

FORGIVENESS FROM THE CROSS

Luke 23:34

Introduction: WWJD? What Would Jesus Do? WDJD? What Did Jesus Do? These expressions are used today to help us remember how we should act and react in questionable situations. Jesus wasn't very popular with the religious "leaders" and they quickly moved to silence Him. They finally got Jesus crucified on a cross. Even hanging on a cross Jesus set an example for us to follow in forgiving our enemies. Jesus prayed for those who had put Him on the cross "*...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...*" Just what does Jesus dying on the cross reveal?

1. Biblical Prophecy was Fulfilled.

- In *Isaiah 53* at least 10 things are predicted concerning the suffering and humiliation the promised Messiah would undergo, including the very prayer Jesus uttered. (*53:12*)

2. The Promised One Identified with His People. (*...Father, forgive them...*)

- Jesus had never before asked the Father's forgiveness for others as He had always done that Himself.
- Jesus was God but also God/Man and hanging from the cross He was now a substitute for man, man's representative.
 - He was no longer in His place of authority but had now taken the position as every other human being before God the Father.
 - Jesus had deliberately surrendered His divine authority of forgiving sin in order to now be identified with every other human being. He now intercedes for mankind.

3. The Cost of Sin and it's Consequent Guilt is Seen. (*...for they know not what they do...*)

- God required that for every sin committed, an atonement must be made. *Leviticus 5:15-16*
Numbers 15:22-25
- Nothing changes sin in the sight of God regardless of what we may call it. Sin is Sin!
- God's standard of righteousness will never change to fit our levels or wants. Whether we know we have sinned or not, sin is sin and all sin needs divine forgiveness. Jesus prayed for God to forgive those who had sinned by putting Him on the Cross.

4. The Blindness of the Human Heart is Revealed. (*...for they know not what they do...*)

- Those who put Jesus on the Cross knew exactly what they were doing but they just didn't believe it was who Jesus said He was, the Son of God, the Lord. They were ignorant of the greatness of their crime.
- All that Jesus had shown and told them pointed to the fact that He was different. He was who He said He was and they should have know that what they were doing was inexcusable.

5. On the Cross Jesus Practiced What He had Taught - Forgiveness. ("...forgive them...")

- Jesus had taught to "*...love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.. (Mt. 5:44)*
- Jesus had also told them "*I am the way, the truth, and the life...*" (Jn. 14:6)
- Jesus also taught that forgiveness comes after repentance. "*If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day turn again to the saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him.*" (Lk. 17:3-4)
- Does God forgive us if we do not repent? "*IF we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 Jn. 1:9)
- What about those who have wronged us but do not "repent?" We cannot keep ill-feelings against them nor keep anger in our heart. We are not to act as if nothing ever happened, but we are to pray for them.

6. At the Cross Man's Greatest and Most Primary Need is Revealed.

- We are all sinners and unfit for the presence of God.
 - It matters not our social standing or if we are highly respected by others or physically attractive.
 - What matters at our time of death is have our sins been put away?
- What does it take for God to forgive us our sins?
 - Divine forgiveness is one thing and human forgiveness is another.
 - We degrees of forgiveness and acceptance of other's asking for forgiveness.
 - With God there is no laxity, no degrees, no shades of forgiveness. Someone has to pay with their blood and that blood has to be innocent.
 - God's Son, Jesus satisfied God's righteous demands by paying the price for our sins to be forgiven. He shed His own blood.

7. Redeeming Love Triumphs at the Cross. ("...Then said Jesus...")

- Man had done his worst and his wicked human heart had been revealed, then Jesus spoke.
 - One can only imagine what Jesus could have done, what He could have said.
 - Instead of calling down fire or an army of angels, Jesus asked for God to forgive.
- Jesus set us an example.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus went to the Cross before we were born.
2. Which of our sins did Jesus pay for on the Cross?
3. If the blood of Jesus has cleansed only our past sins, what if God's pardon were taken away?
4. The blood of Jesus has cleansed all our sins forever.
5. "*Therefore there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" (Ro. 8:1)
6. Think about it: The believer in Jesus Christ is eternally forgiven of every sin.