

Through This Man Forgiveness of Sin is Proclaimed to You

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[0 : 00] Turn with me to Acts 13 and verse 38.

Acts 13 and verse 38. Where the Apostle Paul, preaching in a synagogue in a place called Pisidian Antioch, which is in the middle of modern Turkey.

He says this. Let it be known to you, therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

And by him, everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

The story of the Acts of the Apostles continues to this day. There are 28 chapters in it.

[1 : 20] It closes with Paul being arrested and taken by ship to Rome. And there we believe, well, we know that he was put to death for his faith in Jesus Christ.

That was only the beginning of the gospel as it started spreading throughout the world at that time. 2,000 years later.

And history records for us how the gospel has ignited villages and towns and nations all over the world and continues to do so.

And today we're in the privileged position of being able to witness for ourselves how the story of the gospel has continued through the ages.

Many of you have seen and read about how the gospel took hold in various places in the world where people didn't know it before. And where they came to hear about Jesus and came to experience the life-changing power of God through the gospel.

[2 : 28] Their lives were transformed. And what's more, whole communities and towns and cities and countries were transformed through the gospel. Make no mistake, God has changed the world and is changing the world.

He came for the world. He didn't just come for Jerusalem and the people around Jerusalem and a few communities here, there and various parts of the world.

God is working globally tonight. God is working globally tonight. The church as it was then was centered within the Roman Empire.

But then it drifted and migrated further west to Europe. That is what people sometimes call the second church in history. First church was a church in Acts, confined within the Roman Empire. But as time went on, it migrated west and became the second church. But today it has migrated again. It has migrated south.

[3 : 37] So that today, as we witness the decline of the gospel where we live, tragically. God is working globally. God is not finished with the world. God is finished with the world.

God is finished with the world. Because as we speak in what they call the global south, which is countries like South America and Africa and India and places in the Far East and China in particular.

God is working in a way that would defy our imagination. You would not believe the numbers of people who are coming under the power of the gospel tonight.

The problem is that in a lot of these places that we can't never find out what the numbers are because that information is not available. But those who have been there, they will witness, they will testify to the fact that their churches are burgeoning.

They're packed out. So God is very much at work and has been for the last 2,000 years.

[4 : 50] I witnessed that on Wednesday. I visited a church in the center of Seoul, Korea. And it was the oldest Presbyterian church called the Seungdong Presbyterian Church in the middle of Seoul,

Korea.

And I heard the most fascinating story of the way in which the gospel, of course, we know that over the last 200 years, there was a massive movement of God's spirit in Korea.

Which, by the way, accounts for much of its success as a country. Because that's the way in which the gospel works.

It changes our attitudes and brings in values of steadfastness and determination and truth and honesty into a society.

Let me tell you the story of a man who I heard of on Wednesday called Butcher Park. Who lived in the late 1800s. Right about that time, a man called Samuel Moore, who was an American, he left his training seminary in America and he traveled to Korea.

[6 : 07] And when he arrived there, he started preaching to the very lowest of the low in society. At that time, there were four classes in society.

There were the very high rich and the very high nobility. And then there were next to them, there was the second class, then there was a third middle class. But then at the very bottom, there were the untouchables.

And there were all kinds of people. But included amongst the untouchables, at the very bottom of the pile, there were the butchers. I'm not quite sure why that the butcher, the profession of a butcher, was considered to be such a low profession.

But they were not allowed to wear the same clothes as other people wear. Even the children were allowed to laugh at them and mock them. They were considered to be subhuman in a way.

And these were the people that Samuel Moore started preaching to. He set up a church, he started evangelizing. And he came into contact with this man called Sung Chung Park.

[7 : 20] They called him Butcher Park. And the reason he came into contact with them was because he had typhoid at the time. And Park went to him, desperately seeking help.

But Samuel Moore called a doctor, another Canadian doctor called Dr. Avison, who had come to Korea at that time. He was a missionary. And he treated him. And because this doctor treated him, he couldn't believe that a Western doctor could possibly lower himself so much to treat someone who was at the bottom of the social spectrum.

And so when he recovered from typhoid, he began listening to the Bible. And he began attending the church that Samuel Moore had set up.

