

I Will not Remember your Sins

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[0 : 00] I'm reading again at verse 25, 43, 25. These are the words of the Lord.

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Now, as we know, one of the great themes of the Bible is the fact that God in Christ and through Christ forgives sin.

God is a God who delights in doing this. He is a God who delights in mercy. That's a wonderful thing. When we delight in something, it is something that we take great satisfaction, great pleasure out of.

And that is what God does. He delights, he takes tremendous pleasure and satisfaction in forgiving sin. And, of course, that is all tied in to the great and glorious work of his Son, the Son of whom he said, I am well pleased.

Of course, all this satisfaction and all this delight is tied in to the wonderful work of Jesus on the cross. Now, in this chapter, we find that despite Israel's incredible provocation and ingratitude, we find that the Lord gives us this glorious promise and this glorious assurance of him forgiving sin.

[1 : 41] I am he who blots out your transgressions. Again, in this chapter, we see God's sovereign control, his authority over all things.

And it's good for us to be reminded of these things. And that's one of the important things about reading the Bible, that we're being brought back again and again and again to be reminded of the greatness, the majesty, the glory, the dominion, the authority, the power of God.

Because sometimes we forget these things. And it's good for us to be reminded of it. And when we come to the Word of God, we are shown so clearly and so emphatically that God is the sovereign God.

Now, he goes on to, in this chapter, there are many things that we could highlight. But he talks about his own people.

And one of the wonderful things in verse 21, we find that the Lord says, This people are the people whom I formed for myself. And he tells us why he has formed his people for himself, that they might declare my praise.

[2 : 51] It's not an amazing thing. If you tonight are a believer, that is why you have been made a child of God. Above all other reasons is that you might declare the praise of God.

And this is God's great purpose. This people whom I formed for myself. Now, as we know, God is the one who forms. God is the one who makes.

He's the God who made this world. He made it out of nothing. The great creator God. And there's no point in trying to get our head around these things.

It is by faith we accept it. I mean, there are people who will say, You tell me, how did God make? Well, we cannot tell how God made. Because he made out of nothing.

And you and I know that we can't make something out of nothing. In order to make something, we have to have something first of all. But God was able out of nothing by the word of his power.

[3 : 52] And of course, that brings us into the whole realm of faith. And when we go to the Bible, that's the very thing the Bible tells us. That it is by faith that we believe that God created this world and the universe.

It's all by faith of an acceptance, a belief. And it is, as we know full well, the only rational explanation to this wonderful world that we live in.

And if only more people would go back to the Bible and that they would find the answer to so many of the questions. But then, after God made this world, and we can read through the Genesis account, we find that he picked one man out of all the peoples of this world.

Remember that man, Abraham, whom he called out of Ur of the Chaldees. And he said to Abraham that through his seed, through his family, that all the peoples, all the nations of this world would be blessed.

It was an extraordinary promise. And if we were to trace right through the Old Testament, we would find how God was working. Remember there was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[5 : 02] Jacob's name was changed to Israel. And Israel, remember, he had 12 sons. And remember how they went down eventually into Egypt. And that family there grew and grew and grew.

So that by the time that they left Egypt, as God had promised they would, they had become a great nation. And God took them into the land of promise. And we find that God is watching over them all the time.

And if we were to trace through, if we were to spend the evening doing that, it's actually a fascinating thing to see. All the time God is watching over this particular people. Because he has set them aside for his own glory, for his praise.

He gave to them the law. They were the ones who had the law of God. He set up the worship and the whole structure of the tabernacle worship and then the temple worship.

And all of it is pointing to Jesus Christ. It is all a focus upon Christ. It is all a preparation for Christ. And then there were times when the nation of Israel shone so brightly like in the times of David.

[6 : 14] There were other times where they forgot all about God and abandoned God and began to worship idols. And they were a disgrace to the God that they really belonged to.

But all the time God was watching over them. And it's very interesting when you trace the history of God's people down throughout the years.

