

# Unconditional Forgiveness

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, brothers, sisters and friends, especially if you're joining with us, to old friends too who are with us today. We ask that together we'd know of the Lord's blessing as we turn to his word. There are, as always, intimation sheets at the back door just to highlight some of intimations.
- As always, God willing, on Thursday in the hall next door, at 7 o'clock, our prayer meeting, just a reminder that it's open to everyone. Please do come along to hear more of God's word.
- And we're very thankful that last week we had Thomas Davis. It's a different evening for us, a lecture evening. We hope to have more of these in the future with men coming who are specialists in areas to come share the giftings God has given them.
- And we're thankful to Reverend Davis for his sharing with us last Thursday. God willing, this coming Saturday, our men's breakfast. We took a month off in September for communions.
- We're back in action now. So God willing, this coming Saturday at 9.30. Again, every man in the congregation and those missing today, you're welcome to come along.
- [ 1 : 0 7 ]     Food will be bought. Plenty to go around. Plenty of space on the table. Plenty of overflow in the sitting room. Come for a chat. Come for a roll. And again, speak to some of the men who have been before.
- Conversations are varied. And it's amazing what you'll learn about people sitting beside you at a table over a cup of coffee. So that's next Saturday at 9.30. Come for as long as you can. If it's half an hour, ten minutes, the whole time, come and stay.
- Another thing to note is there's a new website. It's up. It exists. It's online just now. For those of you who are online, it's not quite the finished article yet.
- And I probably shall wait in a few weeks. But the sermon part is there. So it made no sense to wait any longer. So it's not the most beautiful yet. We'll work on that. But it's functional.
- And you have an archive of all the sermons. And you can download these sermons and listen to them again if you so wish. So that's online now. The website address is on the sheet.
- [ 2 : 0 6 ]     But it's very simple. It's just northtolstafreechurch.uk. So northtolstafreechurch.uk. We'll be back communion services next week. That's on the list. See who's preaching and back.
- One other thing to note for us perhaps today is there's a preaching conference this coming Thursday in the MA Hall. It's at 10am to 3.30.
- That's for anyone who is interested in preaching. Now, if you come along to it, it's not to say you're putting yourself forward to be a lay preacher. But men, if you've even thought or want to know more about preaching, this is for you.
- There's David Strain coming. Dr. David Strain from America. Well, from Scotland. But now in America, he's coming. And he's speaking at the conference for us. More details are to come along. Just let me know.

And I'll tell you the details. Today we're praying for Govan. Govan Free Church. They have recently inducted Reverend David McPherson. Now, we give praise to God for the good news of Govan having a minister.

[ 3 : 09 ] That good while for them. And it's encouraging to see the Lord blessing the work in that area. Also, give thanks to God for the big free rally which was held yesterday.

I've seen some reports online and by all accounts, a busy day. A good few hundred children there, I think. And a day where God is glorified. And poor Thomas Davis was speaking of that too.

It's been a very busy few days for him. And our October opportunity. Every month we have a thing to do or to pray about. We're basing our opportunity on what Thomas shared of us last Thursday.

So our opportunity this month is to think and to pray together about how we can use our comfort zone, as Thomas taught us, to create gospel sharing opportunities.

How can you, using the skills and the chances God gives you, share the gospel to those around you? We are here to worship our God.

[ 4 : 09 ] This day we can do so. First of all, in Sing Psalms and Psalm 66. Sing Psalms, Psalm 66. Sing Psalms, Psalm 66.

That's on page 83 of a church Bible, church psalm book, sorry. Psalm 66 on page 83. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 5.

Psalm 66, verses 1 down to verse 5. Shout loud with joy to God. All earth your chorus raise. Sing loud the honour of his name and glorious make his praise.

Speak thus to God the Lord. How great your works of power. So overwhelming is your might that foes before you cower. Psalm 66, verses 1 to 5.

To God's praise. All earth may be mine and glorious make his praise. Here we have the centre of the hills. Say our glory to God, and Qi■■■■ brings thanks to the■■■■ possible. Thank you God. To God. All earth may be poor to other ways you can see.

[ 5 : 29 ] and glorious sake is peace. Speak fast to the Lord, how great your works of power.

O our heavenly, yes, your might, that force before you come.

O let thou come to you, facing at the pure pain.

They never skates to set them free the glory of your name.

And see what God has done this mighty works of old.

[ 6 : 56 ] His peace to our spirit, and grace thou art still to be old.

Boys and girls, and teens. Good morning, morning, morning.

What's we doing? Good morning. Good morning. Oh man. I got some miserable. Good morning.

How are we all? We all good. One sec. There we go. I'll get here. So, oh, one thing actually.

I should be on the sheets. So hopefully, waiting for some forms to come back, we've been promising you guys that you fellowship for ages. So it'll be from P7 upwards, sorry guys. P7 upwards, P7 all the way to Essex.

[ 8 : 03 ] I hope to start that, if the forms come back, by the end of October. So we'll get more information. But there'll be a time in the evening with some games, some learning, and hopefully some pizza.

Probably pizza too. So that'll be end of October. P7 and older. Okay. So, this is something very special, unique. What is it? Sandbook.

Something strange about the Sandbook though. At the peak, investigation. It's very, very obvious, but also very, very hard to see. Something on the outside of it maybe. Pass it along, see what you notice.

So who lives in the months? There is Emma, and there is me, and there's also Cherry. Cherry. And Cherry's now, how old is she now?

