



Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 1, 2023

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever struggle with whether or not God really forgives you? Perhaps you know in your head that God forgives you. Your theology tells you that God forgives you, but it just hasn't sunk in yet. The brain has not notified your heart, and so you live with this sense of guilt, of shame, of disappointment by God. Carl Minnagar, the famous psychiatrist, founder of the Minnagar Clinic, said that if he could convince patients in psychiatric hospitals that their sins were forgiven, he said that 75% of the patients could walk out the door the next day. So you see, forgiveness is huge. And I wanna talk with you for the next few moments about forgiveness and knowing that you are freely, fully forgiven by God. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more. Jesus said to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven you rise up and walk. Jesus dying on the cross prayed for his tormentors, Father, forgive them.

Now, a scripture that has helped me a lot in coming to really know and to experience God's forgiveness is Psalm 130, verses 3 and 4 that I now read, "If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you. So that you may be revered." Revered here has a sense of holding an awe of reverence, of worship. There is forgiveness with you, O Lord. So that you are worshipped. Notice how the Psalmist begins. If you O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? The Hebrew word translated mark means to keep watch, to guard. The word has the idea of watchfulness, of vigilance, of someone who is keeping watch over a city, guarding a city. And the Psalmist is saying here that God does not keep close watch for our sins, God does not take a strict account, God does not keep records of our sins, so as to judge us. God is not like Santa Clause who we sang about a few weeks ago who's making his a list, checking it twice, going to see who's been naughty and nice. The psalmist says that God is not like that. Yes, God is all knowing. He does see our sins, but God is not marking our sins, God is not keeping record of our sins to condemn us, and that's huge, and I hope that gives you real peace. If your O Lord should mark iniquities, who could stand? The Hebrew word translated stand, it's a legal word. It's right out of the court room, it means to stand acquitted in a court of law. Rather than to sink down in condemnation and fear, we stand before God, because God does not keep track of our sins to condemn us, we can stand with heads held high in the very presence of God.

If God gave me what I deserved, I could not stand before him, I could not survive, but then the psalmist adds, but there is forgiveness with you. There is forgiveness with you, so that you may



water from rock

be revered. Now, here's something important, and that the Hebrew word translated forgiveness is a special word for forgiveness in the Bible that is used only of God forgiving us. Not our forgiving others. You see, God forgives you and me in a way that is totally unlike the way that we humans go about forgiving, and the text literally reads, there is the forgiveness with you. The forgiveness.

In other words, this is the real thing, this is the real forgiveness... Human forgiveness is important, yes. But it's God's forgiveness that counts. There is the forgiveness with you O Lord. So we come before God, not trying to justify ourselves, not trying to prove that we haven't sinned, not trying to explain away our sins, but we come for forgiveness, that is... Psalm 103 says, as far as the east is from the west, so far as God removed our transgressions from us. You see, God does not mark our iniquities, God is not keeping score, he is not keeping track of our sins to judge us or condemn us. But there is forgiveness with you so that you may be revered. You see the results of God so forgiving you in me, of God forgetting us so completely, the result is that we revere him, we hold him in awe, we worship, we love him for his great forgiveness of us. No one worships God like those who know how much they are forgiven...

What Jesus says in Luke Chapter 7, Verse 47, that he or she who is forgiven much loves much. I mean, it's hard to love someone, it's hard to worship someone if you think that that person is keeping track of your sins, keeping track of your failures to condemn you, but God forgives us all our sins because Jesus has taken on himself all of our sins, and we have taken his righteousness. God has made us new creatures in Christ. 1 John 2:2 says that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And that's why we so love God, because He is forgiven as he has put us right with Him, Corrie tin Boom, the great Holocaust survivor, in her book, Triumph for the Lord, she says that her favorite mental picture is of God throwing all of our sins into the sea that when we confess our sins, God hurls all of those sins into the deepest ocean, and God puts a sign out there on the ocean that says no fishing allowed. That when God forgives us, we would not have to keep dredging up person wallowing in our guilt, but living in the freedom in the joy that Jesus came to give us. I've enjoyed talking with you about God's forgiveness and the joy that He gives us and knowing we are fully freely forgiven by him.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.