You will see how nation after nation tried to obliterate, tried to wipe them out. There's probably been few groups of any group of people in this world, like the Jewish people that have been attacked systematically over the centuries, over, if you were to follow through world history, and see how this particular nation, and it's very interesting that it is because God has set his mark upon this nation, and that it is through this nation that all the nations of this world are to be blessed.

Because, of course, when Jesus Christ came into this world, he came through the Jewish nation, or his mother was a Jewess. And so we find that all the time God is watching over and God is protecting.

And, of course, it comes to the time, right down to our own time, right to here. And this is we, if you're tonight, are a believer. You are somebody who has been, for the very words that we have, this people whom I formed for myself.

[7 : 44] You are part of this developing, growing number. And never forget, your main purpose in this world is to show forth God's praise, to declare the praise of God.

Now, in this particular chapter, while there are wonderful truths taught to us, and great things about how God has watched over Israel and done so much for them, we find that it's actually a very, very sad picture.

Because at this particular time, as the prophet is prophesying, we find that things are very low spiritually. And we find that the complaint here is, if we look at verses 22 on to 24, these verses, that things have gone wrong.

We find, first of all, that they've stopped praying. The church has stopped praying. Yet, verse 22, Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob. Now, one of the things you'll remember about Jacob's life is, that Jacob was a noted man of prayer.

You remember, there's many instances of Jacob in prayer, but you remember the time when he wrestled all night in prayer. All night he was wrestling and battling.

[9:00] He was a noted man of prayer. But here are his descendants. And it says about them, Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob.

Now, it's very easy for us to read the likes of this and say, Oh, well, yeah, that was then. How about ourselves? Let's, when we read the Bible, we've always got to be bringing things and applying it to ourselves.

That's what God wants us to be doing. To be applying the truth to ourselves. To be examining ourselves in the light of Scripture. I wonder, is it possible that the Lord may be saying of you and me, You did not call upon me, O Jacob.

Now, we're not talking about moments like this, where we gather together for worship. Because, of course, at this particular time, in public worship, we are praying. There has been a call to prayer, where we have engaged in prayer.

What the Lord is talking about here, I believe, is what is happening in the hearts and the lives of all his own people. That they have, that they weren't praying.

[10:09] And I think it's very important that we examine our own prayer life. Are you praying to the Lord? Not talking about the times of emergencies.

Not talking about these times where something comes into your life that forces you to call upon God. Talking about the regular day-to-day living before God.

Are you somebody who is given to prayer? Or are you, with your hand in your heart, having to say tonight, I actually feel rebuked by this.

Because I do not spend the time in prayer that I used to. You might be here saying, I remember other days. And I used to pray regularly.

There was a period of every day that was given over to prayer. And I have to say, that's not the case now. Maybe some people are saying that here.

[11:10] Maybe there are others who have to, who, and thankfully, they're able to say, yes, prayer is a daily part of my life. Well, that is good. But here is a charge against Israel.

You did not call upon me. And the Lord, remember, knows. Because it's to the Lord that we call. Is he hearing our voice? Are we regularly at the throne of grace?

In the private place? In the secret place? Speaking to him? Will you make sure that you give a part? Give a time every day.

We give time to eat. I know that sometimes we are living, and I, probably one of the reasons why people find it harder to pray today than at other times is because of the intense pressure that is upon our lives today.

We are really in a day that is making incredible demands. And people don't have time for this and time for that. And sometimes, it is true, we hardly have time to eat.

[12:13] Sometimes we are eating, as it says, just on the run. We are maybe grabbing something here, grabbing something there, at times. But it is essential that whatever we give time to, make sure that every day you give time to prayer.

And that is what, as we see here, this was one of the charges that God had against his people. But then there was a second charge, Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, but you have been weary of me, O Israel.

They had become weary with their faith. They had become weary with religion. It had become a burden. That is what it says. You have been weary of me.

So that they were, their religious life became a real burden. They did not enjoy it.

Whatever they did, they sort of did it reluctantly. If they were going to go to church, or meet, if they were going to go to the temple, they would be trudging there, dragging their feet, and say, Oh, well, I suppose.

[13 : 26] I suppose I better go. I better go with my sacrifice. But I would rather not, but I better go. You know, it's sad when religion becomes a burden, when people become weary with it.

