

Half Truth

A preacher once spoke these words, “When we become aware of our sin, and seek His forgiveness, we receive pardon through the blood of Jesus and are adopted into His family”. His words, though true, left the listener wondering how all this happens, as he provided no further explanation.

Jesus has explained pardon starting with these words: “...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations...” (Luke 24:47). This text may have been on his mind when the preacher correctly said that pardon is received through the blood of Jesus but he never explained from scripture how the listener’s sins can be forgiven by God: should an awakened soul merely trust that sins are forgiven because Jesus shed His blood on the cross for the entire world or should he, in some other way, convince himself of this pardon? Apostle John describes the role that blood plays in forgiveness stating that “*the blood of Jesus...cleanseth us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7), while the writer of Hebrews concurs, “...without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Although it is accurate to say that forgiveness comes through the blood the question still remains, how does the blood effect forgiveness?

Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to find an example of forgiveness of sins in the Bible. The very first sin was committed in the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. They knew not to eat it, yet they listened to Satan and immediately became aware “...that they were naked...” (Gen 3:7). That is, they knew that they had sinned because they had disobeyed God’s word. God also knew of their sin but rather than threatening them He called to Adam who, along with Eve, was hiding. Notice, He ‘called’ to Adam and did not force him to come forward. Adam and Eve willingly came out of hiding to seek God and to confess their sin; God then forgave them, clothing them with “*coats of skins*” (Gen 3:21). It is significant that an innocent animal had to shed its blood to provide cover for sin, which foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus to provide cover for our sins through His blood. So, when

Adam and Eve became aware of their sin, God forgave them, but only after they sought Him and confessed what was troubling them.

Today, we still confess sins that trouble us to God, but He is no longer found in the Garden of Eden (or walking elsewhere in this world) but He is found in the heart of each believer. He that denies this “...*is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist...*” (1 John 4:3). Jesus has given believers “*the keys of the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt 16:19) so that “*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*” (John 20:23). Scripture instructs those who become aware of their sin to “*Confess your faults one to another...*” (James 5:16) and to, “...*repent ye, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15). Why confess to another person and not directly to God? Because, as just explained, God is in the heart of a fellow believer so, in fact, we are confessing to God when we confess to another believer. As the preacher intimated, repentance begins “when we become aware of our sin” and ends when we “are adopted into His family” but this only happens through the grace of God given to a penitent soul to believe the gospel message, “...*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*” (Matt 9:2). Hence, believers use the blood of Jesus to wash away sins and to cover penitent souls with robes of righteousness (aka, animal skins) when they proclaim the gospel message of forgiveness to those who willingly confess their sins to God and, by the grace of God, are able to believe that gospel message of forgiveness.

The preacher spoke comforting words, but he failed to reveal the whole truth of salvation—how sins are remitted, for it is sin that separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2) but it is the forgiveness of sin that reconciles us to Him (2 Cor 5:18). Dear reader, “...*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (1 John 4:1).

God’s Peace,

Charles Korhonen

May 3	Ken Storm	Holy Communion	May 24	Paul Coponen	
May 10	Charles Korhonen		May 31	Herb Jarvi	
May 17	Ken Storm				

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