

## "Our Forgiving God"

While the God of the Bible will punish sin, His grace and mercy are everlasting. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." God wants to extend His grace and mercy to you. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures reveal to us the amazing grace of our loving and forgiving God. Grace and mercy are what we most need. God our Father keeps steadfast love for His people and forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin." Thanks for tuning in. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Some people like to separate the God of the Old Testament from the God of the New Testament. They believe the God of the Old Testament was filled with wrath but was short on grace and love, whereas Jesus was filled with love and had no desire to judge anything. This view, however, is mistaken. The God of Old Testament is the same God as that of the New Testament. Everything Jesus did and said was in the heart of the Father from the beginning. Revelation 13:8 correctly speaks of Jesus as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Jesus identified with His Father in the most meaningful ways. In John 10 verse 30 Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6 to 7, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (now) If you had known Me (Jesus said), you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Hebrews 1 verse 3 reminds us that Jesus "is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power." Yes, to know Jesus is to know the Father. In John 1:18, the New American Standard speaks of Jesus as the One who has "explained" the Father.

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We'll now worship in song, read from Isaiah 53:4 to 6, and examine the nature of our forgiving God.

Our reading today comes from Isaiah 53 verses 4 to 6. This is about the suffering savior. The suffering servant who would become the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed.  
All of us like sheep have gone astray,  
Each of us has turned to his own way;

But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all  
To fall on Him.

Yes God had a plan and that was the sacrifice of Jesus. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so grateful that Jesus was willing to bear our iniquities in His body so that we might be free from sin. Help us Heavenly Father never to take our salvation for granted. But to know how much You have graciously been merciful to us. This is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

In Exodus 34 verses 6 to 7 The LORD proclaimed about Himself to Moses, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." Iniquity is guilt from wrongdoing or wickedness. Transgression is evildoing and rebellion against God. Sin is missing the mark, which offends God and causes men to be guilty before Him.

People today think much about grace but often miss God's justice. God cannot tolerate sin. David wrote in Psalm 5 and verse 4, "For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you." The prophet Habakkuk also noted in 1 verse 13, that "Your (that is God's) eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor."

Now our sins alienate us from God. Isaiah 59:1 to 2 says, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or (neither is) his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear." God won't hear the prayer of a person who loves sin. Psalm 66 and verse 18 says, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." Proverbs 15 and verse 8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight."

We must not ignore the fact that everyone who sins is facing condemnation. And everyone who reaches the age where they understand right from wrong and then breaks the commandments of God has committed sin. Romans 3 and verse 10 says, "There is none righteous, not even one." Verse 23 says that, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." You see at some point each person realizes the awful evil of his own sin. We must admit that we've sinned against God." Much of life is spent ignoring or denying the reality of our sins. We imagine sin is trivial. We blame others or blame God. God didn't make us sinners, we choose to sin. And we're all accountable to God and guilty when we sin.

Now we must realize that people with unresolved sin cannot enter heaven. Revelation 21 verse 8 says, "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Later on the Lord reveals through John in Revelation 21:27, "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Now this reality created the need for action in the heart of God. On one hand, "the wages of sin is death" and banishment from God (Romans 6:23) because the Lord (according to Deuteronomy 32:4) could not be a faithful and righteous being if He overlooked man's iniquity and took Him to heaven anyway. On the other hand, the Lord loved man, and yearned for his salvation.

God said in Ezekiel 33 verses 10 to 11, "And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them.

How then can we live?’ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?” The apostle Paul assured Timothy in 1 Timothy 2 verses 3 and 4, “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

How, then, could God remain just and at the same time justify sinners? Well, this was heaven’s dilemma, but God was also wise. He knew what to do with the people that He created and loved. Our most critical need, right today, is reconciliation, an atonement by which we sinners may be restored to God’s favor and may ultimately enter His presence. We need to be forgiven.

Have you considered how many times in your lifetime that you’ve sinned against God? Psalm 130 verses 3 to 4 asks, “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.” David prayed, in Psalm 143 and verse 2, “And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous.” We need the Lord’s forgiveness!