And I hope that's not true of anybody in here. That these things have become a burden and wearisome. And you would rather not be doing it.

If you could live comfortably without it, you would push it aside. But you can't live comfortably without it. But you become weary with it. Well, remember, the Lord is taking note.

And my dear friend, if there's any believer in here tonight who is weary, not weary of yourself, but weary of your faith, as it were.

There's a big difference between being weary of yourself, and I believe that the Lord's people are often weary of themselves. And I believe that the Lord's people are often weary of this world.

[14 : 30] That's not what's being said here. The Lord is saying, you have been weary of me. It's not solemn. They were weary of God. And I hope there's nobody here who's weary of reading their Bible, of Bible study, weary of prayer, weary of church, weary of the Christian things in life.

And then we see the other thing. You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offering or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings or wearied you with frankincense.

Yet you have not brought me sweet cane with money or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins. You have wearied me with your iniquities.

You see, they had stopped, they had actually stopped bringing the sacrifices. Either because maybe they were too costly, maybe that is why, or because it had become too much of a burden.

Anyway, the things of God got so relegated out of their lives. And my dear friends, this can happen. And I believe where it happens, I believe there's a pattern.

[15 : 50] It began, the Lord highlights first their prayer. That's the first thing he says. You did not call upon me. And when they stopped praying, then everything became a burden.

And when it became a burden, they stopped giving. And they had lost heart for the Lord. And they stopped sacrificing. They stopped giving to the Lord. It was too costly.

Everything gets relegated. And it's still the same. If we don't watch ourselves, if we don't watch over our devotional life, the rest will fall apart.

And that is a clear lesson to this very day. And yet, despite all these things, the Lord makes this wonderful statement in verse 25.

I, he says, I am he who blots out your transgressions. And he is emphasizing that this is his prerogative, that he is the one who is doing it with a repetition of the I.

[16:53] And God glories in this prerogative. That is his because no one can forgive sins but God. And isn't it wonderful, he says, yes, you've been slack in prayer.

Yes, you've been burdened with me. Yes, you haven't been bringing me the sacrifices. But I, I, even I am he who blots out your transgressions.

Isn't that a wonderful statement? And if you're in here tonight without the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Savior, I want you to take note of these great words. You might be saying to yourself, ah, well, I don't know how the Lord will deal with me because years and years have gone by and I've heard this gospel inside out and right up to now I'm still not right with God.

Well, the Lord is saying, I, I, even I am he that blots out your transgressions. It's a wonderful statement. Now, to blot out means very simply to wipe out, to wipe clean.

In the old days they had these leather scrolls that they wrote on and in order if they made a mistake or they wanted to remove something, they would just get a sponge and they would wipe out what was there.

[18:15] When we think of blotting out something, we often think of it if it's ink and you're trying to blot something out, it might be very easy to smudge it and make a stain and you'd say, oh, what a mess, rather than just having made a mistake in writing, when you try to blot it out, it sometimes looks ten times worse and you say, I wish I'd just left it.

That's awful. That's not how it was there. As we say in these leather scrolls, they would get this sponge and they would wipe it out just in the same way as you would go to the blackboard and you get a chalk and you write and you get a wet cloth and you wipe it clean.

And there's not a sight, there's no trace, it's clean. You don't know what was written there, you don't know if it was somebody working out a maths formula, you don't know whether it was somebody writing a poem, you don't know whether it was a drawing, you've no idea what was there because it's completely obliterated, wiped out altogether.

And that's what God is saying that he's doing. And he does it by the blood of his son, by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is Christ's blood is a cleansing agent.

Oh my dear friend, isn't that wonderful? Wiped out. And I will not remember your sins. Now if you remember your catechism, what is sin?

[19:43] Sin is any want of conformity to or transgression of the law of God. Not conforming to or transgressing. It's both.

It's actually doing what is wrong or missing to do what is right. It is commission and it is omission.

It is coming short of. Sin involves not reaching the mark, not making it. And so we find here that the word says, and I will not remember your sins.