And he was converted. Because he listened to the gospel. And in listening to the gospel, his life was changed. So what did he do? He started gathering other butchers.

All his friends. His neighbors. His mates. And he told them to come to church. And they all started coming to church. And all of a sudden, they were converted in hearing the gospel.

[8 : 34] Which brought a massive problem to the church. Because the church consisted of people of a higher class as well. They all left. That was the way things were at the time.

They all left. But from that, Butcher Park was instrumental, Not only in the gospel spreading amongst the lower classes of his time, But he was instrumental in changing the entire social attitude of Korea.

Now, there is no social class. Oh, you know, there are rich and there are successful people. And there are poorer people. But not the way it was then.

The whole of society was transformed through the gospel. It was the gospel in changing people's hearts.

And by the way, those who left at that time, They went off to set up their own church down the road. Those two churches are still down the road from one another. But they're all on an equal status now.

[9 : 47] That's the way in which God sometimes works fast in a person's life. He sometimes has to work slowly in a person's life as well. Because we're of our stubbornness.

But God is patient. And God is steadfast. That's the way that the world is transformed. And we have to continue to pray that God will send, The Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest field.

Don't think for a moment that God is finished with the world. That is why it's so important to be missionary minded. And for us to know what's going on in various parts of the world.

I know how impossible it is to know what's going on in all the world. But at least we can know what's going on in some parts of the world. So that we can rejoice. And we can praise God. And so that we

can be encouraged.

And we can know that God is greater than every opposing force. That rises up against the gospel. Whatever the forces, whatever the obstacles are.

[10:50] And there are many obstacles. We do not need to be afraid of any of them. People talk about secularism. As if it was some kind of almighty force that God couldn't cope with.

Secularism is just another voice that God can overcome by his word. What we need to be afraid of is our own obedience.

Our own disobedience. And if we are steadfast and if we are prayerful. And if we continue to live in the light of God.

Things may get small. I know that things can decline. Well, they've declined in the past. The Bible tells a story of many times in the history of God's people.

When things declined. But what was important is that those who served the Lord. They remained faithful to him. And that's what God calls us to do.

[11:53] To remain faithful to him. And to believe in him. And to trust in him. And to let our light shine. Because we don't know what future God has for us. We do not know how and when God is going to work.

God is a great God. And he does things at the very darkest times. So this was Paul going. This was his first missionary journey.

It starts in chapter 13. We've read the account of how in Antioch. The church met together. And the result was that they sent him and Barnabas out.

The first place they went to was Cyprus. The second place they went to was Turkey. These places are well known to many of us. As places where people go on holiday. But for this, for Paul, this was no holiday.

Paul was sent to these places. And he had a mission to accomplish. And his mission was to share the good news. That God had come into the world in Jesus Christ.

[12:53] To save us and to rescue us from our sin. The verse we are reading tonight is part of the first recorded sermon that the Apostle Paul preached.

Now I didn't say it was the first sermon he preached. He preached loads of sermons before that. But it's the first recorded sermon. Obviously there was somebody there who was taking careful notes. So that we would be able to know exactly what he said. No doubt he said more than that. But these are the important points. In fact, he preached in Cyprus beforehand.

As he went to Cyprus, the first place he preached to was. But his audience was very, very different. He was preaching there to a governor called Sergius Paulus. A man of intelligence, we're told.

And he wanted to know the word of God. So he called Barnabas and Saul when he heard they were in town. He called them. He wanted to know the word of God. But the focus there is on the opposition.

[13:52] Which came by way of a man called Elymas. The magician whose task it was. Who took it into his head to be as obstructive as he possibly could. And to throw as many spanners in the works as he possibly could.

In order to prevent Sergius Paulus from hearing the gospel. So much so that Paul said to him. You enemy of all righteousness. You will be blind.

From now on you will not see the sun for a time. And God struck him with blindness. And when Sergius Paulus saw the power of God. He believed and he was converted.

But now Paul's moved on. Paul's never allowed to stay in the one place for that long a time. He moves on to a place called Pisidian Antioch. Which like I say is in Turkey.