Eight months? Nine months? It's very logical, a wee bit bigger. And this book has something to do with Cherry when she was much younger. This is Emma's Sandbook. Emma's kept the Sandbook nice and clean and tidy for a few years now.

[ 9 : 02 ] There's something outside of the Sandbook you might notice. It's not too bad. It looked much worse at the time. On the side, on the edge, on the spine of it, on the back of it.

It's a wee bit ruffled, doesn't it? Look, wee bits of bumps and grooves. Almost like wee marks made by a wee mouth by a wee dog. Almost like wee teeth marks in the Bible.

So when Cherry was a puppy, we were trusting her, and she was doing really well. She hadn't done anything wrong. She was doing everything properly. And one day, she went very quiet in the sitting room.

Very quiet. And we thought, oh, she must be playing with her toys. As puppies do. But we found Cherry. And where was she? Well, that had fallen underneath the table.

And Cherry was, thankfully, a very small mouth nibbling away at the side of Emma's Sandbook. And it's a very small bit, isn't it? It's not bad at all. We found it. It was soaking wet.

[ 9 : 59 ] All her slobber, all her teeth marks, chewing Emma's Sandbook. Now, what did we do? Did we say, right Cherry, you're being kicked out of the house forever now. We can't stand.

You're going to live in the shed now because you're a bad dog. Because you chewed the Sandbook. Is she now living in the shed forever? No. Okay. Is she now banned from coming near us ever again?

Do we say, Cherry, because you're such a bad, bad puppy, because you chewed that book, which Emma loved to bits, are you now banned from ever going near us ever again? No, of course not. Are we still giving her food and treats, too many treats, and a bit too much love?

Of course we are. Why? Because we love her, don't we? Because she's our puppy. Okay, in a word. Test your brains here. What word can we say? So when we saw Cherry eating that or chewing that Sandbook, we were quite sad.

We weren't quite annoyed. That's okay. She did a bad thing and she was ruining something. What's one word you say? If I give you a blank sentence. We something Cherry, even though she did that bad thing.

[ 11 : 08 ] We, which one, forgave. We forgave Cherry, didn't we? We said, oh, you've done a bad thing, and it wasn't good. Now the Sandbook is ruined. Not really, but it could have been ruined.

Also, with a Sandbook, I couldn't find it because it was gone. She also ate my sermon notes one day. I remember coming, we had Cherry for maybe a month, and I came to preach one day. I couldn't have my sermon notes.

They were in bits. And it was very hard to preach that day because I couldn't see some of the notes. It was last minute. It was half eleven. I realized, oh no, she hasn't chewed anything since. But anyway, we could have said, you know, Cherry, you've ruined it.

You know, why'd you do that for? But we forgave her, didn't we? Because we love her. Now, later on, when you guys go to Sunday school, we'll be looking and we're doing the ABCs of what it means to be a Christian.

The ABCs of believing in Jesus. And today we're on the letter F. And we're looking at forgiveness. The Bible says how God forgives us. Now, we do something much worse, don't we, than chewing Sam books.

[ 12 : 08 ] God says that we actually go against him. And he is perfect. He is all good. And quite often, we're not good. Quite often, though, we feel like Cherry. We do things that are bad, that are wrong.

Mums and dads, guys and granddads too. But God says, because I love you, I see what you're doing. I see the bad thing you've done. But because I love you, I will forgive you.

And I will forgive you because what Jesus has done. He came and he took on the punishment for you. And because of all that, I can now say, I love you. I forgive you. And I won't ignore you.

I won't kick you away. In fact, I will love you even more. Next time you see a dog chewing something or see something that's been chewed by a dog. Like Emma's poor psalm book.

My poor sermon notes. Just think, even though we do bad things. The Bible says if we believe in Jesus. And boys and girls, you guys know this. But mums and dads forget. If we believe in Jesus and trust in Jesus.

[ 13 : 06 ] God says we can have full forgiveness. He can say, yes, I see a bad thing you've done. But I won't ignore you. I won't hate you. I will show you love.

And I will take you closer to myself. We pray. Lord, thank you for the good news we have of forgiveness. Even though we find ourselves having done bad things and said bad things and thought bad things.

Even though you are perfect and we are not. We thank you that in Jesus we have forgiveness. That because of what he has done we can know that we are clean.

And we are made perfect through him if we trust in him. Thank you, Lord, for the boys and the girls. Thank you that they are here. Thank you for our teens. Thank you for them coming to this time together. Pray, Lord, for Sunday school teachers.

Look after them today and give them the words to say. We thank you for mums and dads and granddads and great-granddies and great-granddads. And everyone here and everyone at home who loves and looks after the boys and the girls.

[ 14 : 07 ] We ask you to be with them. And they would also come to know themselves fully. Of the hope and forgiveness that we find in Jesus. Ask all these things knowing that Jesus looks after us.

That he keeps us. That he loves us. In his name and for his sake. Amen. I'm also down one slip or two.

But I didn't take that in today. It's a bit too chewed to bits. When the boys and girls go off, we can now join together in a word of prayer. We thank you, Lord, for our time of worship. Help us.

Help us, Heavenly Father, to draw together today in a mindset. In a heart. In a way that glorifies you. We come today confessing that at times we come to times of worship.

And places like this. And times like this. And we are so distracted. We perhaps come out of mere pattern. This is what we do each week. So we're here doing it once more.

