

1st Word From The Cross

3-3-19

Forgiveness

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Larry: coffee. Prayer. Daylight Sav. Women's Retreat. Empowered.
- B. Slide7a Israel/Jordan Trip 2020 Info Mtg - Rm133 upstairs. Rt after 3rd service.
 - 1. 1 yr from today (1st 2 weeks of next march). Slide7b Adding Jordan. Cost up.
- C. Slide8 How Do I...Share My Faith? - This Wed night 7pm.
- D. Prayer: Lord, in these 7 statements from the cross, *may we see/find/enjoy* the very **nature** & **work** of Your Son.

II. Slide9 Intro: Forgiveness, 1st Word From The Cross

- A. We are pausing from our *Gospel of John* for a **7 week series** leading us up to **Easter**, **7 Words From The Cross**.
- B. Slide10a/b Our Lord's 7 statements: [Christ was on the cross from 9am-3pm]
 - 3 statements were between 9-noon. 4 were @ 3pm.*
 - 1. Forgiveness Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. Lk.23:34
 - 2. Assurance Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be w/Me in Paradise. Lk.23:43
 - 3. Affection - Woman, behold your son!...Behold your mother! Jn.19:26.27
 - 4. Anguish - My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Mk.15:34
 - 5. Suffering - I thirst! Jn.19:28
 - 6. Victory - It is finished! Jn.19:30
 - 7. Contentment - Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. Lk.23:46
- C. Slide11 Note, He **starts** & **ends** with a prayer to **the Father**.
 - 1. And the *middle statement* is also a cry to the Father.
- D. These words are significant because?
 - 1. They show Jesus was in clear possession of His **faculties**.
 - 2. They show He understood His death was to be an **atonement** for the sin of the world.
 - 3. They show He knew His death would be **effective** in doing that.¹

¹ James Montgomery Boice, The Heart of the Cross, pg.14

III. Slide12 FORGIVENESS (a word of...)

A. **Read context** Luke 23:32-34 esv *Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments...*

1. Father, **forgive** them, for they do not know what they do. Lk.23:34

B. Here we have the **opposite** of Samson, who in his dying hour used the great strength of his body to **destroy** all his foes.

1. Here, Jesus exhibited *the strength of His love* by **praying** for the **forgiveness** of His enemies.²

2. **Slide13** Charles Wesley penned in his Hymn, *Arise, my soul, Arise*.
Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me;
Forgive him, O, forgive, they cry, Nor let that ransomed sinner die.

C. Here we are talking about only 1 category of forgiveness. *God's toward mankind*.

D. **Slide14a-c** In the bible there are **3 main categories**:

1. **Judicial Forgiveness** (God as **Judge**).

a) The **eternal forgiveness** of **all sins** of the one who has *trusted Christ*.

b) This has to do with the believer's **relationship** with God. It is **once for all**, eternal, and conditioned only on *faith in Christ*.

c) The Psalmist says, *Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight*. Ps. 32:1,2 NLT

2. **Paternal Forgiveness** (God as **Father**).

a) This has to do with the believer's **fellowship** with God. Restoration of **fellowship** with God the Father after **the believer** has broken fellowship by continued,

² Adapted from A.W. Pink, The 7 Sayings on the Cross, pg.20.

unconfessed sin.

b) 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

3. Personal Forgiveness (1 to another).

a) Restoration of fellowship with another human being. Mt.6:14,15 ESV *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

4. So we are talking about the 1st category of forgiveness, *Judicial Forgiveness*.

E. Slide15a DEFINING FORGIVENESS

F. The key to understanding the *imagery of forgiveness* is that it views **sin** as something that needs to be **eradicated** or **removed**.

1. Some of the imagery is **spatial**: Sin is removed & cast into the depths of the sea, it's swept away...like a cloud and...like mist, cast behind God's back, set aside, or put away.

G. Slide15b Complementing this motif is one that focuses on *disrupted relationships* between people that need to be *restored*.

H. In **both cases** the imagery of forgiveness revolves around **solving a problem** through either the **removal** of something or **reconciliation** with someone.

1. Slide15c Forgiveness is **a change of status** from **guilt** to **declared innocence**.

I. Jesus' heart was *burdened* for those who had *instigated* & *committed* history's greatest crime.

1. Slide16a He prayed that the **unforgivable**...might be **forgivable**.

2. The **victim** of *history's greatest crime*...prayed for the criminals. William Bright

3. Slide16b He seems to feel the **injury** they did to **their own souls** **more than** the injuries **they gave Him**.

4. Slide16c Cicero, the famous orator, said rightly, **to bind a Roman citizen is a crime, to flog him is an abomination, to slay him almost an act of murder: to**

crucify him is - what? There's no word that can possibly describe so horrible a **indeed**.

a) Jesus was **cruelly, unjustly** (pilate said innocent 3x's), & **disgracefully** executed.

