“Beyond Forgiveness”

January 28, 2018

Colossians 2:1-10

Please open your Bible today to the 3rd chapter of Romans.

When was the last time you forgave someone? What I mean is this. Someone hurt you. They’d done or said something that wounded you. Now, they’ve felt convicted about it, then they’ve come directly to you and apologized for what they had done. Now, what did you do?

I’ll tell you what you did. You forgave them, which, of course, is the right thing to do. But is that all? Isn’t there something *after* forgiveness? Something beyond forgiveness?

Take, for example, it’s been a broken relationship. Hasn’t the relationship been restored? Isn’t there a new connection between you and the one you’ve forgiven? One man said this about his wife after she’d confessed that she’d had an affair with another man. *“I forgave her. But I won’t forget what she did.”* Has he really forgiven her? Doesn’t forgiveness enable you to get over your anger and especially those intensely negative feelings that you’ve harbored against them?

So, you see, there *is* something after forgiveness. But, as you are about to see, with God, there is a whole lot more. And that’s what’s on my heart today. I’ve titled the sermon “Beyond Forgiveness.” Shall we pray?

Now, human forgiveness is not quite the same as divine forgiveness. On the human side, when you’ve forgiven someone, it really is a whole lot better than the resentment and bitterness and anger that you’ve been holding on to. There’s a new freedom, especially from the past attitudes and behaviors. And forgiveness removes revenge. Someone has gone so far as to say that unforgiveness can be compared to your carrying a large metal chain around your neck. And when you forgive, the chain breaks and falls to the ground.

But, as you are about to see from the Bible, what I’ve described for you is human to human forgiveness. These things are not true of God’s forgiveness. Only some of them are. So, what does “beyond forgiveness” look like when it’s *His* forgiveness; and it’s the forgiveness of every single sin you’ve committed? That’s what I want you to see with me here in this third chapter of Romans.

Let’s begin at verse twenty-three. Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

*(25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”*

What I want you to see, to think about, and to understand here is this. God’s forgiveness of your sins is upwards to one hundred thousand times better than yours and mine. So, if you’ve been forgiven by someone this past year or this past week, and you’ve felt that the relationship is truly changed, watch with me and see just how many multiplied more things has changed.

Romans 3:23ff describes the change. Let’s begin with forgiveness. What does your Bible say about God forgiving you? Look closely at the words of the passage. What does Paul say about it?

Look with me at very twenty-five. Romans 3:25 *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for* ***the remission of sins*** *that are past, through the forbearance of God; …”*

The word used here is “remission.” Now, as you’ve heard me say so many times. It takes time and effort to study God’s Word. And here’s what you will discover when you look up the word “remission.” Remission, in the sense used here in verse twenty-five is solely a work of God.

Let me show you what I mean. Paul is saying that your sins have been remitted by God. To remit means “to send off, to hurl away, to release, to let go.” It’s used when someone is released from a legal bond or legal obligation, even a debt. Another word we’d use today is “pardon.”

It’s a cancellation of a legal debt. What happens at the moment you trust in the One Who was crucified on the Cross is this. God completely cancels the debt you owe because of your sin.

The payment for your sin is death. And Someone, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has paid your debt. So, simply and wonderfully put, your sins have been remitted, hurled away, sent off. And there’s no more legal obligation for your sins. Your entire sin record expunged. This is what God did for you on the day He forgave your sins.

Now, you might say, as some do, that God is love; so He’s just going to forgive everyone’s sins and allow them into His Heaven. Well, that’s not the way it works. He is love. And His love brought Jesus into the world and His love brought Jesus to the Cross. And His love allowed Him to be crucified of that Cross.

But, the only way God can forgive you and me is when our sin debt is fully and completely paid. And that’s what happened at the Cross. Yes, He loves you. But alongside that love is His justice. Jesus paid your sin debt. The wages for your sins is your death. And those wages were paid when Jesus died. And at the moment you trust in His death as a Substitute for your death, at that moment, your legal obligation that was incurred by your sins was removed, remitted, hurled away. You’ve been released from a legal bond that kept you away from God and away from Heaven.