[ 15 : 18 ] Or we come begrudgingly. We come for the sake of others and the sake of loved ones. We come to uphold our traditions. And for many of us here, we come because we love you.

But at times we come, yes, we love you. But at times we come and we find ourselves so distracted by so many things. Take our gathering today. Take our hearts today.

Hold us together, we ask. And bring our minds and our hearts to a place of peace. We come just now admitting and confessing that there are many things which have stolen and which continue to steal and attack our peace this week.

Pray just now, Lord, for your people here today. Those who love you. Those who seek to serve you. Help us to become around your word. Help us to be encouraged by it. To be challenged by it. To be reminded by it.

To be of the great love. The great forgiveness. But also the great cost of that forgiveness. Help us today for those of us here who are, as of yet, cannot say that they know Jesus.

[ 16 : 21 ] Who as of yet cannot say that they love Jesus. But who are here with many questions. Who are here seeking to know more and to grow in our knowledge. Who are seeking perhaps after Jesus.

Who are saying and who are wondering to themselves. Can they be saved? We ask that as we hear once more from your living word. You would reveal to them the gospel truth. And the gospel hope.

That all who come to Jesus and cry out. That forgiveness is theirs. Truly theirs. Through his finished work. Thank you, Lord, for the boys and the girls.

Thank you for the teens of Sunday school. We thank you they come out each week. We thank you for their faithfulness. We thank you for their diligence. As we hear reports from the Sunday school classes. That they work hard.

That they serve you well. That even in their young days. They seem to be asking the big questions. And engaging with big topics. We thank you that they seem to be growing in their knowledge.

[ 17 : 22 ] And we pray also growing in their hearts. Thank you again genuinely once more for the Sunday school teachers. Sunday school teachers. Both present. But also Sunday school teachers of years ago.

Still in this congregation. Who loved and looked after many generations of children. Many of whom have grown up. And we pray and we trust the gospel seed was planted.

And as we're reminded on Thursday. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. We pray. Our hearts.

Move. We pray. We pray. At Rescue Journal Supreme. Through you. Should. In the photo catalog has added. goes out and you will accomplish your purposes. Thank you just now for those under the healing of your word here today. Pray just now for those who are not with us, those for reasons of ill health, those for reasons of mobility and of age and other various reasons. You know the full story of our lives. We pray just now for them, those who would desire to be here today but who are kept away or who are often kept away. We ask you to be with them, look after them and draw alongside them and afford them a special sense of your presence. Remember today especially as we think of ourselves, we thank you for the past week. We thank you for all we heard on Thursday evening from Reverend Davis. We pray you bless him especially this communion weekend as he has undertaken so many duties as he is present for his own communion weekend today but also yesterday as he attended and spoke at the rally, the camp rally. We ask you bless him and he would know his ministry is received well. Thank you for all we heard on Thursday. We pray for the work of evangelism in our midst.

As we're reminded you've given every one of us skills and talents, every one of us the ability to somehow share the gospel where we are and who we are with. Give us Lord then that wisdom to lay hold in every chance to come to you just now with the open prayer, the honest prayer. Lord lead me, Lord show me, Lord guide me, show me my skills, show me who I may share these skills with, show me who I may come alongside, show me how and who I can share the gospel with and trust that you are able to take our small words, our small efforts and multiply them for your glory. We do pray for North Tulsa just now, for every home, every family, every individual from McGlenn to Gary represented here and those who are never here and those who don't come near this place, every single individual. We bring them just now to the throne of grace. Those who have no knowledge of you, pray they come under heavy conviction of sin, come under heavy realization that there is a God who made them. You would draw them to this place and use your people, use us as means for that throwing. Pray just now for your people in North Tulsa. Help us to be faithful witnesses, both publicly and privately, that our lifestyles, our words, our conduct themselves would be appealing to those around us. Let's pray for ourselves, we're mindful that we are part of a worldwide church.

[ 20 : 52 ] Do pray for all that took place yesterday with the Big Free Rally. We thank you Lord for many, many children and teens who attended yesterday. As your word went out there once more, that they'd be blessed by it. Thank you for safety and travel and pray Lord for safety as he returned home last night. We remember also the good news we have heard recently of a new ministry starting in Govan. We do pray for the Reverend David McPherson. Pray for him as he returns home once more to serve you in this way and in this place. Look after him and keep him and his family. I pray just now for the congregation in Govan who have laboured for many years and seen much fruit for their labour. We can ask you to continue to bless them in the same way. We ask remembering the ongoing vacancies in our own presbytery. Pray just now for Stornoway and Shawbost. Pray soon for Calanish and for Park. As we pray Lord for these vacancies, we pray for those who are intermoditors over these vacancies. We also give you glory.

We also remember South Uist also. We give you praise for North Uist. As we hear, as we see the ministries beginning once more and as we see the minister and his family settling into life there, we ask you bless them and be with them. As we pray for ourselves and our own nation, we remember the gospel is worldwide. We thank you ongoing mission across this world today. We thank you for the many thousands and millions of unknown, unnamed to us Christians, brothers and sisters who serve you faithfully, who live the gospel, who die knowing they have served you, who go into your eternal rest, to go into glory. We will never see them nor know them this side of glory, but we love them as brothers and sisters. The many millions of different cultures and colours, languages and races and together we make up the one church. We thank you that we have one saviour who died for his one church, once and for all, making that one final sacrifice for sin so that we would, as one body, be united together for all time.

