

(The Real Truth) 4. the Real Truth About Forgiveness

by Zac Poonen

God's forgiveness of our sins is made possible through Jesus Christ's sacrifice, which pays the debt of our sins and offers us eternal life.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, John 14:6, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Divine Forgiveness", "Atonement Through Christ"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on how God forgives our sins by emphasizing that God's justice and holiness require punishment for sin, but His love provided a way for forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Good works cannot atone for past sins, as sin is a debt owed to God's laws, and even our best works fall short of God's holiness. Despite our hopeless condition, God's great love made a way for forgiveness through Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross, where He took the punishment for our sins, conquered death, and offers forgiveness to all who believe in Him.

Transcript

How can God forgive our sins?

God is a just and righteous God and He cannot forgive a person by OVERLOOKING his sins. That would be unjust.

God is a holy and just God. And so He has to punish sin.

But because He is also a loving God He has made a way for our sins to be forgiven.

All religions teach us to be good, kind and truthful. But all these refer to how we must live after we have received forgiveness for our sins.

Goodness, kindness and truthfulness are all like the superstructure of a building. Forgiveness of sins is the foundation of that building.

The most important part of a building is the foundation.

For God to forgive our sins, He had to do something that was more difficult and more painful for Him than when He created the world.

For creating the world, God had only to speak a word, and the world came into being immediately.

But He could not forgive our sins by just speaking a word.

If man's sins were to be forgiven, there was only one way.

God had to become a man like us.

He had to live through the temptations and struggles that we face as human beings. And He had to die as a sacrifice in our stead, taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself.

The punishment for sin is not suffering or sickness or poverty, or being born into this world again on a lower social scale, or any such thing. It is eternal death - which is the same as being separated from God for ever.

Physical death is being separated from our physical body. Even so, spiritual death is being separated from God the Source of all life.

Good works that you do in the future can never atone for the evil that you have done in the past. Sin is a debt that we owe to God's Laws. If we disobey the laws of the country, say by cheating on our taxes, we cannot be forgiven just because we promise to pay our taxes in future. No. Even if we pay our taxes in future, we still have to pay for what we owe from the past. It is the same with sin.

However many good works we may do in the future, we still have to pay for the sins we committed in the past.

Besides, the Bible says that "our best works are like filthy rags in God's sight" (Isaiah chapter 64, verse 6).

God does appreciate good works. But even our best works do not meet the standards of His holiness, for He is infinitely holy. So we are in a hopeless condition, for even our good works are not good enough. There is no way by which we can ever enter God's presence.

We are hopelessly LOST.

But God in His great love has yet made a way by which our sins can be forgiven.

God is so complex that our human minds cannot understand Him fully. The Bible reveals God as One, but yet being Three Persons in that Oneness - known to us as Father, Son (meaning that He has the same nature as the Father, and NOT that He was born through the Father) and Holy Spirit - all equal with each other.

It is impossible for our human minds to grasp how three separate persons can still be One God. We can only think of persons having separate bodies. But God is Spirit. Our minds are limited. They cannot grasp the complex nature of God.

Just like a dog cannot understand things that human beings understand, there are also things about God that we human beings cannot understand. We can only know what God has chosen to reveal to us in the Bible. No more.

For example, you may be able to explain addition to a clever dog - that $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$, by placing three bones in front of it, and then counting them one by one.

But try explaining multiplication to that dog - that $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

You will find that even the cleverest dog cannot understand that!

Yet we human beings know very well that three 'Ones' still make 'One' when multiplied with each other!

Now God is far higher above us than we are above the dogs.

A dog would have to be human to understand multiplication.

We would have to be God ourselves in order to understand God.

So it is not surprising if we cannot understand that God is Three Persons and yet One God. Even though we don't understand it, we know it is true, for God says so in His Word.

In the same way, many use human logic and say that if God is everywhere, then God must be in every human being, animal and plant, and in every religious place of worship. This sounds logical to the small human mind that has not understood Divine truths.

But it is totally false. God is everywhere in the sense that He knows everything of what is going on everywhere. But He is certainly not in Hell, even though he knows what is going on there.

The very meaning of Hell (eternal punishment for sinners) is "a place where God is absent". That is what makes the suffering of sinners in Hell unbearable.

So God certainly does not dwell in everyone.

To save humanity from eternal punishment for its sins, God the Father sent the Son to be born as a baby, through a virgin, by the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, nearly 2000 years ago.

He was named Jesus Christ.

He grew up from childhood to manhood, facing every temptation that human beings face. And in all those temptations He overcame.

He never sinned at all.

God the Father allowed Jesus Christ, the Son, at the age of 33, to be taken by wicked men and crucified on a cross. On the cross He became a curse for our sake, and took the punishment for the sins of mankind. There we see the tremendous love of God.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, and shed His blood, the righteous penalty for our sins was paid fully.

The demands of justice had been met.

God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, three days after He was buried, to prove to the world that His sacrifice on the cross had been accepted.

That there is only One God and that there has been only one incarnation of God on this earth, the Lord Jesus Christ, is proved by two facts:

The Lord Jesus Christ was the Only One Who died for the sins of the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the Only One Who came back alive after being dead, never to die again - thus proving that He had conquered man's greatest enemy, death.

After forty more days on earth, Jesus returned to heaven where He is today.

He promised, before He left, to come back one day to judge the world and to rule it in righteousness and peace. He gave us certain signs that would precede His coming back to earth.

As we see those signs being fulfilled now, we know that the second coming of Christ is very, very near.

Before He returns to earth, it is important that you receive the forgiveness that God offers you in Christ.

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