In 1 John 2 and verse 2 Christ is called the “propitiation for our sins.” Well, Christ is “the propitiation,” because by His becoming our substitute and willingly suffering the punishment for the guilt of our sins, God was willing to remove our sin and accept us. Propitiation refers to the appeasing of God’s wrath through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus Christ. Now no one can earn salvation. Sinners cannot pay back, bribe, or impress God with lavish gifts. It took a sacrifice of blood to appease the wrath of God and to atone for those sins.

Now removing the sin and its consequences opens up the way for reconciliation. When the sin is gone, we can once again enjoy the favor and grace of God. The purpose of forgiving is so that we might return to a right relationship with God. God wants to love us in spite of our past iniquities, and transgressions and sins! John 3:16 to 17 says, ““For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Isaiah prophesied of Jesus in chapter 53, verses 5 and 6, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” He suffered crucifixion for our sake. 1 Peter 2:24 says that Jesus “Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

We need spiritual healing. We need saving. We need the only answer for our sins— and that’s Jesus! Isaiah 53:10 to 11 describes what Jesus did: “But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, (that is the Father crush Jesus) putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.” He became the guilt offering, the sacrifice to bear our sins. Now because He bore our punishment, we can have life, newness of life, abundant life, and eternal life.

God wants to reconcile with us. He wants us to stand in His grace and favor. 2 Corinthians 5:18 to 21 says, “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, (that's in the gospel) we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Now God's love demonstrated itself through Jesus. Romans 5:6 to 11 says, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

God takes no pleasure in being angry with people. God said in Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins." When God forgives sins, He forgives all sins. Colossians 2:12 to 13 says, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." If God could raise up Jesus, He can forgive you of all your sins by making you alive with Christ. When we're baptized, we die to that old man of sin and we rise up to walk in newness of life. Now all means all, not some or most.

2 Corinthians 5:17 the bible says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Now all one's old sins are gone. Psalm 103 verses 8 to 12 reminds us that, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us." Oh, God can free us from sin. He can free us from a guilty conscience, and the spiritual consequences of our sins.

Micah 7:18 to 19 says, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea." Forgiveness means God no longer holds our sins against us; they are no longer on His mind when He thinks of us. The Lord said in Isaiah 44:22, "I have wiped out your wrongdoings like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

I know that I can't change the past. History is history, and I can't make it undone. But my past is no longer an obstacle separating me from my God and my God from my soul. My sin is gone, my guilt is gone, and my shame is gone. I can pray, and God will hear. I'm not all I ought to be; I'm not all I want to be; I'm not all I'm going to be; but thank God by His mercy and grace, I'm not what I used to be. I'm born again, a new person.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're grateful for the grace and mercy that You show each of us for our sakes. And so that You will no longer be angry. And Father we're thankful that Jesus paid the ultimate price of His body and blood on the cross so that we might be healed from sin. Help us Heavenly Father to live a life worthy of our calling. In Jesus name, Amen.

It's to the glory of God that we can be freed from sin, guilt, and shame. Can you say, "My sins, for which I am ashamed, are all forgiven and washed away by the blood of Jesus. My sins are now fully forgiven? Can you say the rebellious sinner I once was is now dead to sin, and the person I have become belongs to the Lord Jesus? By God's grace my conscience is cleansed and my guilt removed. I am now at peace with God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ"? Can you say that? Or are you living with guilt and shame or are you free from sin? Can you look in the mirror and smile at the new person you've become?

When you're forgiven, the old man of sin is dead and you're free from sin. God no longer holds your sins against you. You're born again! Know this: "that your old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6 and verse 6) Now that freedom takes place when you're baptized into Christ, buried and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. That was the plan of the Father through the Son. And that's how you can get into a right relationship with Him and become a child of God.

Being born of water and the Spirit is the new birth. Titus 3 and verse 5 reminds us that the Lord saves us "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." In baptism we are born again and have newness of life. We're no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6 verse 7) but slaves to righteousness. At baptism the Lord forgives us, adds us to His church, causes us to become Christians, and gives us the hope of eternal life. Let God save you.

Now we hope our study on, Our Forgiving God, has caused you to understand God a little better. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). Now SEARCH is on YouTube! So subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and then like the programs and tell a friend. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

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