Until we see these days of eternal glory, help us to be faithful in our own mission field here, our homes, our workplaces in North Tolstice as a whole. Help us to be faithful, help us to be full of joy, gospel joy, as we see and as we understand that you are working in North Tolstice.

As we see as a word goes out that the seeds are being sown week after week after week. And although we see perhaps little impact or little result, give us, we ask that gospel-minded patience to understand where the seeds are being sown. Help us, Lord, then to be faithful. Help us to be full of that gospel optimism, that gospel optimism that says we trust in a God who is able. And our heavenly Father, you are able. Help us to come around your word today as we deal with the forgiveness of our sins, to be humbled, to be laid low as we remember the great pain, the great cost of sin, but also to be humbled with love and joy as we hear once more of the great plan of salvation, the great plan of reconciliation that you enacted on our behalf. Help us then to focus on your word today. Pray just now for those over us locally and nationally. Pray just now for our leaders, both locally and nationally. Pray that we'd have a prosperous country, a prosperous nation, but we pray more than that, we'd be a nation that glorifies you, that sings your praises. Until we see these days of blessing, we ask you would lead our people well, lead our leaders well, both our first minister, prime minister and king, we'd be mindful of a king over them who is highly exalted and who they are answerable to. Look after us, Lord, and keep us. As we dwell in safety here today, give us that sense of urgency, that sense of zeal.

Perhaps we still have the freedom and the ability to preach the gospel to help us to make the most of it. Ask all these things, relying on a glorious risen savior, who now stands at your right hand, making that constant intercession for us, who will one day come and bring us home to himself.

[ 25 : 49 ] That that day comes, we trust and we love, and we ask all these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Let's read in God's word, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, that's on page 908.

Page 908. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, page 908.

Let's read together God's word. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made of hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.

For while we are still in this tent, we groan at being burdened, not that we be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so as what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the spirit as a guarantee. So, we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.

[ 27 : 21 ] For we walk by faith and not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body than at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

For what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance, and not about what is in the heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, and therefore all have died.

And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

- [ 28 : 43 ] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
- That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against him, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Again, in Sing Psalms now, this time Psalm 25.
- [ 29 : 47 ] Sing Psalms, Psalm 25. Sing verses 10 down to verse 17. Sing Psalms, Psalm 25.
- That's on page 30. Psalm 25 on page 30, verse 10. To those who keep his covenant laws, he shows his love consistently.
- For your name's sake, O Lord my God, forgive my great iniquity. Psalm 25, verses 10 to 17. To God's praise. Psalm 25, verse 10.
- Forgive my great iniquity. Forgive my great iniquity. Forgive my great iniquity.
- Forgive my great iniquity. For your name are those who fear the Lord. He'll teach to them the chosen way.
- [ 31 : 28 ] That they may prosper, that they may prosper, their lives, their children in the land will stay.
- O friends, I'll go to the earth's name, with them, with them, his love, and they will share.
- My eyes alone is on the Lord. He'll flee my feet from every sin.
- Turn to me, Lord, show me your face. I suffer pain and loneliness.
- that God will fall. My heart have grown. deliver me from thy grace.
- [ 33 : 02 ] your face. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's turn back now for a short time to the chapter we had. 2 Corinthians chapter 5.
- 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Looking at that well-known section for us. Verses 17 down to verse 19.
- For a text we can focus on the first half of verse 19. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- Remember, we're carrying on our series, looking at the Gospel, ABCs, and we'll do today and we'll do next week. We'll take a break after next week. We've got quite far.
- We've got to G the next week. So we're doing a good chunk of the alphabet. Take a few weeks off and then start again after a few weeks. But we're at F today.
- [ 34 : 12 ] And really, the reality is, there's only one word that comes to mind. Think of who our God is and who the Gospel is. What we have to know about Jesus.
- It's forgiveness, isn't it? It's forgiveness. And we often hear, don't we, about these three simple words that are so needed so often, but are so hard to say.
- And sometimes, if we're honest, they're very hard to hear. I forgive you. I forgive you. Harder sometimes to even mean when you say it.
- I forgive you. And you think how much hurt would be helped, or sometimes even cured, if we heard that from someone who has wronged us.



Someone came to us and said, will you forgive me? Will you forgive me what I've done to you? Will you forgive me for what I've said to you? Will you forgive me for this or that? Or that? And for us to say to them, I forgive you.

[ 35 : 20 ] Perhaps for us, that feels impossible for some situations. Now, I don't know your situations. I don't know who has wronged you, or how they've wronged you.

And it's not for me to say that today. Perhaps some hear you've been wronged in ways that are awful, that are dark, that are grim. And it's hard.

It's hard to say, I forgive you. And we'll see that in a second, all that means for us. But one thing we can say is, forgiveness is one of the central themes, is it not, in the whole of Scripture.

Forgiveness. Not some trite, just happy, smiley theme of forgiveness. No. Forgiveness comes at a cost.

Forgiveness is real and serious. And forgiveness can hurt. And we see right from the start, that the Lord promises forgiveness to His people.

[ 36 : 20 ] Right from the start, we can trace the theme of forgiveness all the way through the Scripture narrative, till we find the reality of what forgiveness looks like.

The coming, the life, the death, resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Forgiveness is a topic we hear much about.