So, yes, everyone everywhere needs forgiveness. But the kind of forgiveness you need for your sins is the “pardoning type.” You’ve been released from the legal obligation you put on yourself by choosing to sin.

What then is beyond forgiveness? First, there’s remission. Your entire sin debt has been covered by someone else. You do not have to pay that debt. And the only reason God can release you from that debt is because Someone Else, His Only Begotten Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, paid it.

And just one more thing to consider here. God was perfectly just in condemning you for your sins. But is also perfectly just in removing that condemnation. And why? Because Someone Else, His Only Son, completely paid for you to be released from condemnation.

Can you see how serious sin is? Can you see how even your little white lies had to be dealt with? Think with me about your sins. How many are there? How bad are they? How long have you persisted in loving those sins? How long will you stay in your sinful state? God’s answer to those questions is the Cross. At the Cross Jesus provided a way for your entire sin debt to be paid off.

Let’s illustrate it with your home mortgage being paid off by someone else. How would you act, think, or feel if someone here today came to you and said “I’ve talked to your mortgage company this past week and I’ve made a way for you to have your entire mortgage paid in full”?

Think about how much the forgiveness of that debt will mean to you. What difference would it make today? What would you do with the truthfulness of that statement? Would it matter if someone did that this past week for you?

“Paid in full” is remission means. You are no longer obligated to pay the debt you justly owe to God for your sins.

Just a few weeks ago a man said to me this. He said, “What the world really need is justice.” And I’ve been thinking about what he said.

What would you think of a judge who decided to show love to everyone who came into his courtroom and completely dispense with justice. Suppose he said *“I am going to pardon every rapist, every murderer, and every terrorist who comes into my courtroom.”* Who on the entire planet would consider that love or fairness or even justice of any type? No, that’s not love.

What is love? Love is God making absolutely sure that the wages for *your* sins has been paid for. The blood of Christ, Paul says in verse twenty-five is what we can count on. Why? Because the only basis for God canceling your sin debt was that Christ has become the sinner instead of you. He shed His blood on your behalf. He died for you. He Who knew no sin was made sin so that you, by His crucifixion, His death, His burial, and His resurrection might be released from that bondage; the bondage of sin; so that the remission of your sins would be a reality.

What’s beyond forgiveness?

First, there’s remission.

Second, God is satisfied. Look again at verse twenty-five. When I say that beyond forgiveness is remission, I mean this. Every single sin from your past and every sin from my past has been removed and we’ve been pardoned.

But there’s something more that is beyond forgiveness. And that is this. God is satisfied. Romans 3:25 *“Whom God hath set forth to be* ***a propitiation*** *through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; …”*

Propitiation. What is a propitiation? Well, let me say this first. In order for there to be remission, there first has to be propitiation.

The message that covers Romans one through Romans three is a dark; deeply depressing message. God’s wrath has been displayed against all the unrighteous acts of human beings. And Paul lists these ungodly deeds in Romans chapter one.

Folks, God, to be God, must be a righteous, holy, good, and perfect Judge. So, yes, God is a God of wrath. He must exhibit ad express His wrath against the sins of mankind. What kind of Person would He be if he was like the judge I just spoke to you about?” He would certainly not be a true Person let alone a true judge.

But God is fair. He is a just judge. He does not overlook the sins of the world. All through the history of the world we see God responding to the evil deeds of men. Do you remember what God did with Cain, the man who killed his brother Abel? God judged him. God declared him a vagabond and a fugitive. And He said that anyone who finds him would rightfully take his life. Why? Because the right thing to do with a murderer is to bring him to a court of law, have him tried, and then, when found guilty, sentence him to death. God is a Just Judge.

And what did He do with the world when only eight people lived righteous lives? He sent a flood over the entire world. And what did He do when Sodom and Gomorrah lived in the most immoral of relationships by practicing homosexuality? He is a Just Judge. And what did He do when David chose adultery and murder over righteousness? God is a Just Judge.

