

April 14, 2019

Forgiveness: Sin's Double Cure

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

Not long before she died in 1988, in a moment of surprising candor on television, Marghanita Laski, one of our best-known secular humanists and novelists, said: "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."

John Stott
British Anglican pastor and theologian

I asked a few people if they'd ever forgiven anyone and what it felt like. They gave me answers so pious I knew they'd never done it... Forgiveness is a brutal mathematical transaction done with fully engaged faculties. It's my pain instead of yours. I eat the debt. I absorb the misery I wanted to dish out on you, and you go scot-free.

Andrée Seu Peterson
journalist

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.
Hebrews 9:22

Mercy and forgiveness must be free and unmerited to the wrongdoer. If the wrongdoer has to do something to merit it, then it isn't mercy, but forgiveness always comes at a cost to the one granting the forgiveness...Forgiveness means bearing the cost instead of making the wrongdoer do it, so you can reach out in love to seek your enemy's renewal and change. Forgiveness means absorbing the debt of sin yourself.

Tim Keller
Presbyterian pastor

"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."
Isaiah 43:25

I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.
Jeremiah 33:8

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.
1 John 2:12

"To him [Jesus Christ] all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
Acts 10:43

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
Matthew 26:27-28

Forgiveness, reader, is, I think, something very much like hope and love, a powerful, wonderful thing.

And a ridiculous thing, too.

Isn't it ridiculous, after all, to think that a son could forgive his father for beating the drum that sent him to his death? Isn't it ridiculous to think that a mouse could ever forgive anyone for such perfidy?

But still, here are the words Despereaux Tilling spoke to his father. He said, "I forgive you, Pa."

Kate DiCamillo
The Tale of Despereaux

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9
Luke 19

People: **Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest!**

Leader: Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is
unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and
shall declare your mighty acts.

Psalm 145

People: **I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.**

We praise our King forever

"Jesus, Everlasting King"



Je - sus, ev - er - last - ing King, ac - cept the tri - bute which we bring;
ac - cept the well - de - served re - nown and wear our prais - es as your crown.

1. O send your Spir - it to im - part
2. The glad - ness of re - demp - tion's day:
3. May ev - 'ry time of wor - ship see
4. O that the months would roll a - way

rest and re - pent - ance to our hearts,
our hearts would wish it long to stay,
your grace re - vealed more rich and free,
and bring the cor - o - na - tion day;

like the dear hour, when from a - bove,
nor let our faith for - sake its hold,
till we are raised to sing your name
the King of grace shall fill the throne

we first re - ceived your pledge of love.
nor com - forts sink, or love grow cold.
at the great sup - per of the Lamb.
with all his Fa - ther's glo - ries on.

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, palm branches were laid on a pathway before a victorious king or other leader. Palm Sunday calls us to rejoice in our victorious King who has come to us.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

Our King comes to us, but we do not seek after him

Luke 10

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

Psalms 53

God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God... there is none who does good, not even one.

We confess our rejection of our King

Leader: Gracious and merciful God, you have said that:
You bless those who are poor in spirit, acknowledging their need of you, giving them the kingdom of heaven.

People: **But we have been proud in spirit, inflated with pride in our own strength; we have forgotten how much we need you.**

Leader: You have said that you bless those who mourn for their sin, for you will comfort them.

People: **But we have not mourned over our sins, instead we have hardened ourselves so that we are unaware of the sin in our own lives and the grief it causes you.**

Leader: You have said that you bless those who are gentle and lowly, for you will give them the whole earth.

People: **But we have valued toughness over gentleness. We have too often chosen to be concerned with ourselves rather than with our brothers and sisters and neighbors. Like the prodigal son, we want to satisfy ourselves rather than you, our Father in heaven.**

Leader: You have said that you bless those who hunger and thirst for you, for you will satisfy them.

People: **But we have hungered after the pleasures, prestige, and possessions of this world. We have turned from you by choosing to satisfy our desires instead of seeking you.**

Leader: Lord, you have said that the wages of sin is death, but your gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

People: **O God, our sin fills our cup with your wrath and judgment for we deserve nothing else. But in your grace you, Christ Jesus, have taken that poisoned cup from us and on the cross you drank it all. Now our cup overflows with your love. How glorious to know that it is not our life, not our death, but yours alone upon which our eternity rests. Amen.**

When we hear what God requires of us we are faced with the fact that we have not done and can not do what he requires. So for our worship to be honest it must acknowledge our failure. This leaves us no other hope but his grace and mercy.