We know perhaps much about. But what does it actually mean? What does it mean that God forgives us through Jesus?

What does it look like when He forgives us through Jesus? And how should that then show itself in our lives?

Just to help us understand then what forgiveness is, as a brief summary, we can just take four headings to help us using these verses as our base.

[ 37 : 20 ] Separation. Separation. Why we need forgiveness. Then preparation. What God had to do to forgive us.

Reconciliation. How we are forgiven. And then finally, restoration. What does true forgiveness look like in the life of the believer?

First of all then, separation. Simple question is, why do we need forgiveness? We are saying the central theme of Scripture is God's forgiveness of His people.

Why then do we need forgiveness? Now, many of us know the answer to that. We say, well, we know the story. We can know it. But really we have to feel it. We have to really grasp it.

Knowing the facts and the figures. You know, we've seen judges together. We've seen some of the horror of the Old Testament together. We've seen God's people doing awful things. Sacrificing their babies and everything else.

[ 38 : 22 ] Well, obviously they need forgiveness. They're doing awful, disastrous, evil things. And we don't look to ourselves and think, well, these awful people, yes, they need forgiveness.

But not me. You know, I live a normal life. I do normal things. I'm not doing these awful crimes. These disgusting, evil things. How can I then be lumped in the same category as these really bad people doing these really bad things?

Well, sadly for us, the Bible does not give us that escape route. The Bible is clear. We all need forgiveness.

Why? Because we are under a God who is watched. One word we see again and again to use, described, God is described as.

One word again and again. Even our prayer today, we called God, we addressed God in this way. Holy. God is holy. God is holy. Now we call God holy.

[ 39 : 27 ] It's not just a title we give him. It is also a description of who and of what he is. He is holy. He is, quite literally, he is other.

He is beyond us. He is perfect. Even perfect doesn't quite cut it. But perfect is the closest we can think about. He is other.

He is clean. He is pure. He is holy. He is perfect. Sin does not go near him. There is no darkness or shadow close to him.

He is pure, glorious, eternal, radiant light. That is God.

The word for glory in Hebrew, it's the same word as you used to describe something that's heavy. His holiness, it's a heaviness.

[ 40 : 25 ] He is so perfect. He is so pure. It's almost like a weight around him. And that's the image of God.

And we know that. But let's remind ourselves that he is other to us. He is not just good or great. He is perfect. He is holy. He is in radiant, eternal, untouchable light.

And then there's us. The other word we often use is not as debt. That we owe a debt. He is glorious.

He is perfect. Sin is not near his presence. And every time we sin, every time we go against him, we take ourselves as it were further and further away from the holiness and the perfection of a God who cannot and who will not even behold sin.

He is perfect. And we are not. And this image of debt is there from the very start as we trace it all the way through scripture.

[ 41 : 38 ] Everything we see, every thought, every action, every attitude against his holiness, we accrue and we gather and we gather more and more, we could say, of this debt.

The burden of sin weighs heavier and heavier on us. And this distance between us and God, which is already insurmountable, it becomes even further away.

And the debt grows and the debt grows. And we all know we try and make ourselves lovable to God. We try and make ourselves look clean to God.

We act the right way. We say the right things. We do this and we do that. And the list of how we do it is actually, it keeps on going. You can try and name every example of how we try and make ourselves more holy to God.

Try and act more self-righteous. But we always find new ways and better ways to do that. You know, we perhaps try and come to church and think, well, that will impress God.

[ 42 : 51 ] Not a bad thing. We must come, that's why we hear God's word. We try and act and live in a good, upright way. Again, not a bad thing. It's a good thing. But it does not impress God.

God is not so human that he is impressed by us by doing these acts. He is other. It's this debt of sin which requires the forgiveness of God.

There is forgiveness needed. There is, as we'll see just now, reconciliation needed. Reconciliation is, if you like, the final step of full forgiveness.

Where we are made fully right with God. But now there is separation. Now there is debt. Now there is weight that crushes us, that kills us.

And friends, you know this weight. This weight that you think, you know you can't be right with God. You know, your logical people, your smart, intelligent people, you know in your heart of hearts.

[ 44 : 01 ] This weight hangs over you, or hangs off you. And you know you can't lift your face to see God. You know you can't go near him, really. You know there is this barrier between you and him.

And if nothing changes, then nothing changes. That barrier remains. And you will never see the face of God in love anyway.

You will never be near him in love. But it is this separation. And we know in our heart of hearts that there is nothing we can do to change it.

In and of ourselves. All the holy living. All the good living. Still as popular today. Often, even in my own younger years. In school.

In school. The term good living was still used to describe Christians. Or that person's good living. Never a more ridiculous pain term could be used.

[ 45 : 00 ] As if we are just here looking good and trying to act the best way possible. Nonsense. Good living is a rubbish term. It is not good living.

Forgiven. Loved by God. Kept by God. Disastrous at times. People. It is what we are. As Colossians tells us.

Before we come to Jesus. It says to the Colossian church. Once you are alienated from God. Complete alienation. Complete removal. Complete separation.

Once you are alienated from God. And were enemies in your minds to him. Because of all your evil behaviour. So there is separation.

That we cannot change. So what happens? Where is the hope here? That brings us to preparation. What had to be done.

[ 46 : 01 ] To forgive us. What had to be done. To forgive us. We can't pay the debt. I have given this illustration before.