And this time his audience is entirely different. This time he goes into a synagogue. And so because for Paul. His motto was. His strategy was.

[14:52] Always to the Jew first. And also to the Greek. The Jews were his own people. Paul himself was a Jew. People who were in covenant relationship with God.

People who were descended from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And Jesus was a Jewish man. And so they were. In going to the Jews.

Paul knew that he could speak the same language. And they could understand exactly. What it wasn't. Paul didn't always go to the Jews. He went to the Gentiles.

Like in Acts chapter 17. Where he preaches the gospel to the Areopagus. They were Gentiles. And so his strategy was different.

When he preached to them. His language was different. He took a different tag. But as far as the Jews. The great advantage was. The great advantage was. That he didn't have to explain the Old Testament. They knew exactly who he was talking about.

[15:52] When he talked about Abraham and Isaac. And Moses and David. If he was going to Gentiles. He would have to explain who these men were. But here.

He doesn't have to do that. He can assume. He knows. That they know who he's talking about. The problem with the Jews was. That they were anti-gospel.

And we read that. In the verses that follow. That many of them. Rose up against Paul. Because of the message that he brought. And they drove him out of town. I want us to just look at this great verse here.

Just for a few moments. Because. Paul in his sermon. He focuses. As he always does. On Jesus. The gospel is about Jesus. Not about a way of living.

It's not about a religion. It's not about what you do. Or what you don't do. It's about. A person. Jesus. And he tells the story.

[16:50] Using the Old Testament. Of how Jesus fulfilled. What was promised in the Old Testament. First of all through Moses. And the Exodus. Jesus. The people of Israel. Going through the wilderness.

But then also through David. The King David. And he said. He told of how. Jesus was fulfilling. Was the fulfillment. Of that promise.

Jesus. But in so far. As they fail to recognize him. As the son of God. And as the Messiah. They indeed. They put him to death. On a cross.

Because they rejected. Who he was. You know. It's one of the most. Astonishing. Facts of the Bible. That the very people. Who ought to have recognized.

Jesus. As the fulfillment. Of God's promise. In the Old Testament. Were the people. Who not only. Failed to recognize him. But they hated him. You would have thought.

[17:47] That. The Jewish people. So well versed. In the scriptures. They knew. All about. What Isaiah. Had said. About Jesus. And what Moses. Had said.

About Jesus. And what David. Had foretold. About Jesus. They knew. All of these things. They were experts. In the Old Testament. They had grown up. In the Old Testament. And they were the ones.

Who claimed. To wait for Jesus. For the Messiah. And yet. When he came. They refused. To recognize him. They hated him. They turned against him.

And they delivered him. To the Romans. To be put. To death. The death. On the cross. It's one of the most. Astonishing. Facts. And Paul. Makes out here.

That this was. A fulfillment. Of God's promise. That. That his Messiah. Would be rejected. If you read. Isaiah 53. That was the promise. Of God. That.

[18:41] That Messiah. Was going to be rejected. He is despised. And rejected. A man of sorrows. And acquainted. With grief. And yet.

In that. Very rejection. In. On that day. When the. Whole world. Turned against Jesus. And nailed him. To a cross. That was the moment.

That God. Was reconciling. People. To himself. Because. In the suffering. And in the death. Of Jesus.

Jesus. Was. Being. Made. A sacrifice. For our sin. So that. By his death. That sin. Could be. Forgiven.

And that's what. Paul preaches. In verse. 38. That's what he. Announces. And that. Announcement. Is still. To this day. The very. Essence.

[19:36] Of the gospel. Here's what he says. Let it be known. To you. Therefore. What does he want. To be known. What do we want. To make known. To the world. Tonight. What's the greatest.

Message. That anyone. Could think about. This evening. Or hear. This evening. That through. This. Man. Forgiveness. Of sins.

Is. Proclaimed. Through. This. Man. Forgiveness. Of sins. Is. Proclaimed. To you. And I want us. To think. Very briefly. About that. This evening. Because. It applies. To every. Single. One of us.

The bible. Tells us. That.

We. The one. Thing. That we need. This evening. Is. God's. Forgiveness. And I believe. That. That. When we talk. About forgiveness. We need to stop.

