

The Gospel and the Creeds

We believe in the forgiveness of Sins

The Gospel is Good News. Good news that God loves you and wants to restore the relationship you and He were created for from the beginning of time. It is Good News because in Jesus, all the promises of God are Yes. It is Good News because he gives us His Holy Spirit through whom we have direct access to His love, strength and power. It is Good News because we are no longer alone, but part of a great body of believers in whom we find our purpose, connected by love. It is the best news on earth because by this gospel our sins are forgiven.....

Do you know what it is like to be forgiven?

Forgiveness is like being renewed, its releasing, its hopeful, its being honoured. Living under the burden of guilt is crushing, depressing and distressing. Being released is like...

We believe in the Forgiveness of Sins.

We believe that God is not into condemnation but into releasing us from our debt to him generated by sin (Romans 6:23). We believe that in Christ there is liberty and hope because Gods grace in Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. But to truly know forgiveness do we need to know why we need it and what we are forgiven of?

What is Sin? How does it affect us? What are sins?

Ray Comfort and the "Way of the Master" have used The Ten Commandments as a way to help people recognise that they have need forgiveness. The programme is a helpful way to start a conversation on "what is sin" but it is not the only discussion on sin that we need to have. The Bible helps us to understand the depth of these commandments regarding our attitude to the poor and to the rich. It challenges our spending habits, both with our time and money regarding our own family, and the family of God. When searching our scriptures it is important that what we ask to see is not just how God might bless us, but how far short of Gods ideal do we fall, that we might seek forgiveness, and in our restored state be lead into new ways of living that brings honour and Glory to God.

And so we need forgiveness which is offered to us freely through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:38,39 "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

The Good News is that this is offered to everyone. To know and be truly forgiven.

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One of the interesting things of the Creed is that it puts forgiveness of Sins just after the bit on the communion of saints and the holy Catholic Church. I don't think this is a coincidence as the key to sustaining a community of Gods people, or any family, is through forgiveness because the reality is that we will always be offending one another in some way or other, failing to measure up (GK ἁμαρτία – hamartia word that we translate to mean sin) to the standards we place on each other. The reason for this is many, some justifiable, and some not, but often that is not our call. Rather, we are to leave vengeance to God alone and to work it through with forgiveness (Eph 4:32, Col 3:13 see also Rom 1:31{majority text versions only}).

The Parable of the so called unforgiving servant is particularly telling, and difficult (Matthew 18:21-35). The truth is that we are commanded to forgive as we have been forgiven (see also the Lords Prayer). And like God himself, forgiving the offender will cost us something, usually not our Son, but it may mean giving up our pride, our ego, our self righteous attitude, our self absorption, our "its all about me-ism", our desire for judgement and vengeance, our distrust of God, our sin.

Of course this is not an easy thing to do, but God does not command us to do this because he wants to inflict us with more pain, but because he loves us and he knows that where unforgiveness flourishes, so are the roots of bitterness, and faithlessness. Love can not thrive where hatred abounds, and so God invites us to let it go and leave it to him. It is mine to repay says the Lord. And this applies no matter the circumstance and there are many things that would be horrific to forgive and the truth is that this can only be done through Gods grace and strength which is ours through Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

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In Forgiving, we may have to forgive ourselves as well because the measure we hold up for ourselves is higher, or different from the one God holds up for us, and we can go through life forgiving everyone else and not ourselves for missing a mark that was either real or not. This form of unforgiveness can be hugely crippling as it often brings a condemnation that prevents us living in the grace that has been given us freely through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is one area that the Devil likes to work in but we are not unaware of his schemes.

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A word on Forgiving and Forgetting.

These are not the same things. It is possible to forgive and to let the person carry on without necessarily forgetting. When someone hurts us we forgive but do not necessarily need to forget because it is likely we would end up in the same situation again. We wouldn't have learnt anything, and neither would they. It is like classic operant conditioning such as in child behaviour modification.

Imagine that your child whinges for an icecream and you give them one but tell them that you don't like them whingeing. Next time they whinge you tell them to stop whingeing but still give them the icecream, what you have taught them is that it doesn't matter what you say, because what you do is different, you reward their bad behaviour. When it comes to forgiving, we can forgive but if we forget it is like we continue to allow the child to keep whingeing. That is why it is often important that even though we are forgiven we have to fulfil the consequences, pay off the debt, return the goods, and in other words, prove ourselves trustworthy again.

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This is our catch cry, and the good news that we need to proclaim every where we go. In fact this was the Apostles Paul's Job description given to him from the Lord Jesus himself.

Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' Acts 26:16-18.

Oh that every one of us would take this on board for ourselves. We have an important message which Satan would try to douse but this is what we are here to do. Let no one stop us. Let no thoughts get in the way but let us witness to one another and all people we meet of this amazing grace that is ours through believing in Jesus Christ. No more living in the kingdom of darkness. No more submitting to the power of the Devil. We have been granted the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance of the Kingdom of Light to all who believe.