I will say it again. Because it is one of the pivotal moments of my poor time in ETS. The future college. And it sticks with me. It is a good example. But it wasn't as fun at the time. But I got knocked on the door.

It was about Saturday morning. I was trying to think of the other day. It was Saturday morning. I was at my flat. I got knocked on the door. I got knocked on the door. Three very big men.

I mean they made me look small. Very big men in black suits or whatever it was. Shirts. Looking very grim. Three very big bald sky looking men. Telling me. I owed 15 grand.

There it was. It was upwards of 15 grand. In rent. And in electric use. And I thought. Okay. I knew I didn't.

[ 47 : 00 ] But also. Donald did not have 15 grand. To give to these three men. At my door. On a Saturday morning. So I invited them in. And they again told me. I owed the company. 15 odd grand.

And they are here. To take payment. All this stuff. I don't think I do. I have been paying my bills. If nothing changed.

In that moment. If they insisted. I owed them 15 grand. If my name was on that sheet of paper. In front of them. If it was my name. We'll get. A second.

It wasn't. But if it was. If they had the right person. And the right address. These men in front of me. Who had the right. To take away my property. And my.

Few pennies I had. There is nothing I could do. Nothing I could do. I owed. In theory. A debt to them. And the debt was mine to pay.

[ 47 : 56 ] Thankful for me. It was the wrong man. Wrong address. And. That's a whole different story. For a different day. What happened there. It ended well in the end.

But. You can imagine the panic. For poor Donald. At. I know. Quarter to eight in the morning. On Saturday morning. But. But it wasn't my name. I didn't have to pay the debt. Someone else did.

The debt is there. It hangs over us. Ephesians 2. Says. Of. Those. Of us. Who are yet to come to Jesus. You live in this world.

Without hope. Without God. The good news is. That right from the start. God is clear.

Right from the start of time. God is clear. That he. Will as it were. Make up the distance. We can't go to him. We can't. Rectify our debt.

[ 48 : 53 ] We can't pay that off. So God says. Right from the start. I will make a way. Where I. Will clear. The debt. You accrue. I will make the way.

I will descend. Down to you. Because you cannot come up to me. I will descend. From holiness. Into creation. Into your place. Into your lives.

See that right from the start. Don't we? The serpent. Being crushed. That promise in the garden. That one will come. Of the line of a woman. A man will come. Who will crush. The head of the serpent.

All the way through then. To all the sacrifices. Of the old testament. All the system there. All pointing forward. To something. And someone more. To this great. Final sacrifice.

That would last more than just a year. Or a few months. It would last forever. All pointing forward. To the saviour. Who would come. Who would take on himself. The full. Debt.

[ 49 : 53 ] That needed to be paid. All this. To secure. Our forgiveness. This is a preparation. That was done. Generations of the Lord. Leading his people. And showing his people. That he is preparing. A way.

For them. He has not abandoned them. To their sin. He has not left them. To this debt. That would crush them otherwise. He says to them. I see your sin. I see the damage. You're doing to yourself. I see the evil.

You're doing towards me. But I am making a way for you. I'm making a way for you. I'm making a way for you. I'm making a way for you. I'm making a way for you.

So how does that then translate. Into our forgiveness. That brings us to. The word here. Reconciliation. Reconciliation. Of course in English. Reconciliation word. In our Bibles. Here. Here.

Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here. Here.

[ 50 : 51 ] Here. Here. It's.

Here. Here. Say it looks good. To make. That tipped. Here. Maybe. That's a story. In the Greek.

That's a story. Here. There. something else. Like my name in the bailiff's paperwork got exchanged after a few phone calls and a long hour wait, got exchanged for the actual place, the actual address, the actual resident who owed unfortunately that 15k plus.

In exchange, reconciliation, in reconciling us, God exchanges one thing or one person for someone else.

When we are forgiven by God, this is what takes place. When we speak of forgiveness, we often perhaps hear and think about the Bible says that God no longer remembers our sins.

[ 52 : 14 ] He has no wrath against us anymore. That it's just God putting it out of our mind and we think that way. We think it's just God saying, oh well, I'll forget about our sins now and it's fine.

How does God remember our sin no more? Why does God say as distant as east as from the west? Why does God say as deep as the sea is at where your sins are cast into the sea? Why?

Because our sin has been dealt with. God does not just wave his hand and forgive the debt. The debt must be paid. The debt must be paid.

And the debt is paid. If reconciliation is one thing replacing something else, then that's what we see, isn't it, on the cross.

Often called, and Luther, often called of this, Martin Luther, the great exchange. On the cross, we see taking place the great exchange. We read, didn't we not, our final verse there, in verse 21.

[ 53 : 25 ] We see this great exchange being given to us in such clear writing. What take place on the cross? For our sake, God made him, Jesus, to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God.

The great exchange, that great reconciliation takes place, where Jesus is on that cross, in his full body, in his full mind, in his full spirit, he receives the full range of punishment meant for us.

In his body, he receives the full physical death of the cross, which itself, we know the horror of that. That slow, well, before he even gets the cross, the torture, the mutilation, on the cross, the slow suffocation as your lungs collapse in on themselves with the internal pressure and vacuum as your lungs then fill with fluid as you drown slowly to death on the cross.

With that, the mental anguish of his friends and family, as it were, being far away from him. The spiritual reality we see here where we can't even begin to enter into.

can't even begin to touch it, not really. He was made to be sin for us. The perfect, sinless son of God.

