

The Road To The Cross

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Last week we saw that The Road To The Cross is Paved with Challenging Truth...

From our passage in Matthew 21 we learned that Jesus challenged us...

1. To be SINCERE, SOLD OUT, and SANCTIFIED and
2. To PRODUCE FRUIT

As we continue our series the Road To The Cross, I want to focus on the words of Jesus in Luke 23.

Luke 23:32-43 (NIV)

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. **33** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar **37** and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? **41** We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Key Text: Luke 23:32-43 (NIV)

34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them...

Here in these words we see that The Road To The Cross Purchased the **FREEDOM of our FORGIVENESS**

Imagine for a moment that you are one of the criminals, both insulting him at first and then later one repents and asks to be remembered. Imagine for a moment you are one of those in the crowd watching, sneering, insulting, mocking the one hanging on the cross. Imagine you are one of the soldiers responsible for carrying out this cruel torture of death upon this innocent man.

A sign hangs above the one who is being mocked and rejected, but no one contemplates its truth. He is a King!

Suddenly his words pierce the air and your heart as he declares, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." You realize just how desperately you need to hear those words. There are so many things that you have been carrying, wishing you could rid yourself of the guilt and the shame. Could it be that this man holds the power of your freedom?

Maybe today you carry the weight of needing forgiveness. Forgiveness for what you have done, Forgiveness for what you haven't done. Forgiveness for what you have said, Forgiveness for what you have thought. Forgiveness for failed promises, failed commitments, wounds inflicted, sins committed.

To all who need forgiveness today, hear the words of our Savior. He spoke them not only for those who were at the cross that day, but for all who would come to the cross by faith. "Father, forgive them..." To us all he travelled the Road of the Cross to offer us the Freedom of Forgiveness

1. Forgiveness From God

Psalm 103:1-14 (NIV)

1 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. **2** Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— **3** who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, **4** who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, **5** who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. **6** The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. **7** He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: **8** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. **9** He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; **10** he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; **14** for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

That freedom comes as, like the thief, we reach out to God with a **bold plea** that acknowledges our condition and asks for his forgiveness. "We are getting what we deserve, Jesus, remember me."

1 John 1:8-9 (NIV)

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Like David let us pray...

Psalm 25:18 (NIV)

18 Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins.

It's an invitation for God to see it all and to take it all away; even those brought about by our own willful rebellion

God wants us to ask

And in response he says YES. **God does not withhold**

Jeremiah 31:34 (NIV)

34 ...“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

He chooses not to remember them. His forgiveness is not partial. He does not keep our record in his back pocket, ready to wave it in our face when we mess up again. In fact, our earlier passage in Psalm

Psalm 103:10-12 New International Version (NIV)

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **12** as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

In Exodus we read of the people's rebellion and sin in the incident of the [Golden Calf](#), when God threatened to destroy the people of Israel rather than forgive them (Exod. 32:10).

According to the Talmud, Moses felt that Israel's sin was so serious that there was no possibility of intercession on their behalf (Rosh Hashanah 17b).

At this point, God appeared to Moses and taught him the 13 Attributes, saying: "Whenever Israel sins, let them recite this [the Thirteen Attributes] in its proper order and I will forgive them." Thus, this appeal to God's mercy reassures us that repentance is always possible, and that God always awaits our return."

Biblical Origins

The 13 Attributes of Mercy are based on two verses in [Exodus](#) 34:

Exodus 34:5-7 (NIV)

5 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. **6** And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, **7** maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

What Are the 13 Attributes?

The 13 Attributes of Mercy, according to the generally accepted opinions of Rabbenu Tam and Abudraham, are as follows:

- **The Lord!** (Adonai)—God is merciful before a person sins! Even though aware that future evil lies dormant within him.
- **The Lord!** (Adonai)—God is merciful after the sinner has gone astray.
- **God** (El)—a name that denotes power as ruler over nature and humankind, indicating that God's mercy sometimes surpasses even the degree indicated by this name.
- **Compassionate** (*raham*)—God is filled with loving sympathy for human frailty does not put people into situations of extreme temptation and eases the punishment of the guilty.
- **Gracious** (*v'hanun*)—God shows mercy even to those who do not deserve it consoling the afflicted and raising up the oppressed.
- **Slow to anger** (*ereh apayim*)—God gives the sinner ample time to reflect, improve, and repent.

- **Abounding in love** (*v'rav hesed*)—God is kind toward those who lack personal merits, providing more gifts and blessings than they deserve; if one's personal behavior is evenly balanced between virtue and sin, God tips the scales of justice toward the good.
- **Faithfulness** {Truth} (*v'emet*)—God never reneges on His word to reward those who serve Him.
- **Maintaining Love** {Preserver of kindness} for thousands of generations (*notzeir hesed la-alafim*)—God remembers the deeds of the righteous for the benefit of their less virtuous generations of offspring (thus we constantly invoke the merit of the Patriarchs).
- **Forgiving wickedness** {iniquity} (*nosei avon*)—God forgives intentional sin resulting from an evil disposition, as long as the sinner repents.
- **Forgiving Rebellion** {willful sin} (*pesha*)—God allows even those who commit a sin with the malicious intent of rebelling against and angering Him the opportunity to repent.
- **Forgiving Sin** {error} (*v'hata'ah*)—God forgives a sin committed out of carelessness, thoughtlessness, or apathy.
- **Who cleanses** (*v'nakeh*)—God is merciful, gracious, and forgiving, wiping away the sins of those who truly repent; however, if one does not repent, God does not cleanse.

Who Cleanses (but does not cleanse completely, recalling the iniquity of parents upon children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generations)" (34:6-7). The Hebrew phrase "v'nakeh lo y'nakeh" (and who cleanses but does not cleanse) is a common biblical grammatical form that uses repetition to stress the action.

The Road to the Cross not only Purchased the Freedom of our Forgiveness from God but made a way for us to find the Freedom that comes from Forgiving Other

2. Forgiveness For Others

There is freedom in both being forgiven and forgiving others.

Matthew 6:12 (NIV)

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

He invites us not only to ask for forgiveness but to extend it. In the first case God wants us to ask for forgiveness, in the second God asks us to forgive.

Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.^[a]

23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ **27** The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ **34** In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

God doesn't withhold forgiveness from us, and he doesn't want us to withhold it from others.

Communion

Matthew 26:26-28 New International Version (NIV)

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** This is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Numbers 6:22-26 New International Version (NIV)

The Priestly Blessing

22 The Lord said to Moses, **23** "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

24 ""The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.""