

The Forgiveness of God

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As we come through the Easter season of the year, let us consider some of the important truths of Scripture and permit God, the Holy Spirit, to bless our hearts. And may He stimulate our hearts and thinking about what Christ's life and death is all about and how that impacts our own lives. In Luke 23:34 Jesus prayed,

"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

When we think of that request we are challenged to ask the question, "What did Jesus mean when He said, "They know not what they do?" They knew they were putting Him to death on a cross, one of the most painful ways of dying. They had worked feverishly to bring Jesus death to pass. So there was something far more important in this question.

In looking at this honestly and with honest judgment, we call to our understanding that the two thieves who were being crucified with Him had earned by their lives and actions the judgment they were suffering. However, with Jesus' crucifixion it is something entirely different. He had been tried by the Roman Courts through Pilate who declared publicly there was no reason for Jesus to be put to death, Pilate declared he found no fault found in him worthy of death. Pilate said to these who cried for his death that the blood of this injustice and crime of murdering an innocent man be upon them and their people and they gladly accepted that. So we see clearly they already knew that Jesus was innocent and yet they wanted him put to death. There was no ignorance on their part in this matter.

Dear friend, when Jesus made this prayer to the Father in Heaven, he was declaring that the ignorance of the Jews related to something other than Jesus death. Jesus was indicating that their ignorance was found in the fact that they did not know that they were working out the plan of God for man's salvation and redemption in the death of Jesus. They were mentally aware of the immediate event of Christ's crucifixion but they were unaware of the greater and higher work God was performing for all of mankind. This ignorance was due to their spiritually dead hearts and minds.

Christ's death was necessary to reconcile unsaved man to God as he became the second Adam to pay the price of all of mankind's sins and the sin of the first Adam. By doing this He would bring man into a place where he could now call upon God for forgiveness of his sin and to experience a remarkable change that takes place in their hearts and lives through the supernatural working of God the Holy Spirit.

God declares that when repentant sinners receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives they at that instant become new creatures in Christ and causing old things pass away and all things become new. I personally know that happened in my heart and life at my conversion and I have witnessed this in the lives of others who in believing God and his invitation to receive him, asked the Lord Jesus in simple child-like faith to come into their hearts and lives and to save them. It is a Biblical fact that God the Father did forgive those who sought His Son's death in the sense that all who would then trust Jesus for their salvation would be forgiven and saved. The Bible declares that many of the priest of that day after the death and resurrection of Jesus believed in him and were saved.

This forgiveness was not for the wicked terrible act of putting Jesus to death. In Acts 2:23, Peter preaching in Jerusalem declared,

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, YE HAVE TAKEN AND BY WICKED HANDS HAVE CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN•(murdered)."

Look again to Acts 3:13-15,

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus; WHOM YE DELIVERED UP, AND DENIED HIM in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murder to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

Acts 3:19, "Repent therefore, and be converted, that you sins may be blotted out.

The word "forgive" in Luke 23:34 does NOT mean to forgive, pardon, forget in mercy as we understand it. IT RATHER MEANS SUFFER this to take place, let this alone, don't interfere, FORBID IT NOT. It is the same word used in the book of Acts with the stoning of Stephen when he prayed "Lay not this sin to their charge." Never is the word Forgive used in Scripture to relieve men from their accountability, or responsibility. Next time we will look at this more closely.