memory of sin may be in our mind, but God says, I will not remember.

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