[20 : 32] For a moment. And ask ourselves. Do we know. What forgiveness. Means. It's a. Everyday word. Isn't it. It's the kind of word. That we use. Regularly.

In our everyday. Relationships. With other people. Especially when. Things go wrong. Between friends. Between a man. And his wife. Between a brother. And sister. Or. Or someone else. Or maybe.

When there's. Tension. Or when there's. An argument. Or when there's. A fallout. We say. Well we need to forgive. And forget. We need to move on. But forgiveness.

When it comes to God. Is. Entirely. Different. From forgiveness. As it exists. Between. You. And your friend. I need to explain this.

forgiveness. Because. If I don't. Then. Forgiveness. Becomes. Cheapened. To the level. That we use it at. Which is. Nothing more than. Well forgiven. Forget.

[21 : 29] Let's move on. The problem is. God. Can't do that. God. Cannot. Just. Treat. Our sin. As if it was nothing.

That's what we say. Isn't it. Somebody comes to us. And says. I'm sorry for what I said to you. We say. Oh. It was nothing. And that's a very kind gesture. It's only civilized.

And right. For us to be able to say that. But God. Can't do that. And I'll tell you. Why he can't do that. Because of his holiness. You see.

It always. It. It horrifies me. When I hear people. Talking about forgiveness. Almost as if. Well. Of course. He's God. Isn't he? He's got to forgive. Because that's in his nature. To forgive. And therefore.

He owes me. His forgiveness. Is a wee bit like. The way we think about love. We talk about. God is love. God is a loving God. Therefore. God loves everyone.

[22 : 24] Therefore. God loves me. Therefore. God owes me. His love. Therefore. Everything's going to be okay. Because whatever I do. However. However. Sinfully I live.

Even if I live a life. Which is completely opposed. To what he. He has said in his word. Then at the end of the day. Everything will be okay. Because God is love. And.

And God owes me that. Doesn't he? Because. It's just him. I think there are millions of people tonight. Who are going to hell.

Believing. That God is love. And that's fearful. It's a fearful misunderstanding.

And to a large extent. The church is responsible for that. Because of the lies. Which.

[23 : 20] Are often preached. In the name of God. God. The church. The church. Needs to preach. The truth. And the truth.

Begins. With what God is. And who God is. No assumptions. Let's stop assuming.

That we know. What. Who God is. Let's. Let's. Go to the Bible. Because it's when we go to the Bible. That we discover.

That God is. In his nature. Without sin. Holy. Sinless. Pure. Righteous.

100%. 100%. Righteous. The Bible tells us. That he cannot look. At sin. And unless that is our starting point.

[24 : 22] Then everything else. Is meaningless. Do you know what? Even. The phrase. God is love. Is meaningless. Unless I understand. Who God is.

Forgiveness is. Meaningless. Unless I understand. That this is God. Who is holy. And who lives. In unapproachable light. Do you remember that great passage.

Or those great. Those great. Memorable. Occasions. In the Old Testament. When. When men. Got just a glimpse. Of the holiness of God. And it shook them.

To the very core. It utterly. Terrified them. Like Isaiah. In the sixth chapter. When. When. On a certain occasion. He saw. This is what he says.

He says. I saw. The Lord. High. And lifted up. And the throne. The. The. The. The. The. The robe. Filled.

[25 : 21] The temple. And he saw. Angels. Angels. Angels. Angels. Angels. With six wings. Each. Who flew.

Around. God. And who. Worshipped. And who said. Holy. Holy. Holy. Is the Lord. God. Of hosts. The whole earth.

Is full. Of his glory. That. Is what God is. And you know what. You know what the effect. That that vision had. On Isaiah. It terrified him. Do you know why.

Because all of a sudden. As he looked. At God. Whatever he saw. But he was looking at God. He saw his own sin. As he had never seen. That sin before.

And it was like. He looked at himself. It was like. He just disintegrated. That's what it says. It says. Woe is me. I am complete. I'm disintegrated. I'm finished. I'm done for.

[26 : 19] Because I'm a man. Of unclean lips. And I live. In a. Among a people. Of unclean lips. And my eyes. Have seen. The Lord. My dear friends. Listen to me.