But, I said there is something else beyond forgiveness. What is that? It’s this. God is satisfied.

What, then, is propitiation? Propitiation is what Jesus became when He was crucified. In His death Jesus took all of God’s wrath upon Himself. Romans 3:25 *“****Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood****, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; …”*

Jesus’ death was the death of a Substitutionary Sacrifice. From the very beginning of the human race, God required a death to pay for man’s sins. He provided the sacrifice of a one-year old lamb as the payment in place of the person who had committed the sins.

You see, even in that OT sacrificial system God was expressing His love for His creatures. And out of that love Jesus became a Substitute for you. And so, Jesus, the Sacrifice is our Propitiation. Jesus shed His blood and, by doing so, became the means by which the Father would be satisfied.

When He looked on the world after He had completed the six days of creation, He said “It is good.” And when He looked on His Son after Jesus was crucified, He said “It is good.” That’s what the Bible means by ‘propitiation.” God’s wrath against all unrighteousness was removed on that day. We call it Good Friday because the greatest good ever done in history was done that day. The Lamb of God shed His blood for you and me. Jesus died so that God’s wrath might be removed.

And what, then, is God looking for from you in light of Christ’s death? Look again at verse twenty-five. Romans 3:25 *“Whom God hath set forth to be* ***a propitiation through faith in his blood****, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; …”*

The key is not merely faith, as important as that is. The key is “faith in His blood.” When you realize that Christ’s shed blood is the only thing that can remove God’s wrath upon you, then you are seeing Him as your propitiation.

Someone has died for you. What is your response? Paul says “believe it.” It’s true. It’s fact. It’s history. It’s the only answer to your sin. So, will you trust Christ and Christ alone? If not, why not?

The sooner you quit trusting yourself, your goodness, your efforts, your baptism, your good works, ever your prayers, and begin trusting in the Savior Who shed His blood on Calvary, then and only then, does Christ become your Propitiation.

What, then does all this mean?
First, it means that God takes yours sins very seriously. How serious? So serious that He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world to be crucified. Can you then see how serious your sin is? It’s because Christ’s death was a death that completely satisfies God’s justice.

Remission means that God releases you from your legal obligation to Him because of your sins. And propitiation is the basis for that remission. As your propitiation, Jesus has done all that can be done for you. He bore the guilt and condemnation of your sins.

And can you now see why God offers the Gospel message to everyone under the sun? Jesus, the Lamb of God, takes away the sins of the world, said John, the Baptizer.

Remission and Propitiation; two of the greatest blessings that are yours because of Jesus Christ. So, yes, there are many things beyond forgiveness. But these two are two of the greatest, as we’ve found in the Book of Romans.

It was said by Samuel Coleridge that William Cowper was the greatest modern poet of his day, the 18th century. Cowper was the one who translated the Iliad and the Odyssey by the Greek writer Homer.

Cowper lived in the town of Olney, England when John Newton was the Pastor of the Church in Olney. Cowper became good friends with John Newton. The reason I mention Cowper is this.

He wrote some phenomenal poems; some of which have become hymns that Christians have sung throughout history. One of them you know as “There Is a Fountain.”

See if it doesn’t aptly describe Romans three and the work of Christ.

“There Is a Fountain”

1. There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in His day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away:
Washed all my sins away,
Washed all my sins away;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.
3. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow’r,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more:
Are safe, to sin no more,
Are safe, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Are safe, to sin no more.
4. E’er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die:
And shall be till I die,
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.
5. When this poor, lisping, stamm’ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save:
I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save,
I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save;
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save.

Folks, God has done far more than forgive your sins. He provided you a Propitiation and He provided you the Remission of your sins.

Now, you may be here today and, for the first time, realize what Jesus did for you at Calvary. Then, today, for you will be the Day of Salvation.

You are a sinner and you’ve come short of the Glory of God. And yet, at the moment you trust in Christ, God does for us something we could never do for ourselves. He remits your sins through the Propitiation provided by the shed blood of the Son of God.

