

God's forgiveness

ODCC 21/06/09 (x.pages)

Text: 1 John 1:5-10

Introduction

1. I want to highlight today how deep and how powerful and how complete is the forgiveness of God.
 - a. Only the one and only Almighty God can forgive mankind's sin and He does so at His own expense.
 - b. You see, forgiveness comes at a price but is offered for free and the cost to God is beyond human understanding but we are unable to enjoy it to the full.
2. It is like the sun, although scientists can tell a lot about the sun, there's a lot more they do not know than what they do know.
 - a. Nevertheless we bask in the warmth and glory of the sun and we benefit from it's life-giving properties because without the sun, life would cease to exist on earth.
 - b. And anyone who refuses God's forgiveness is like someone who digs a tunnel 100km deep into the earth and lives in the darkness – that's the spiritual picture of someone without God.
 - c. And that is why our text talks about light and darkness.

The fact of sin

1. "If we claim we have not sinned" says John. Most rational people acknowledge that they are sinners (although they don't like to be called sinners) but there are some who deny sin.
 - a. To those who deny sin, says John, then "you are calling God a liar," because God has said in numerous places that we are sinners (i.e. Rom 3:23 (*For all have sinned...*)).
 - b. And if we call God a liar then we negate His Word. The picture is of someone who has a life-threatening illness and a doctor insists that they need to take a certain medicine but the sick person refuses to believe they are ill and refuses treatment.
2. Of those who know they are sinners, most do not believe they are as bad as the Bible says they are. To them, the sin that most people commit does not warrant the extreme judgement promised by God (i.e. 2 Peter 2:4-10a).
 - a. I often use the very first sin as an example. Adam and Eve ate a piece of fruit – on it's own, is that such a serious sin to warrant the kind of judgement that God brought upon them and their descendants to this time?
 - b. But you see, this is the thing about sin. It's not what we do that makes it serious. What's more serious to murder someone or to steal a drink mat from a bar in Thailand?
 - c. They are both exactly the same because they are both sin and the Bible says, "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom 6:23).
3. Because we judge sin by the act carried out, we deem one to be worse than the other. Murder is far more serious than stealing a cheap drink mat off a bar. But God judges the thoughts and intent of the heart and in both cases there is a heart problem. That's why God said to the prophet Samuel, "*Man judges the outward appearance but I judge the heart*" (1 Sam 16:7).
 - a. Every sin committed by every person, whether in thought, or act, is as bad as the sin committed by Adam and Eve.
 - b. Jesus instructed us to pray like this: "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*" (Matt 6:9-12).
 - c. Sin is a deliberate violation of the will of God. In heaven God's will is carried out absolutely and the result is life and peace. On earth God's will is ignored billions of times every day by billions of people in billions of ways
 - d. The universal and eternal law says that the soul that sins shall surely die (Ex 34:7; Ezek 18:20). God cannot be just if He leaves our sin unpunished. As weak and imperfect human beings we hate to see a lack of justice. How can we expect a perfect God who is the judge of all the earth not to carry out justice?

God forgives

1. Our text has great news! It says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
 - a. So the good news is that God forgives and purifies. And those whom God forgives and purifies are totally forgiven and their slate is wiped absolutely clean so that they stand as if they had not committed any sin – just like Adam and Eve in the garden before they ate the fruit.
 - b. But see, our text also reminds us that God is **faithful and just**. If He is faithful and just then justice must be upheld so how can God forgive us?
 - c. Our text says, *“If we confess our sins...”* So does it work like this? I sin, confess it and God forgives. I sin again, confess and God forgives. I sin again and again and again and each time confess and God forgives.
2. God cannot just overlook my sin just because I confess it. Can you imagine if everyone who broke the law confessed and we forgave them.
 - a. There has to be a basis for God’s forgiveness where He is both merciful and just.
 - b. Remember I said near the beginning that forgiveness is not free – it comes at a price!
 - c. Even God who created all things and sustains all things (owns all things) had to pay the price to be merciful and forgiving.
3. The price God paid was to send Jesus to take both the blame and the punishment for my sin and in that act, God was just by meting out the punishment for my sin upon Jesus who took the blame for me.
 - a. If I confess my sin God will forgive me. There is a condition. I have to acknowledge that I am full of sin.
 - b. I have committed innumerable sins in my life and each of them as serious as the sin committed by Adam and Eve.
 - c. If I confess my sins – not each one because I could not remember more than a fraction of them but if I confess I am a sinner then God will forgive me.

Fellowship with God

1. We come back to the major point of the last couple of weeks. God is not so much interested in rules as He is in relationship.
 - a. I said at the beginning that we may choose to live in the light of the sun or we can dig down into the earth and live in total darkness.
 - b. Our text has the same thought. It says, *“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all...if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”*
2. Walking in the light is a description of walking in relationship which, as I pointed out last week, means companionship with God.
 - a. It doesn’t mean to say that we stop sinning but what does happen in our relationship with God, He affects us so deeply that He changes our hearts.
 - b. Sin stems from the heart but God changes our heart so that instead of desiring to be independent and live out our own will, we begin to want God’s will.
 - c. If you need to repent generally or specifically I urge you to do so now.