[ 55 : 02 ] This whole world made through him. This whole world that belongs to him. This whole world where it's sung for joy as he created it.

we now see as he hangs on the cross, as he gives his gurgling last breaths, we see our Saviour becoming sin for us.

As he endures in a way we cannot understand and praise the Lord, his people will never understand what it is for him to be on that cross and for the whole of the wrath as it were of hell, of punishment, of wrath for sin to be poured out onto him.

We can't grasp it, we can't understand it, but he endures it. As it were, he became sin on that cross for us.

Jesus, quite simply, takes on the full wrath of God and here we see reconciliation. Here we see one thing, us, our sin, our punishment, our debt, and another thing, another one, a sinless, perfect Saviour, one, as it were, exchanges for the other.

[ 56 : 23 ] He takes on our darkness, our sin, our just punishment and he then gives to us his righteousness, his perfection, his beauty.

And it feels almost too simple. That's the beauty of it. The gospel is simple. Now, the ins and outs of the mechanics of how it all works, I'm bad for that.

When I was doing driving lessons, my instructor was constantly having a go at me for asking all the questions of how does the clutch actually work and what happens, he goes, it doesn't matter. Why do you care?

Just drive the car. We ask sometimes, we get stuck sometimes in the ins and outs of the deep theology of things. Friends, there's time for these questions to be answered either now or in the glory.

The main thing is, first, you come to believe for yourself that your sin has been paid, the debt has been paid, your name is no longer as it were on that flyer that says you owe your life because of your sin.

[ 57 : 34 ] You have an unpayable debt written to you. You now say, well, because of Jesus, his name was there rather than my name and the debt has been paid off in full by him.

Our sins are forgiven, the debt is paid. Famous, a very simple Billy Graham quote.

When God forgives us and purifies us of our sin, he does it in full, he forgets the sin and forgiveness results in God, as it were, dropping the charges against us.

The charges are dropped. Someone else takes the crime, the punishment, as I say, for our crimes. We can't see it in our legal system.

That's because unfair, isn't it? You would never have a judge say, oh yes, I will sentence you for this awful crime. But thankfully, your brother your father, your friend will take this charge rather than you.

[ 58 : 55 ] So you, criminal, guilty of this awful crime, you can go free. Because this other person says, I will take the prison sentence for them. It wouldn't happen. If it could happen, it wouldn't happen.

It's not fair. It's not fair. It makes no sense. It makes no sense that one would take the punishment meant for us. It makes no sense one who is perfect becomes, as it were, sin on the cross for us.

It makes no sense outside of a God who is gracious, who is loving, who is kind, who loves us enough to come down and to do this for us.

Why? To show his forgiveness to us. To show his love for us. What does it mean for us then?

It means, our final point, it means restoration. It means that now the Christian can say, because I believe this is true, because I believe that he is my saviour, he has taken on the full wrath of God for my sins, because I believe I am forgiven, I am fully restored.

[ 60 : 09 ] Not my work, but his work in me. We now come to God with clean hearts and clean hands. And this, I think, is where the good living thing, the world doesn't quite get it.

They think Christians are good because of how we act and how we speak and how we conduct ourselves. And that's the problem when Christians act the wrong way and speak the wrong way and conduct ourselves in a bad way.

The world says, see, look, if that's the saviour they worship, then how powerful is he? Look at how his people act. And they don't get it. They think we say we're different to them because we're better than them.

The difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is the Christian admits we're bad. We're not good. But he is good. And because he is good and we trust in him, he gives us his righteousness.

We have before the Lord clean hearts and clean hands. Although, at times, we feel quite the opposite, don't we? The Christian knows if we trust in the finished work of Jesus, if we trust in the forgiving work of our saviour, if we have and know his forgiveness, we can know but we come to God, we appear before him clean and perfect and blameless because we're covered by him.

[ 61 : 37 ] This great exchange has taken place. Quite simply, it means we are free. Free from the wrath.

Free from the worry. Free from the debt. If you come to Jesus, you can know and know for certain, know for certain that God no longer has any wrath against you.

And the freedom that gives you cannot be explained. Cannot be explained. It has to be experienced yourself. To know that God now declares you as clean.

But more than that, God now declares you through the sun as perfect because you're covered by the sun. For the brothers and sisters here, this is a whole different sermon but we can't end without touching this very briefly.

We'll cover this in detail one day. What it means for us then as Christians who have been forgiven. How then should we conduct ourselves in our forgiveness to one another and to others who have wronged us?

[ 62 : 54 ] Now, let me start by saying something which I worry is often lost sometimes to Christians. There's simple facts at play here. A Christian is told and we're told in Scripture, are we not, that we must forgive as we're forgiven and we acknowledge that.

We seek to forgive others who have wronged us as we wronged our God and we understand we're to forgive brothers and sisters for wrongs to us and all of us but we know that. Sometimes we take that as being the instruction we must be aware with respect to use this illustration what we might call doormats.

To be stamped on, to be, have feet wiped on us, to be, to be trodden down. When it comes to situations where there is real damage and again, I don't know people's lives.

I really don't. I actually don't know all that much about your stories. If you haven't shared it with me, I've made a conscious effort since I've arrived here to hear nothing about NMLS's life until you tell me yourself.

I mean that. Unless you told me yourself your own words, your story, I haven't heard anything else about you. I've made a conscious effort to hear nothing about you. So I actually don't know your stories.

