

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 11- Luke 11:1-13**

212- Lord, Teach Us to Pray- Part 5

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July 28, 2013

## **Luke 11:1-13**

**1** It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

**2** And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

**3** 'Give us each day our daily bread.

**4** 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

**5** Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

**6** for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

**7** and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you *anything*.'

**8** I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

**9** "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

**10** For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

**11** Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

**12** Or *if* he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

**13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

To the Glory of God

Now in our Church Bible Reading Plan- we just finished a very interesting Book named after the main character- Job. And one of the strangest things about the Book of Job is just how the three “friends” (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) are restored to Job and to God. It is very round-about and teaches us surprising lessons about prayer and about forgiveness. Please turn with me to read **Job 42:7&8:**

**7** It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.

**8** "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you *according to your* folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

So here in verse 7- God says that His Wrath is kindled against Eliphaz and his two friends because of this reason:

**... because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.**

... so how will these men be forgiven and be restored to God's Fellowship and escape this terrible Wrath? God says that they must ask Job to pray for them as they offer up for themselves a burnt offering,

**... My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you *according to your* folly,**

And verse 9 says that they did that:

**So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.**

Now all of this happened not just for the three friends' sake- but for Job's sake as well. So when Job prayed for *them*- everything changed for *him*. Verse 10 says:

**Job 42:10**

**The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.**

So from this- it *appears* that the condition or the catalyst for Job's friends to be forgiven and restored to God was Job's forgiving intercession for them. And it also appears that the origination for God's restoring of Job's fortunes was the same- that he prayed for these men who for over 30 Chapters had tormented him and falsely accused him.

Now what is remarkable about this- is that God would not simply accept the repentant prayers of these three men for *themselves* but required that somebody else pray for them. And that is because God had said that He would hear Job's prayer and not theirs.

Now perhaps one reason for this strange thing is that this is God's Way of demanding that- as His people- we must forgive and be reconciled to each other before God will ever accept our worship of Him and forgive us Himself. And we know this is true from a general perspective because **Matthew 5:21-24** says:

**21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, '*YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER*' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'**

**22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.**

**23 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,**

**24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.**

And we also know that this is true concerning husbands and wives because **1Peter 3:7** says:

**You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.**

Now the Prayer that Jesus teaches here in **Luke 11** says that we are to pray:

**And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...**

Job needed forgiveness *himself* but he also needed to forgive these other men. And the enemies of Job also needed God's forgiveness. So God brought them to Job- seeking his intercession on their behalf- and I suggest to you that this is exactly the kind of Love that Jesus demands from us today. For example- **Luke 6:28** says:

**bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.**

So the three "friends" needed to seek forgiveness from Job *before* their prayers could be heard by God because Job's animosity toward them was their fault in large measure. And what we should take away from this – is that if your brother has anything against you- you are to go and be reconciled to your brother before you come to God to worship Him.

And that should be it- right? That should be the end of it- right? I mean they go to Job and patch things up and then all is well, right? Wrong. Strangely- the inspired Biblical text does not say that God will hear their prayers when they patch things up with Job. It says that Job's *prayer* for them will be heard. So even *after* they patch things up- the Bible says that God still doesn't hear their prayer and they need Job to pray for them. So why is that?

The dynamic here is not simply human forgiveness opening the way for the three to be heard in Heaven. The dynamic is that God ordains that the prayers of *some* people will be received for the guilt of others.

And that tells us that at least *part* of the reconciling process in forgiveness is the *vertical* intervention of Job to God on behalf of his adversaries- not simply the *horizontal* reconciliation between the people. The Bible says here that the prayer of Job for these three was a *requirement* for God *not* to "**deal with them according to their folly.**"

So what we learn from this is something amazing that we have been investigating lately in our Prayer Meetings on Wednesday Evenings. And that is that there are some things that God wills to do in the earth that He will not do at all- except that prayer is made that He will do them. In other words- there are some aspects of God's Will that are clearly spelled out in Scripture as being God's Will and yet God will not ever do those things unless and until His people pray that God will do them.