Today, you need to acknowledge that your sin is what separates you from God. And today you need to repent of your sins and believe on the LORD Jesus Christ. And when you do that, you will be saved.

* To Repent - to change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* To Believe - to simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins.

Have you repented? Are you believing on Christ alone for your Eternal Security? If not, why not?

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for every sin you ever

committed. He became your Substitute on the day He died on Calvary two thousand years ago. And today He’s offering you remission. Your entire sin record expunged.

This is the greatest news in all the world. The Father gave Only His Son to pay the penalty for all your sins. Jesus died on the Cross as your Substitute and He wants to be your Savior today. Won’t you cry out to Him for His free gift of salvation? What could possibly hold you back from having a saving relationship with your Creator?

Think about the LORD as the One Who loves you and delights to have you as His Child and to have you know and understand Him. He delighted in purchasing salvation in order to bring His forgiveness into your heart. John 3:16 *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Would you pray this prayer today? The Sinner’s Prayer. *“Father, I realize I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me. Thank you. Amen”*

Jesus said, Revelation 3:20 *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.”*

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 128 “I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

The Book of Romans contains the pure Gospel.

You might consider Romans like the most appetizing meal you have ever eaten, including dessert.

The name Giovanni de' Medici might not be familiar to you. At the age of seven, Giovanni de’ Medici became a monk in the Roman Catholic Church. At thirteen he became a cardinal, and at forty he became pope and changed his name to Pope Leo X.

The pope that preceded Leo was a man named Julius II. Julius II raised and saved a lot of money for the Church. But nearly all of it was spent in the first eight years that Leo X served as pope.

And Leo X wanted to build the largest new Church in the world. It was the sixteenth century. But, because there was no money left to build this huge Church, he created what some call a fund raiser. He sold a reliable method of getting out of purgatory. You could purchase an indulgence from the Church and your loved one would possibly get out of purgatory. In other words, the Church sold forgiveness.

By the way, the Church he had built became the largest Church ever built until the 1990’s. It took 120 years to build; 163,000 square feet with the dome 450 feet high. It’s still to this day called St. Peter’s Basilica.

But, one of the monks in the town of Wittenberg, Germany had been teaching the Book of Romans and came upon the fact that forgiveness cannot be purchased either before death or after death. So, he posted a list of ninety-five complaints against the Church, including a complaint against indulgences on the Church door in the town. The monk’s name was Martin Luther.

And, because of Luther’s bravery in standing against the false teachings of the Church, a Protestant Reformation began.

What was it that Luther discovered? Please look with me at Romans 3:24 *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

*(26) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”*

Luther said that if the Bible says that forgiveness is free, then no one has the right to anything of anyone except to receive it.

Here’s how Luther put it. “The first and chief article is this: Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (Romans 3:24-25). He alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world ([John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John) 1:29), and God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all ([Isaiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah) 53:6). All have sinned and are justified freely, without their own works and merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood (Romans 3:23-25). This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit.” [Found on [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org) “Smalcald Articles.”

And he adds “You must get used to the idea that it is one thing to do the works of the law and quite another to fulfill it. The works of the law are everything that a person does or can do of his own free will and by his own powers to obey the law. But because in doing such works the heart abhors the law and yet is forced to obey it, the works are a total loss and are completely useless.”

FACTS OF JUSTIFICATION

Apart from the works of the law (Romans 3:20)

Unto all who believe (Romans 3:22).

God’s righteousness comes to us by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22)

For those who have sinned (Romans 3:23).

Obtained freely, without deserving it (Romans 3:24)

Obtained on the basis of the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24)

Fully, from all things (Acts 13:39).

Immediate upon believing (Genesis 15:6; Luke 18:13, 14).

Now, present position before God (Romans 5:9; 8:1).

Once for all, eternal (1 Corinthians 6:11).

In my preparation for today’s sermon, I did a search through the Book of Romans and found something wonder-ful and something that will strengthen the heart of every Christian. On average, once in every eleven verses, the Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, placed a word about the main topic of Romans; God’s righteousness. And 2/3 of those references are in the first six chapters of the Book.