Unless we start there. We're going to get nowhere. With the gospel. Can talk about love. All you want. But unless you're starting. Your starting point.

Is God. And his holiness. Then it's meaningless. But you know what. That's why tonight.

I rejoice so much. In the love of God. Because. That same God. Who cannot. Look at my sin. Has sent his son.

Into the world. To save me. From my sin. Now that's love. Love is not. When God says to us. I don't care.

[27 : 15] How you live. You live any way you want. I'll still love you. No matter what. Everything's going to be okay. That's not what God says. And that's not love.

Love. Is that extraordinary quality. In God. That says. Even although you are a sinner. I have come into the world. To rescue you. From that sin.

And to transform you. From that sin. And to change your life. And to take away the guilt. Of that sin. And the only way.

That he could do that. Was by dying on the cross. So that that guilt. Would be. Taken away. And that's what forgiveness means. And that's what Paul means.

When he talks about. Know this. That through this man. Forgiveness of sins. Is proclaimed. Do you know what the difference is. Between the way we forgive sins. By saying. Well let's forgive and forget.

[28 : 12] And the way that God. Forgives sins. Do you know what the difference is? That when we sin against God. And every one of us here tonight. Has sinned against. We've accumulated.

Guilt. Against God. Every one of us. Has accumulated. A mass. Of guilt.

And that guilt. Deserves. According to God's word. That guilt. Deserves. God's condemnation. That was why. In the Old Testament. That time.

And time again. God had to make clear. To his people. That death. Was the wages. Of sin. They had to put. Their sacrifices. To death. Which involved. The shedding of blood.

There was never an end. To the shedding of blood. In the Old Testament. Why was that? Because God is preaching. To his people. He's reminding them. Day after day. That the wages of sin. Is death.

[29 : 09] So God. Can't forgive and forget. Just like that. Because he's holy. And because. He's the God. Of perfect justice. And because.

Every sin. Our sins. Have brought on them. The wrath. And the condemnation. Of God. The soul that sins. He shall die. Says God.

And that death. In the Bible. Is not just. When a person. Ends his life. In this world. But it goes on. Into eternity. Death. In the Bible. Is eternal punishment.

Away from God. In outer darkness. That Jesus calls. Outer darkness. Where there will be.

Weeping. And gnashing. Of teeth. But in the gospel.

Here's what God. Has done about it. He has done. Something. To actually. Remove. Our guilt. From him. And it's only. By removal.

[30 : 05] Of our guilt. That we can have. Real forgiveness. Not just God. Saying. Well it's okay. We'll let you off. With it this time. That's not what God. Says to a person.

When he forgives them. He tells a person. Because Jesus. Has died. Instead of you. When Jesus. Went to the cross.

And suffered. On the cross. That guilt. Which is yours. Was placed. On him. He became guilty. Instead of you.

And he. Took the wrath. And the. The condemnation of God. Instead of you. Because. And that's what Paul means. By. In him.

Through. This man. Only. Through this man. There is no other way. To be reconciled to God. But. By Jesus Christ. Through. This man.

[30 : 59] Forgiveness. Of sins. Is proclaimed. To you. You ever read these. I'm sure you have.

These stories. In Jesus. Life. In the gospels. Where Jesus. Says to someone. Your sin. Is forgiven. Like the man who was.

Let down. The paralyzed man. Who. When his friends. Heard that Jesus. Was in the house. There was a whole pile of people. In the house. And couldn't get in the door. So they. Dug a hole in the roof. And they let the man down.

And Jesus. Looked at the man. He said. Your sin. Is forgiven. And the people. Were outraged. The Pharisees. Were outraged. They said to him. Who do you think you are? You can't just.

Forgive sins. Because. Because. Only God. Can forgive sins. You know. They were right. They were absolutely right. Only God. Can forgive sins. But the mistake.

[31 : 57] They were making. Was that. He was God. And he was. With all the authority. Of God. He was saying. To this man. Your sin. Is forgiven. Only God.

Can say that. To us. It was like. The woman. Who came. When there was. This dinner party. That was. In which Jesus. Was invited. By a man. Called Simon. In Luke chapter 7.