Now that doesn't in any way detract from God being Sovereign. But God has specifically chosen prayer as the means or the catalyst for Him to do what He desires in the earth. And so because it is His Will and shall be done- God will come to His people and lay the burden to pray upon them so that they will ask Him to do what He has already said He is going to do.

And so as we learn God's Will from our study of Scripture- we also learn how to pray. And as we yield ourselves to pray that which is God's Will- God moves on those prayers and carries out that which He has already said He will do. So if you correctly understand this- God is absolutely Sovereign over everything- all the time. And God doesn't need or require our help or our cooperation to do anything that He has determined to do. And yet even though God has no lack and has no need that we should do anything in order that His will be carried out- the Bible clearly and repeatedly says that God has Sovereignly chosen to make the prayers of His people the "means" or the "catalyst" or the "origination" of Him doing what He has already said in His Word that He will do.

And conversely that also means that even though God has clearly revealed in His Word that it is His Will to do certain things- He will *not* do them- apart from His people praying that He will. And that is why it is so very vital that we faithfully pray for our enemies and for those who seek to do us harm and for those who persecute and harm us- because- for reasons we may never know- *their own* prayers may not be enough to reconcile them to God.

In other words- God's Will may be that we are the appointed "means" of someone else escaping the consequences of their sinful folly- which they may be able to escape in no other way than that we pray for them. Consider these Passages:

- **Matthew 6:14&15** "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your father who is in heaven will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive you your trespasses."
- **Mark 11:25&26** "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your father who is in heaven forgive."
- **Matthew 18:34&35** "And the master was angry and he handed him over to the jailers until he pay back all he owed. So will my father who is in heaven also do to you if each one of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts."

So this week- I'm asking a question,

How can we forgive those who sin against us?

What gives us the freedom and the ability and the incentive and the power to forgive those who sin against us? Some of you have been wronged so deeply and hurt so badly by other people that forgiving them would be as great a miracle as if God asked you to fly through the air. But I beg you to recall the little poem of the Puritan John Bunyan who wrote this over 330 years ago:

Run, John, run, the Law commands  
But gives us neither feet nor hands,  
Far better news the Gospel brings:  
It bids us fly and gives us wings.

And that includes the "flying" of forgiveness. So I want God to show us our Gospel wings this morning. Forgiving is a sort of "flying" that we can do through and in and by the Power of the Gospel. In fact- six concepts are all we need for this flight and that will make us strong so that we may not just periodically forgive somebody when they do us

wrong- but that we can- to the Glory of God- actually walk in forgiveness.

And I find all six of these concepts in just three verses found in **Ephesians 4:32–5:2**- so let's turn in our Bibles and read that Passage together:

**32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

**5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;**

**2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**

So here are six concepts in this inspired text that will equip us and empower us to be obedient to the Command of Jesus to forgive. And all six of these concepts are things that God the Father and God the Son have already done for us without our help or cooperation. They are all Works of His Sovereign Grace.

Now first of all- I need to say that I am only talking to genuine believers right now. If you are not a truly born again soul- I pray you will listen and be drawn in this morning and that you will confess your own inability to love and serve God and that you will turn away from sin and the false and temporary pleasures that it promises and that you will fall at Jesus' Feet and beg him to forgive you and rescue you from the deserved Wrath of God against your wickedness. That would be a good thing, indeed.

But what I am describing here about this "Gospel-flying" is that since forgiveness is a part of the glorious finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ- the power and ability for us to forgive those who have wronged us is received only by faith and is yours freely- if you will confess the wickedness of your sin of unforgiveness and lay down the weight of unbelief that God is the Sovereign Judge of all matters and simply trust that what you are unable to do- Christ has already done.

