**The Positive Power of Forgiveness: “I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins” - Psalm 130:3-4**

Luther said: **“If that is not true, what does it matter whether God is almighty, or Jesus Christ was born and died and rose again? It is because these things have a bearing upon my forgiveness that they are important to me.”**

I’d like to ask and answer three questions about forgiveness in this message. We will focus on Psalm 130:3-4 to help us answer these three questions.

1. \_\_\_\_ do we need forgiveness?

Verse 3 says, **“If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?”**

Guilt comes when you break the rules and you know it. But the rules don’t change! You can’t get rid of guilt by pretending the rules aren’t there anymore.

We’ve relativized the rules, normalized guilt, but still something is wrong.

Psalm 130 - teaches us that we will never fix ourselves because we lack the inner resources to solve our own problems.

The Bible says the opposite is true: The problem is within us. The answer lies outside of us.

Here is the bottom line: We need forgiveness and we cannot live without it. The one piece of good news is that God doesn’t keep an eye on our sins. If He did, we’d all be in hell already.

2) **What \_\_\_\_\_ do we have of forgiveness?**

The first part of verse 4 brings us some very good news; **“But with you there is forgiveness.”**

**He is \_\_\_\_\_\_ to forgive.**

**He is \_\_\_\_\_\_ to forgive.**

**He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to forgive you.**

Exodus 34:6-7 calls **Him “the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”**

**Isaiah 55:7 “Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on Him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.”**

You want a pardon for all your sins? You’ve got it. You can go in evil and wicked, and you can come out with \_\_\_\_\_ and a full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord. That’s the best deal in the world.

1. **What happens \_\_\_\_\_ we are forgiven?**

The last part of verse 4 has the answer: **“Therefore You are feared.”** Another way to say it is, **“Therefore we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ You.”**

The Bible uses a number of images to describe how God deals with our sins:

**God \_\_\_\_\_ out our sins as a thick cloud (Isaiah 44:22).**

**God forgets our sins and remembers them \_\_ more (Jeremiah 31:34).**

**God puts our sins \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his back (Isaiah 38:17).**

**God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_s our sins in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).**

**God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).**

A long time ago God fixed His gaze on the cross of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are honest enough to \_\_\_\_\_\_ that we are wicked and evil, a stream of mercy flows out from the cross of Christ and our sins are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by His blood. We discover in one shining moment that with God there is forgiveness.

With God there is forgiveness. That’s why the creed says**, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.”** Nothing is more important.

So I come back to the question I asked earlier: Are your sins forgiven and do you know it?

***O for the wonderful love He has promised,***

***Promised for you and for me!***

***Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon,***

***Pardon for you and for me.***

***Then the chorus makes the appeal:***

***Come home, come home,***

***You who are weary, come home;***

***Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,***

***Calling, O sinner, come home.***

Prayer doesn’t save. Only Christ can save. But prayer can be a means of reaching out to the Lord in true saving faith. If you pray a prayer of confession of sin asking Jesus to forgive in faith, Christ will save you. ***You can be sure of that***.

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