And it was a very. Respectable affair. And the woman. Came in. We've talked about it often. I'm sure. This woman. Came in. Out of the blue. And. Uninvited. And she went.

Straight up to Jesus. And she began to. To. To weep. She was. Inconsolably. Weeping. And the man. Simon.

Was outraged. If Jesus. Knew. What kind of a woman. This was. He wouldn't even. Go near her. And Jesus. Said. To her. Your sins. Are. Forgiven.

[32 : 52] That's what Jesus. Came to do. He came. To forgive. Our sins. By. Dying.

On. The cross. So that. Through. His death. On the cross. By. Our. Guilt. By him. Becoming.

Guilty. For us. He could. Remove. That guilt. And set. Us. Free. From sin. That's why.

Forgiveness. Is such. An important. Topic. And that's why. It must not be. Watered down. God.

Does not. Come to us. Tonight. And says. No matter. Who you are. No matter. How you live.

Everything's going to be. All right. God. Comes to us.

[33 : 48] Tonight. And says. Through this man. Forgiveness. Of sins. Is proclaimed. To you. And by him. Everyone. Who believes.

Is freed. And that's why. Tonight. I'm going to ask you. Again. Do you believe? Have you come.

To accept. Jesus death. On the cross. As the payment. For your sin. Has your life. Been transformed. By. The gospel.

Because it's. Only by the gospel. Only by his death. And resurrection. That we can know. His forgiveness. That forgiveness. Of all our sin.

I don't want. A God. Who simply. Tells me. Doesn't matter. I want a God. Who tells me.

[34 : 45] It does matter. That you have. Transgressed my law. I want a God. Who tells me. Straight. The truth.

About myself. And I'm amazed. Tonight. That that same God. Has taken.

My punishment. And has set me free. And has removed. My guilt. And he can do. The same for you. Please ask him to.

Have you come in that door. Loaded. With a sense. Of your own. Guilt. Before God. If you have.

You've come. To the right place. Because when God. Forgives. All our sin. Is. Removed. He doesn't just say it.

[35 : 47] He does it. And changes. Lives. Let's pray. Father in heaven. We thank you. For. The glory. Of the gospel. We thank you.

That Jesus. Came into the world. To remove our sin. And to change our lives. We pray Lord. That that gospel. Will never be distorted. And we pray. That you will.

That you will. Raise up. People. Who will go out. And share that good news. With others. All over the world. That Jesus. Has come into the world. To seek. And to save.

Those who are lost. Forgive. Our sin. We pray. Bring that forgiveness. To each one of us. We pray. That each one. Will experience it. For the blood. Of Jesus Christ.

That cleanses us. From all our sin. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing. In Psalm 51. In closing. Psalm number 51. And we'll.

[36 : 40] That's on page 68. It's the same. Psalms version. It's verse 7. To verse 15. I'm going to sing. Three verses. Cleanse with hyssop. Purify me. I'll be whiter.

Than the snow. Let the bones. You crushed. Be joyful. May I joy. And gladness know. From my failure. Hide your face. Blot out. All my wickedness.

We can sing these words. In faith tonight. Believing. And knowing. That God is not only able. But that he is willing. And capable. Of removing. Our sin.

Let's sing these words. In faith. Verse 7. To verse 15. Standing to sing. Cleanse with hyssop.

Purify me. I'll be whiter. Than the snow. Let the bones.

[37 : 38] You crushed. Be joyful. May I joy. And gladness know. From my failure.

I hear this. Blood out. All my wickedness.

Lord. Lord. Create. Create. A pure heart. In me. And a steadfast.

Mind renewed. Do not take your spirit. From me.

Cast me not away. From you. Give me back.

[38 : 35] The joy. I had. Keep my will. In spirit. Glad. Then I'll teach you.

Waste. To sinners. Rebels. Rebels. Will turn back. To you. Free me.

From blood. Guilt. My saviour. God. Most merciful. And true.

And. True. Then. I'll. Praise you. Righteousness. Teach. My. Lift. Your name.

To. Bless. Now. May grace. And mercy. And peace. From father. Son. And spirit. Be ours.

[39 : 36] In Christ. Amen. Amen.