God declares our sins, our rejections of him, are forgiven according to the riches of his grace lavished upon us in our crucified King

We have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. And the life we now live in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us...In God we have redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Galatians 2
Ephesians 1

We rejoice in the love of our King that brings us life

“Amazing Love”



1. My Lord, what love is this that paid so dear - ly, that
 2. And so they watched him die, des - pised, re - ject - ed. But,
 3. And now this love of Christ shall flow like riv - ers. Come



I, the guil - ty one, may go free? A - maz - ing love, o what
 oh, the blood he shed flowed for me!
 wash your guilt a - way; live a - gain!



sac - ri - fice; the Son of God giv'n for me! My debt he paid and my



death he died, that I might live, that I might live!

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 Romans 5

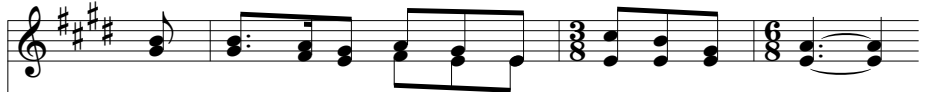
"His Mercy is More"



1. What love could re - mem - ber no wrongs we have done?
2. What pa - tience would wait as we con - stant - ly roam?
3. What rich - es of kind - ness He lav - ished on us.



Om - nis - cient, all - know - ing, He counts not their sum.
What Fa - ther so ten - der is call - ing us home?
His blood was the pay - ment, His life was the cost.



Thrown in - to a sea with - out bot - tom or shore.
He wel - comes the weak - est, the vil - est, the poor.
We stood 'neath a debt we could nev - er af - ford.



Our sins, they are man-y—His mer-cy is more. Praise the Lord,



His mer-cy is more. _____ Strong-er than dark - ness,



new eve-ry morn; our sins, they are man - y—His mer-cy is more.



You cannot sin so much as God can forgive. If it comes to a pitched battle between sin and grace, you shall not be so bad as God shall be good. I will prove it to you. You can only sin as a man, but God can forgive as a God. You sin as a finite creature, but the Lord forgives as the infinite Creator
Charles Spurgeon

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

¹³And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Colossians 2:13-15

Sermon

Forgiveness: Sin's Double Cure

50¢ Words: The Vocabulary of Faith

Rev. Per Almquist

advent

coming

Immanuel

God with us

incarnation

veiled in flesh the
Godhead see

Messiah/Christ

appointed,
empowered, sent

Savior

the great rescuer

epiphany

God revealed

love

Christ died for us

hope

assured confidence

grace

love undeserved

sin

not the way it's
supposed to be

redemption

ransomed

atonement

setting things right

propitiation

wrath lovingly satisfied

reconciliation

enemies no longer

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

God draws us in to his triumph at the cross of Jesus Christ, making it our triumph as we celebrate the Lord's Supper

We celebrate God's free grace to us in Jesus Christ by observing the Lord's Supper each Sunday. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized followers of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup you are acknowledging that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. If you have any doubts about your participation, please speak to one of the elders after the service.

Clothed with our
flesh he
vanquished death
and sin together
that the victory
and triumph might
be ours.
John Calvin

"Rock of Ages"

Rock of Ages, cleft for me
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure,
cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

Not the labors of my hands
can fulfil thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears for ever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the Fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyelids close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

"Before the Throne of God Above"



1. Be - fore the throne of God a - bove I have a strong, a per - fect
 2. When Sa - tan tempts me to des - pair, and tells me of the guilt with-
 3. Be - hold him there! the ris - en Lamb, my per - fect, spot - less Right - cous-



plea, a great High Priest whose name is Love, who e - ver lives and pleads for
 in, up - ward I look and see him there, who made an end to all my
 ness, the great un - change - a - ble I AM, the King of Glo - ry and of



me. My name is gra - ven on his hands, my name is writ - ten on his
 sin. Be - cause the sin - less Sav - ior died, my sin - ful soul is count - ed
 grace! One with him - self I can - not die, my soul is pur - chased by his



heart; I know that while in heav'n he stands, no tongue can bid me thence de -
 free; for God, the just, is sat - is - fied, to look on him and par - don
 blood; my life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ, my Sav - ior and my

Last time: *DS al fine*



part, no tongue can bid me thence de - part.
 me, to look on him and par - don me.
 God, with Christ, my Sav - ior and my God.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4

Just as the people of Jerusalem laid down palms and their cloaks before the coming of the King, we lay down before that same King our tithes and offerings to acknowledge his coming in triumph

We give our offerings to God as a public demonstration of our faith, putting our money where our mouths are. In this action we show what we claim, that our lives are organized around God and lived for him instead of ourselves.

The King comes to us that we may come to him, so we approach his throne of grace with confidence coming to him in prayer

*During this time we live in faith, trusting in the power of his grace, placing our lives and our church in his hands.
We ask that he would work in us and through us for his glory.*

Our main goal in prayer is to delve into a deeper relationship with the God who loves us, not to control our environment or our circumstances.