Now these six concepts are divided into two main categories that I want to go over with you this morning from this Passage here in Ephesians.

- A. One category is what Christ did for us before we even existed
- B. The other category is what God did for us during our own lifetime

So three concepts are what Jesus Christ has done for us *before* we were ever born and three other concepts are what God has done for us *during our own lifetime*. And all six of these concepts- when put together- will work powerfully in our lives so that we can walk in forgiveness toward each other.

## **Category #1: What God Did for Us Before We Existed**

The first concept in this Category is this:

### **1. God Loved Us with a Special Saving Love**

**Ephesians 5:1&2a**

**1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;**

**2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you...**

So the first concept in true Gospel forgiveness is the unspeakable reality of being loved by Almighty God. But to actually realize the force of this- you need to know that this is *not* merely what is called the “General Love” that God has for all the world- and ever lost sinner in it. “General Love” is the kind of Love whereby God doesn’t instantly annihilate every person at the very moment that they sin. It is the kind of Love whereby God gives life and breath and pleasant food and rain and protection and family and job and laughter and green grass and many evidences of His Truth and His Power and His Greatness to evil people who have no intention at all of serving Him.

And even though this Love is very *general* in nature- it is still an amazing thing when you stop and think about it. For God to show Mercy and Kindness and ongoing Love toward human beings- who- for the most part- spit in His Face and sin repeatedly against Him and laugh at His Law and spurn His Righteousness is an amazing thing. And it detracts from the notion that God is mean or that God is all about a bunch of rules and regulations and that God doesn’t care and “why did this bad thing happen to me” mentality.

We must acknowledge, dear friends, that nobody *deserves* this kind of Love and Mercy and Grace and so when we think about it- even this “General Love that we see demonstrated every single day in a thousand ways- should cause us to turn to God in humble gratitude.



Now keep in mind that all lost people who lived their entire lives as the recipients of this General Love will stand before God on the day of their death and be judged for their unwillingness to repent and to trust in the Savior for eternal life and they will spend eternity in a lake of fire for their rebellious and hard hearts.

So what we can see is that this “General Love” or this “Common Grace” as it is also called, doesn’t save anyone- it doesn’t wash a single sin away and it doesn’t change a single heart. The unsaved people who lived long and full lives under the Mercy of this Common Grace or this General Love will benefit from it only in this life because on the very moment of their death- they will be judged and they will die in their sins. So why does God manifest it?

General Love or Common Grace is simply a manifestation of the “Goodness of God.” You see, the God of the Bible is not only Sovereign and Almighty and Omniscient and Omnipresent and Immutable and Righteous and Holy and Glorious- the God of the Bible is also “Good” and He is Kind and Merciful and even though every single human being on planet earth right now is a wicked sinner who transgresses against God blatantly and repeatedly- God does not instantly judge all men- but gives most of us- space to repent.

The great question that most people have when they really begin to serve God and study the Bible is:

Why does God save *some* but not all?

... but that really isn’t the most important question because underneath that question lies the *implied* statement that we are somehow *worthy* to be saved or that somehow God *owes* us Salvation or that we *deserve* a chance to be saved. But we don’t.

No, the greatest question and the greatest mystery of all is:

Why does God save anyone?

When you consider all that the Bible says about God and how Holy He is and how Powerful He is and how Righteous He is and how Pure He is- and then you consider how sinful and wicked and awful we really are- you can see very quickly that God would be perfectly justified to destroy the universe and everybody in it in a moment of time. And

yet God does not do that. Why? It isn't because God is a sap or that He enjoys being used by people or that He is weak. No, it is because God is Good.

So the great mystery is *not* that God chooses to periodically judge some people with tidal waves or disease or volcanoes or war and they meet God instantly upon sinning against Him. No, the mystery is why God doesn't do *everybody* like that.

And even though it is true that some people seemingly do not have chance after chance to repent and turn from their sins- it is also true that most people have years and years to think about God and eternal life and Jesus Christ and Salvation and Repentance and yet they spend that time spurning God's Love and shaking their fist in God's Face as they do and say and think things that are direct violation of His Word and they turn to God only when they temporarily need something from Him.

And even though these people try to use God repeatedly for their own well being- God still demonstrates His Mercy and His Love and His Kindness towards them and they go on and live years and years and years with seemingly no repercussions for their actions. That is the "General Love of God"- and it truly is a marvel to behold.

But if that is all you know of the Love of God- then you are very weak and poor- because there is *another* kind of Love that God manifests to human beings that makes God's amazing "General Love" pale by comparison and that other kind of love is called, "God's Saving Love".

Saving Love is distributed only to God's elect- those wicked and unworthy sinners upon whom God has chosen to set His Love upon for no other reason other than it pleased Him to do so. And this Love is a far *deeper* Love and a far more *intensive* Love and an infinitely more *beneficial* Love than His General Love and unlike His General Love- God's Saving Love is a Love that is eternal and absolute.

Notice that **Ephesians 5:1&2** speaks of us as not just casual acquaintances of God- but as His "**beloved children**" or as children who are deeply and eternally loved by the Father. This kind of love doesn't just withhold Wrath until the time of death but it actually moves Jesus Christ to voluntarily take our place to receive that Wrath against our sins in our stead and to bring us into the Father's embrace.

Saving Love goes about to seek out unworthy sinners and it overrides their natural and normal inclination to run and hide from God and it forcefully opens their blind eyes and it premeditatedly unstops their deaf ears and it violently takes out of them a stony heart of rebellion and it gives them a heart that is equipped with the gift of faith whereby they may hear the Gospel and believe the Gospel and be saved.

So Saving Love goes way beyond the “General Call” that is given to every soul everywhere to repent and believe and it actually undertakes to save us *effectively* and *infallibly* and *eternally*. Saving Love doesn’t offer eternal life and then stand around and feel bad when we reject it- no- Saving Love does whatever needs to be done to get us forgiven and saved and glorified.

And there is countless Scriptural Proofs for that in both the Old and the New Testaments- just one of them being **Ephesians 1:3- 12** which so impressed me that I painted it on the wall in the back that says:

- 3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,**
- 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love**
- 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,**
- 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**
- 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace**
- 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight**
- 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him**
- 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him**
- 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,**
- 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.**

I mean this is just fantastic! And this grand and glorious Good News ought to literally take our breath away. I can scarcely read this passage in **Ephesians 1** and not fall on my face and begin to clap my hands in absolute amazement of the Saving Love of the King of the Universe towards a wicked sinner like me.

Here the Apostle Paul teaches that this Saving Love of God chose us for adoption as children of God before we did anything good or bad and before we were ever born. In fact it says that God chose us in Him to save us to the utter most:

**... before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.**

And that means that God chose to save us regardless of how bad we were or how evil we have been or how many sins we have committed. Then he goes on to say

#### **4 ... In love**

**5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,**

**6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.**

So the Bible says that God has loved you with a Love that is precious beyond words because it is a Love that He gave you before you were ever born and that moved Him to predestine you to be a child of God in holiness.

So the first concept in Gospel forgiving is remembering this and of being reminded of just how blessed you really are that the God of all Creation has set His Love upon you to forgive you and to save you and to keep you- all the way to Glory.

The concept of God's special Saving Love- theologians call this, "Covenant Love"- goes way beyond God's "General Love". This Covenant Love is a Love that fixed personally and particularly on you as an individual and chose you and pursued you and brought you to Salvation because God means to have you.

And if you ever really get gripped by being loved like that by the Owner and Creator of the Universe- you might not need the other five

concepts in order to forgive others who wrong you- but just in case- the second concept is:

## 2. Christ Gave Himself for Us as a Sacrifice

### **Ephesians 5:2b**

[Christ] gave **Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God...**

Now according to **Ephesians 2:3** the Bible teaches that in our fallen and lost condition- *before* we were saved- we were all “**by nature**” children of wrath. And that phrase “**by nature**” means that you don’t have to learn this; nobody teaches you how to be a child of wrath. And it also means that you don’t “become” a child of wrath at some point later on in your life.

No, to be children of wrath, “by nature” means that being a child of wrath is the *normal* and *natural* function of your nature. So being a child of God’s Wrath is not what you *do*- it is who you *are*. And the Bible teaches that we are all like this from the very moment of conception- in our mother’s womb- not as we grow older and commit various sins.

Dear Friends- we must try to grasp the fact that we are not sinners because we have committed sin. But we sin because we are all sinners- by nature- from the very moment the seed of our father came into contact with the egg of our mother and transferred both the fallen nature of Adam and the very guilt of Adam’s sin to us.

That is who we are “by nature”. And so the *natural* thing for us to do, the *comfortable* thing, the *easy* thing, the *normal* thing that we are most inclined to do and the thing from which we derive our greatest joy is to sin against God. And because that is true- we all *deserve* to perish and be punished in hell for the sins of our thoughts and imaginations and attitudes and tongues and hands and whole bodies. We earn our own damnation every day.

But the Covenant Love of God for us moved God to not only choose us- but to forgive us and to save us at great cost to Himself- namely the horrendous death by Crucifixion of Jesus Christ- Who was God in human flesh. This is what Paul was talking about when he said:

### **Ephesians 5:2b**

[Christ] gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God...

And so when he said,

**"Christ gave Himself up for us"**

... that means: "in our place"- so that we don't have to perish in hell forever . **Galatians 3:13** says:

**He became a curse for us**

Now to feel the full force of this and to make this concept really strong for forgiveness in our lives- we need to realize again that this is not merely a *general* thing that Christ did for everybody. No, **Ephesians 5:25** says:

**Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.**

In other words Christ's gave Himself up to die as a substitute for the Church- not everybody- but the Church. So Jesus manifests this Covenant Love only for His bride. So the way to understand this is that "in love"- God chose you to be His bride and "in love" God lays down His Life for you. So you, *individually* and *particularly* were in view as the goal of both God's loving and God's dying.

So the first concept is that you have been loved with a special saving love. And the second concept is that Christ gave Himself as a Sacrifice to take your place so that you will never perish. And the third concept in our effort to forgive is:

### **3. God Was Fully Satisfied with Christ's Sacrifice**

**Ephesians 5:2b,**

**[Christ] gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**

When Paul calls the death of Jesus for us a "**fragrant aroma**" to God he means that God was fully satisfied with what Christ did. God did not look down and say, "*You can't do that- You can't die for others.*"

*Every person has to bear their own guilt. Don't be so foolish to think You can take the curse and condemnation of another."*

God didn't say that. On the contrary, the Father looked down and took tremendous pleasure in the honor that the Son gave to the Father in obeying His Commission to die for the sins of the world. You see, the Father had sent Jesus to die.

So Christ did not die in vain. God received His Offering. And the Sacrifice of Jesus completely satisfied the Father's Justice. And it removed forever all of God's Wrath and Judgment against those who place their trust in Jesus.

So that's the Category of God's Work before you were born:

- ✓ God loved you with special "Saving or Covenant Love"
- ✓ Christ gave Himself for you as a Sacrifice
- ✓ God was satisfied with Christ's Sacrifice. Your sin debt is fully paid.

## **Category #2: What God Did for Us During Our Lifetime**

The first concept in this second category is:

### **1. God Sovereignly Put Us in a Saving Relationship with Christ**

God didn't *ask* you, He didn't *request*, He didn't simply *try*, He didn't even just *offer* you Salvation. No, God Sovereignly *put* you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. And so now- you are united to Christ like a vine is united to the branch.