J. **Slide17a** Remember what was happening around the cross. Some **onlookers** were saying, *come down from the cross if you're the son of God*. The **religious leaders** said, *he saved others but he can't save himself*. The **soldiers** said, *if you're the king of the Jews save yourself*.

1 of the **thieves** on the cross next to him said, *if You are the Christ, save Yourself & us*.

1. **Who does this?** Mocks a dying man? Who would make fun of a person who was sitting in an electric chair? Who laughs at the man with the nose around his neck?

2. **Slide17b** Luke explained the thief **hurled insults at him** 23:39 NIV. They hurled verbal stones. A bucket full of rage.

a) It was as if *the thief* thought, *they've broken the **body**, now let's break his **spirit***.

b) **Slide17c** To which **Peter** tells us about this incident, *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly*. 1 Pet.2:23

c) And how did He keep from retaliating, keep in control? *for they know not what they do*. They didn't.

(1) **It's as if Jesus** considered this bloodthirsty, deaf-hungry crowd **not as murderers, but as victims**. **It's as if He** saw in their faces not **hatred but confusion**. **It's as if He** saw them not as a **militant mob** but as **sheep without a shepherd**.

K. **Praying for** those who *sent Him or put Him on the cross* was prophesied by Isaiah. He bore the sin of many, And **made intercession** for the **transgressors**. 53:12b

1. That **prayer of intercession** **started** that evening in Gethsemane, **continued** on the cross, & **still continues today** at the right hand of the throne of God.

L. **Slide18a** Were they **ignorant** of their wrongdoing? (of course not)

1. **Judas** knew he had betrayed a friend (by throwing from his hands his 30 pieces of silver & by placing in his hands a rope to *assuage* his guilt).
2. **Pilate** knew he had condemned an innocent man (by trying to wash off his soiled soul).
3. The **Sanhedrin** knew they bribed false witnesses to make the charges stick.
4. **Slide18b** * They were not *ignorant* of the **facts** of their guilt. They were ignorant of the **enormity** of their crime.³ [**sin** is so bad because **God** is so **Holy**]
 - a) They did not know they were crucifying *the Son of God!*
5. Paul said, *None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* 1 Cor.2:8
6. Peter said, *You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead... Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.* Acts3:15,17
 - a) Their crime was much greater than they could ever have realized because of the *infinite value of the person* whom they had condemned.⁴
7. **Slide18c** Remember, **sins of ignorance** are still **sins**.
 - a) *If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks.* Lev.5:15
 - b) Try arguing w/the Traffic Officer the point that *you didn't see the stop sign.* *Ignorance* is no excuse in our society, nor in the presence of God.
8. **Remember**, this was **not a statement of forgiveness** to His murderers, **but a prayer** to their Heavenly Father.

M. **Slide19** What Jesus **Preached** on the sunny slopes of *the sermon on the mount*, He **Practiced** on *the grim hill of Calvary*.

1. *Love suffers long...endures all things. Love is patient... always perseveres.*

³ Erwin Lutzer, Cries From The Cross, pg.39

⁴ Erwin Lutzer, Cries From The Cross, pg.40

- N. **Slide20a** Was Jesus' prayer heard? I think so...perhaps it's what brought about the thief on the cross's repentance? The centurion standing there? The 3000 at Pentecost? A prayer still being answered today?
1. **Slide20b** Our gospel is a gospel for **sinner**s, and for **sinner**s only.
 2. **A father** once prepared **a feast** to which **both his sons** were **invited**. One son a rebel, the other son decent. The one with stains from a pig pen, the other the stains from the soil of the fields. Yet it was the prodigal who enter the banquet hall, **while** his clean living, hard-working brother shut the door in his own face. The door opening automatically for the one who said, *I have sinned*, **while** staying shut to the other who claimed *his hard work all the years was good enough*.
- O. **Sins Forgiven**: *not as a ticket to heaven or pass out of hell*. But because we *desire God*.
1. We need to make sure that we are not **using** God. We can't let God become a means, or a device; **rather than an End, the Treasure**.
 2. **The Gospel** is not a way to get people to **heaven** but the the way to get people to **God**.
 3. *If we don't want God above all things we have not been converted by the Gospel*.
- P. He didn't say, *Father, enlighten them, for they do not know what they do* (mere **enlightenment** would have just been torture, understanding what they really did). But far greater, *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*.
1. This prayer is still applicable for us today.
We must realize **our need for** forgiveness.
We must come **confessing** our sin.
We must be willing to **receive** that forgiveness.
- Q. Perhaps this morning you can hear **your own name** in the petition...*Father, forgive Brian for he does not know what he does*. He doesn't understand the enormity/seriousness of sin
1. I believe I still sin because...*I still haven't grasped how Holy my God is and how ugly my sin is*.

2. Let me ask you, *If God can forgive the murder of His only Son, then can't any and all of your sins be forgiven this morning?*

R. Communion: