

Our Need for Forgiveness

Ephesians 2:1-10

10. Throughout this passage, Paul assures us of God's willingness to graciously forgive those who believe in Him. With that in mind, what can we do to assure other people of our willingness to forgive? (cf. Matthew 7:1-5)

What good work of forgiveness will you do this week? Tell a friend and ask them to hold you accountable.

Last Word: I firmly believe that there is a direct correlation between how we view our own need for forgiveness and our willingness to forgive others. Simply stated, the more we see our need for God's forgiveness, the more we'll forgive others. God has freely released each of us from a sin debt we could never repay. How much more should we do the same for others?

Paul ends this passage with a call for the forgiven to remember we are pardoned people "*in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*" We don't do good works to earn God's mercy; we do good works because we have been changed by His grace. Godly behavior flows from a grace-centered heart. I can think of no better good work than sharing the love, mercy and grace of God with someone who has wronged you.

Prayer: Ask God to help you remember that you were once lost and separated from Him but through mercy, love and grace He forgave your sins. Pray for the power to forgive others.

There is a hymn we occasionally sing entitled, "*I'm the One*" (Roy Overholt). In this song we acknowledge that we were not present during Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. "But every time I sin on earth I feel that I'm the one." Lyrically, this hymn challenges us to see the degree to which we could sin. "I'm the one who shouted 'crucify,' I'm the one who made that cross so high, I'm the one who stood and watched him die, What have I done I'm the one."

Think of the most evil person you have ever encountered. Do you think you would be capable of committing the same sinful crimes? Probably not because typically when we compare our sins to the offences of others, our transgressions, at least to us, seem quite negligible. Nevertheless, God sees our sins in terms of an enormous debt we can never repay even if we live a thousand lives over. But, from the depths of His mercy, love, and grace He saves us; freely forgiving us of all our sins.

In our text, the apostle Paul gives us a focused picture of how far from God we once were and how powerfully He worked to restore us. Consequently, our own need for forgiveness becomes the most compelling source of strength for us to forgive others. *Read Ephesians 2:1-10.*

1. From vv. 1-3, how would you describe the spiritual nature of a person overpowered by sin?

2. Is there any way that you fall, or have fallen in the past, into the description of the person described in vv. 1-3? Explain.

3. Forgiveness of our *“trespasses and sins”* emerges from three aspects of God’s nature: His mercy, love and grace (vv. 4-5). In your own words, briefly explain each quality.

4. Several passages vividly paint a picture of what God does with our forgiven sins: i.e. Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; and Micah 7:19. What do these images say to you about the extent of your forgiveness?

5. Furthermore, Paul describes forgiven people as being *“made alive,” “raised,” “seated”* with Christ and recipients of *“the immeasurable riches of His grace”* (vv. 5-7). What difference does the reality of your union with Christ make in your everyday life?

6. According to vv. 8-9, how does Paul confront the person who thinks they have earned God’s forgiveness?

7. In what way(s) does a self-righteous spirit keep us from forgiving others? (cf. Luke 18:9)

8. Verse 10 is one of the central statements of Paul’s teaching of the gospel of grace. Paraphrase what he is saying here?

9. How does knowing that you are God’s *“handiwork”* or *“workmanship”* affect the way you think about:
God –

Yourself –

Others –