**Ephesians 4:32b,**

**... Forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

We are now "in Christ." And that means we are in a relationship with Christ—we are united to Christ—in a way that makes us acceptable to God because Jesus is acceptable to God. How did we get into this relationship? **1Corinthians 1:30** says,

**... by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**

By God's Sovereign “doing” you are in Christ Jesus. God Sovereignly inserted life into our dead hearts and awakened faith in us and put us into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Now listen to me. If God had not Sovereignly done that- put us into a relationship with Jesus- then all his other Work like loving us and giving His Son to die for us and being satisfied with the Son's Sacrifice would have all been in vain. We would have still spurned His Love and gone about to live our lives for our own self- interests.

But thanks be to God that He did it! And that He is doing it all on our behalf. So what we get out of that is that God's Saving Love will not be frustrated in pursuing you for Himself. His Own Personal, Individual, and Particular Saving Love is moving Him to do whatever he has to do to save you and forgive you. Nothing will stop God from saving His elect.

## **2. God Adopted Us and Made Us Rightful Children**

The second concept for Gospel-forgiving that God did for you after you were born is that God adopted you into His family and made you a rightful child of God.

### **Ephesians 5:1**

**Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.**

In other words realize that when God united you to Christ, you became with Christ a child of God and His heir. And this is what God had been planning all along. **Ephesians 1:5** says

**God predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself...**

Now some parents have children accidentally. And if they are cruel and heartless parents- they might even tell their children they didn't want them. But God has no unwanted children. They are all planned- from eternity past- with great expectation and joy. They are all pursued. They are all loved and wanted.

## **3. God Forgave Us for Our Sins**



Finally the third concept in Category #2 for Gospel- forgiving is that God forgave you for your sins.

**Ephesians 4:32,**

**And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."**

So the only way you can justify holding someone else's sins against them is by forgetting these six concepts and beginning to think that you are entitled to an easy life with no pain or suffering or trouble. But by reminding yourself of all the amazing things that Jesus has said and done for you- especially in forgiving you of your sins against God- it will result in the humility that you need to forgive others when they sin against you.

So let's review:

Category 1- What God did for you *before* you were born:

- A. God has loved you with a special, personal, saving, Covenant Love from all eternity.
- B. His Son gave His Life for you to take the place of your Judgment
- C. God was fully satisfied by the Substitute and Sacrifice of the Son. The debt was paid.

Category 2- What God did for you *after* you were born

- A. God Sovereignly brought you to faith and put you in a saving relationship with Christ.
- B. God adopted you into His Family as a child of His Own.
- C. And God forgave all your sins and there is no more eternal condemnation.

And these are the wings John Bunyan had in mind:

Run, John, run, the Law commands  
But gives us neither feet nor hands,  
Far better news the Gospel brings:  
It bids us fly and gives us wings.

And if you believe in your heart that God has done all of this for you and in you- you will be equipped to forgive.

150 years ago- the great Prince of Preachers- Charles Spurgeon- tells how his own heart was set on wing to Forgive by his own Forgiveness by God:

“My life was full of sorrow and wretchedness, believing that I was lost. But, oh, the blessed gospel of the God of grace came to me, and with it a sovereign word, "Deliver him!" And I who was but a minute before as wretched as a soul could be, could have danced for the very merriment of heart. And as the snow fell on my road home from the little house of prayer, I thought every snowflake talked with me and told of the pardon I had found, for I was white as the driven snow through the grace of God.<sup>1</sup>

But years later he added this:

“To be forgiven is such sweetness that honey is tasteless in comparison with it. But yet there is one thing sweeter still, and that is to forgive. As it is more blessed to give than to receive, so to forgive rises a stage higher in experience than to be forgiven.<sup>2</sup>”

Amen. Let's pray

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<sup>1</sup> Volume 15, p. 156, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*

<sup>2</sup> Volume 31, pp. 287f., *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*.