Now, this is actually marvelous language because we know at one level God cannot forget. God cannot forget anything. But when we come across this word remember in the Bible, to remember means when it's spoken of in terms of God, it means that God is going to take action.

for instance, it says that God remembered Noah. Now, God never forgot Noah. And this was during the flood. But God remembered, in other words, God was coming to deliver Noah.

[20:58] It says God remembered Israel in Egypt. That was when he was coming to deliver Israel out of Egypt. It wasn't that God had forgotten, but it means that he was going to take action.

So, you see very simply what is being said here. That it says, I will, and I will not remember your sins. God is saying, I will not remember your sins in order to take action against them.

Why? Because he has already taken action upon them, upon his son. God is totally just and right and fair and he will not take action twice.

If God has taken action against his son on your behalf, then he will never take action against you.

Isn't that wonderful? And that's what this verse is telling us. That is what this verse is pointing out to us. That God has taken action against Christ and on the cross Christ bore upon himself God's wrath and God's punishment for sin.

[22:10] And because of God's action upon his son, the slate has been wiped clean. Isn't that wonderful?

God will not remember your sins. Wiped out, I will never take action against your sins. The gospel is good news.

You tell me if there is any better news in the whole wide world than that. The reason why so many people do not understand that this is good news is because they don't understand what sin is.

They don't understand who God is. They do not understand God's holiness and God's justice and the fact that God has to deal with sin.

And if we don't understand these things then we don't understand that this is great news. But it is. It's the most liberating truth that we can ever come across. And the reason why the Lord does all this for my own sake.

[23:18] God forgives for what he is in himself. That's important to remember. Not for what we are. Not for what we have done or what we haven't done.

You know some people think oh God will forgive this person and that person because they are very nice people. No. You know some people think that it's easier for God to forgive some people than others.

Because we look at this person and we say oh God will forgive that person because he's an awfully nice person. And he's lived in a very decent way. He's never as far as I'm aware ever hurt anybody or ever said anything that's wrong.

So God will forgive that person. It's easy for God to forgive that person. But that person over there oh see all he's done. God doesn't work like that.

My dear friend it is the same price that has to be paid for the person who appears so upright and the person whose life has been a mess.

[24:23] And that is the death of Jesus Christ. Because we don't and thankfully we're not able to see into I think it would derange our minds if we could see the sheer depravity and twistedness.

And if we had God's vision of what sin is really like and its offensiveness it would derange our reason. We couldn't cope with it. But God hides that from us in this world.

And yet when God convicts a soul that's what happens. the sinner is given a little insight into his or her sin and its offensiveness before God.

And I know that there are many people in here who have understood exactly what that is. There have been times when you have been in agony of soul and you have cried like David against thee the only have I sinned.

And you have cried like David wash me that I might be clean. Create a clean heart Lord renew a right spirit within me. You've cried these things and you meant it with all your heart because God gave you a little insight into what sin is.

[25 : 39] It's offensiveness against his holy nature. But so often we do not see what it is. But the fact remains that even people who are upright and nice people there is still within them a heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked.

and that soul needs saving just as every soul needs saving and the only way that that soul can be saved is through the finished work of Christ.

And so the assurance of the pardon of our sins is grounded in the nature of God. Isn't that wonderful? It's not anything that you and I can do.

It's not even anything that the church can do. It's all what God does. And tonight it's for his sake for his glory.

That's what we're here about. The glory of God. As we saw earlier the reason why God has formed this people for himself is that they might declare his praise. If you're here tonight without Jesus Christ may I ask you to ask the Lord to save you.

[26 : 59] And you know what I would love you to ask that in your salvation that you would glorify his name. I don't think you could pray a greater prayer than that.

Lord save me in order that I may bring glory to your name. Because at the end of the day that's what it's all about.

and that's what it will be about forever and ever throughout an endless eternity is glorifying the name of God. That is what we will be involved in declaring his praise eternally.

What a wonderful prayer then to make that your salvation will be a salvation that will bring glory and praise to the Lord.

It will because every saved soul does that but you pray it and come to the Lord with that prayer because this at the end of the day is what it's all about.

[28 : 00] Let us pray. Lord our God we pray.