[ 64 : 10 ] I only know what you've shared with me yourselves. Now I don't know Christians, how ours have wronged you or hurt you in the past. And the Christian, our job is not just to say, well, that's fine.

You can come back into my life now and although you've hurt me and there's been abuse and there's been pain, it's all fine. No. That's not forgiveness. Forgiveness does not remove consequence.

I think of one friend. It's an example that's painful but an example that shows for us how forgiveness should work and how it does work. And this friend won't mind me sharing this because, you know, they've shared it publicly but I'll just keep it private.

It's on the mainland but it's a friend anyway and they've been wronged badly, badly by a family member in a bad way.

Now, in one sense they can say they forgive this family member. They have brought this person to the Lord and say, I give all my anger and all my wrath against them which is justified if you knew the story and I give it to you Lord and I say, you know, I can't change the situation, I can't change what was done to me but I can take it to you and say, Lord, as much as I can I forgive them.

[ 65 : 40 ] Not for a second does that mean that person then has to have contact with a person who has done these awful things to them. Not for a second. Because forgiveness does not cancel out consequences of sin.

Think of it in a different way. Think of a criminal, plenty of criminals and you heard Bob be mentioned on Thursday night by Reverend Thomas Davis. Well, Reverend Dr. Bob Aykroyd is a man who knows his theology better than me.

And Bob goes to prisons and there's plenty of prisoners in our prison system who are coming to know the Lord. It's quite beautiful actually. Lots of prisoners who are coming to know the Lord, coming to love the Lord. And just because they're saved and they're now cleared of their sin before the Lord and they are, it doesn't mean for a second they get to leave prison early.

We still face the consequences of their sin. But their sin is forgiven to them. The debt is cleared. Forgiveness does not mean we are doormats.

It does not mean we are to be walked over. But it does mean we have to say at times well vengeance or wrath belongs to the Lord. Taking aside the legal situations and big situations that's bad.

[ 66 : 54 ] But normal situations, normal wrongs with one another where we're wronged by a brother or sister in a smaller way. We have to be willing to forgive one another.

Why? Because Christ, God in Christ will forgive us. Yes, there's big situations and we deal with that case by case and person by person.

But in general, brothers and sisters, the small sins, the small wrongs we have faced and we do to one another. We're called to be a people of forgiveness.

Bringing everything to the Lord and trusting that He will do the work. And vengeance belongs to Him. And here's the amazing thing of forgiveness. We can say as Christians, the Lord will have justice.

How? Either in this world, justice will be faced by those who have wronged us, or in the next. Either they come to Christ and are saved and He pays a price, or they don't and they face their own justice in the world to come.

[ 68 : 06 ] Forgiveness is there. Forgiveness is available. As Christians, we should be willing and ready to be overflowing in forgiveness to one another.

But not enduring abuse. You know, the Lord gives plenty of provision for church discipline and where wrong has been done. Please don't be silent about that wrong.

But even where wrong has been done and where discipline must be done, there's still forgiveness there. As you take it to the Lord and say, I forgive that person and then Lord, I leave the rest with you. And how freeing, how freeing that prayer is in someone's life.

Friends, forgiveness can be yours today. You can't earn it, you can't pay for it, you can't do anything about it. All you can say is, Jesus, I accept it.

I accept that your finished work on the cross has done everything for me to be saved. I accept that on the cross, because of what you've done for me, that great exchange took place where my sin was laid onto you, where your righteousness was given to me.

[ 69 : 15 ] And I can now walk in love and in freedom with God. The free gift is yours. Each day you don't make use of it as a day you've wasted.

But God gives you the free gift today once more. Lay hold on it and know forgiveness from God. Know freedom with God and know the love and the smile as a word of God shining onto your souls.

You can know it right now if you come to Jesus. Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for the gift of forgiveness. We're reminded that through the work and the finished work of our Saviour, you were working out your plans of reconciliation and your plan of forgiveness.

Pray, Lord, for any who are thinking it's too good to be through, that free forgiveness can be fully theirs today. Lord, we ask that you would show them that the gospel truth is so simple that they can come and know for themselves right now this full forgiveness is full and free forgiveness from the finished work of Jesus.



Lord, for any today who are yours and who have been wronged in various ways, Lord, you know the details. We ask, Lord, for a peace in their hearts today.

[ 70 : 31 ] We ask, Lord, for a work of reconciliation to take place, if possible, between brothers and sisters. And if not, Lord, we ask we lead these things to you and trust that you are able to work all things out in your way and in your time.

Thank you, Lord, for the free gift we have. We can know that you now look on us with a smile rather than a frown or not look on us at all because you have made a way for us, a way to be saved.

Ask all these things in and through and for the great saviour, the great sanctifier, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We can close in with Scottish Psalter and Psalm 32. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 32.

They're saying verses 1 down to verse 5. That's on page 243. Psalm 32 on page 243. A psalm, of course, that speaks of the joy of being forgiven by the Lord.

[ 71 : 44 ] Psalm 32, page 243. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he have done whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputed not his sin and his spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein.

Psalm 32 verses 1 to 5 to God's praise. O blessed is the man the man to whom is the part of him all the transgressions he hath done whose sin is covering let this the man to the Lord imputed all his sin and in this sin there is no guide nor progress out heaven where as I did fulfill my

Spanish Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh I Will Confess Oh Oh Oh My Is Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh  
Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh and forevermore. Amen.