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We praise our King who triumphed over our sin

"Lift High the Name of Jesus"



1. Lift high the name of Je - sus, of Je - sus our King. Make
 2. Lift high the name of Je - sus, of Je - sus our Lord. His
 3. Lift high the name of Je - sus, of Je - sus our Light. No



5 known the pow - er of his grace, the beau - ty of his peace. Re -
 pow'r in us is great - er than, is great - er than this world. To
 oth - er name on earth can save, can raise a soul to life. He



9 mem - ber how his mer - cy reached and we cried out to him. He
 share the rea - son for our hope, to serve with love and grace, that
 o - pens up our eyes to see the har - vest he has grown. We



13 lift - ed us to so - lid ground, to free - dom from our sin. Oh
 all who see him shine through us might bring the Fa - ther praise.
 la - bor in his fields of grace as he leads sin - ners home.



17 sing my soul and tell all he's done 'till the earth and heavens are filled with his glo - ry.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!
 Psalm 72

We receive the promise of our King who has come

Leader: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

People: Amen

Please stay and join us for a time of refreshment and enjoying each other's company.

This is a time to share in life together as the gospel calls us as we reconnect with those we know and as we meet someone new.

Revelation 1

500 WORDS

THE VOCABULARY OF FAITH

revelation

God spoke

inspiration

God-breathed

trinity

3-1-1

holiness

separation

righteousness

the way it should be

sovereignty

ultimate kingship

providence

kingship in action

kingdom

living the reign

salvation

ultimate rescue

election

God's choosing

predestination

the love before time

calling

lovingly summoned

regeneration

made alive with Christ

repentance

turning

faith

confident trust

justification

made right

adoption

beloved children

sanctification

making the holy holy

perseverance

held secure

glorification

the full enjoyment of God

advent

coming

Immanuel

God with us

incarnation

veiled in flesh
the Godhead see

Messiah/Christ

appointed, empowered,
sent

Savior

the great rescuer

epiphany

God revealed

love

Christ died for us

hope

assured confidence

grace

love undeserved

sin

not the way
it's supposed to be

redemption

ransomed

atonement

setting things right

propitiation

wrath lovingly satisfied

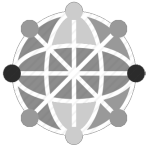
reconciliation

enemies no longer



Welcome to Free Grace

We are a broken church full of broken people. We know we need God's free grace. Some of us have accepted this grace, some are exploring what it's all about. All of us are still trying to understand it. We are a church that seeks to proclaim this free grace of God with both our words and our lives. Not satisfied with simply talking about it, we want to live it out. We invite you to come, explore, and live God's free grace with us.



Our Connections

Free Grace is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a family of churches that seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Our Leadership

Free Grace is lead by her elders, men called by God and set apart by the church to care and lead her as individual members, families, and as a whole. Our elders are:

Rev. Per Almquist (pastor)
Kevin Kidd
Ken Morris



Credits

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Dan Crawford, *voice*; Meredith Stevens, *voice*; Shane Stevens, *percussion*; Beth Almquist, *piano*

"Jesus, Everlasting King" ©2003 detuned radio music. Words: Isaac Watts, 1707, alt. Music: Matthew S. Smith, 2003.

"Amazing Love" ©1989 Make Way Music (ASCAP). Words & Music: Graham Kendrick, 1989.

"His Mercy is More" ©2015 Messenger Hymns (BMI) Getty Music ASCAP Designee (ASCAP) (admin. by Music Services, www.musicservices.org/) Love Your Enemies Publishing (ASCAP). Words and music: Matt Papa and Matt Boswell, 2015.

"Rock of Ages" ©1985 Music Anno Domini. Words: Augustus Toplady, 1776 alt. by Thomas Cotterill, 1815. Music: James Ward, 1984.

"Before the Throne of God Above" ©1997 Sovereign Grace Worship. Words: Charitie Lees Bancroft, 1863. Music: Vikki Cook, 1977.

"Lift High the Name of Jesus" ©2013 Getty Music Publishing (BMI), Alletrop Music (BMI), and Fionán de Barra. Words and Music: Keith & Kristyn Getty, Ed Cash, and Fionán de Barra, 2013.

Mr. Head stood very still and felt the action of mercy touch him again but this time he knew that there were no words in the world that could name it. He understood that it grew out of agony, which is not denied to any man and which is given in strange ways to children. He understood it was all a man could carry into death to give his Maker and he suddenly burned with shame that he had so little of it to take with him. He stood appalled, judging himself with the thoroughness of God, while the action of mercy covered his pride like a flame and consumed it. He had never thought himself a great sinner before but he saw now that his true depravity had been hidden from him lest it cause him despair. He realized that he was forgiven for sins from the beginning of time, when he had conceived in his own heart the sin of Adam, until the present, when he had denied poor Nelson. He saw that no sin was too monstrous for him to claim as his own, and since God loved in proportion as He forgave, he felt ready at that instant to enter Paradise.

Flannery O'Connor
The Artificial Nigger

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory