

The Forgiveness of God, Part 2

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Dear friends, today we continue considering the word translated “forgive” in Luke 23:34. So many today use this text to teach that Jesus’ words of forgiveness freed all humanity of any responsibility for their actions. We noted last time that Peter when preaching in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost declared that indeed God has not forgiven them for their sin. Peter exhorted them to repent of their sins against Jesus.

Acts 2:38-39, “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” NKJV

Acts 3:19-20, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” NKJV

It is interesting that in the New Testament Greek, this word is never used to relieve one of their accountability. What we have done is fact and God holds each of us accountable for our sins. Please do not forget that your sin and my sin put Jesus on the cross.

Other places in Scripture, when the word “forgive” in the Greek is used, it has a totally different meaning and application. It means not to stop, not to forbid, but rather to allow it to take place. Perhaps one of the best places in the Bible to see this with clear understanding is in Matt. 19:14. Jesus used this word when he said to his disciples, “Suffer (Greek “forgive) the little children and forbid them not to come unto me.” Jesus made it clear and simple that He was saying, allow them to come, don’t interfere, suffer them to be let alone.” Again in Mark 14:6, when someone murmured against the breaking of the Alabaster box of ointment used to anoint Him, as such a waste of expensive perfume, Jesus again said, “Let her alone (Greek “forgive), don’t interfere ... suffer her to do this.” In Mark 15:36 when one ran with a sponge of vinegar to give to Jesus while suffering on the cross, they were stopped from this act by some who said rather emphatically, “Let him alone (Greek “forgive), don’t interfere.” Once again in John 11:48, the Pharisees said of Jesus, “If we let Him alone (Greek “forgive), all men will believe on Him.” They said we must interfere; we must do something to stop Him.

What was Jesus literally praying to God the Father in this His first words from the cross? He was praying to God the Father and asking the Father to not interfere, not to stop this suffering and death. He was praying, “Father, suffer them to do what they are doing, for even in their ignorance because of their spiritual blindness they do not yet understand that they are providing the one and only way for their salvation and redemption in the death of their Savior. If they will humble themselves enough to acknowledge that they are lost in their sins and without any other way of true forgiveness of their sins, the assurance of Heaven and the acceptance of God except through His faith in His marvelous grace.”

It is interesting to note that this word is a verb in the Greek language in the aorist tense meaning continuous action, or literally meaning that He repeated this prayer again and again, repetitiously

interceding for all who are responsible for his death for our sins. I cannot speak for any of you, but my understanding of this wonderful truth makes His offering of Himself for my sins and my salvation all the more meaningful to me. I trust you have made Jesus your savior for your salvation.