

The Lord's Day Evening

**January 14, 1945**

**"I Believe in Forgiveness"**  
**Scripture Lesson – Mark 2:1-12**  
**Text – Mark 2:7, 10**

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Introduction

1. One cannot read or say creed without facing question of forgiveness
  - a. God the Father
    1. Man when he says this must face his life as a child of God and realize he is not what God would have him be and so is a sinner.
  - b. Jesus Christ His only begotten Son
    1. Here we see life of Christ and surely must face our own falling short and realize our need for forgiveness.
  - c. Suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, dead and buried
    1. Here we are forced to ask, "Why did He die?" and the only adequate answer is that He died for sin. So then we must realize that our need for forgiveness must be tremendous.
  - d. So then this phrase would naturally follow our other statements of belief found in the creed.
2. But many people take the forgiveness of God as a matter of course
  - a. So sin does not mean much to them
    1. They feel they can go and do as they please and God will forgive them
  - b. Reason many eminent teachers of morals look with such disfavor on the doctrine of forgiveness.
    1. They feel that it encourages people to live an immoral life and sinful life without any restraint.
  - c. These two false conceptions come from failure to understand meaning of forgiveness.
    1. I am most anxious to try and show you the real meaning of forgiveness

I. What we are forgiven for

1. Sin
2. Meaning of sin
  - a. Transgression
    1. Violation of Ten Commandments
  - b. Iniquity
    1. A degrading effect upon one's life
    2. David transgressed then because iniquity came into his heart he added to transgression of one law another and another until he stands before us a picture of an iniquitous defiled soul.
  - c. Against God. David – against Thee, Thee only have I sinned.

3. Sin then is more than merely things
  - a. It is rebellion against God
  - b. Assertion of our puny wills against God
4. It separates us from God
  - a. Man who wrote company in Dallas that my Dad's firm was not a good credit risk. This man had accepted our family's friendship and was a guest time and time again in our house. The awful thing about it was not that the man had told a lie, but the awful thing was that the man had violated a relationship.
  - b. Herein lies the awfulness of our sin. We by our rebellion have sinned against God and alienated ourselves from Him.
  - c. This is natural condition of heart
    1. This must be admitted as true
  - d. Forgiveness must be considered in this light and until we can understand this about sin we cannot comprehend the doctrine of forgiveness.

## II. Only God can forgive

1. Illustrate
  - a. Suppose man who had violated the friendship of my father should have gone to my grandfather and said to him that he had lied about his and his son's firm and had hurt Bob very much and wanted to ask their forgiveness. My grandfather could have forgiven him the lie he told about his firm, but he could not have said, "Well, I forgive you for Bob, too," because it was my dad he had hurt most and he and he alone could forgive him.
2. Many do not seem to understand this in their relationship to God
  - a. Confession is an important thing in relationship to sin and forgiveness
    1. But the Catholic confessional is at error in that the sin is against God and should be confessed to God not man.
    2. The Oxford Group Movement is also at error at this point as well as at others. It demands that their adherents confess to the group. One may confess to the group what the group considers to be sin and they may leave impression that the confessor has been forgiven. But the truth is sin is not what that group may consider sin, but what God considers sin. Sin is against God and must be confessed to God and forgiven by Him.
3. Again God in forgiveness must not only forgive the transgression, but He must also forgive the rebellious spirit which produced the rebellion.

## III. How God can forgive

1. It cannot be bought
  - a. Many feel it can
    1. They give to charity
    2. They give to church
    3. They perform some act of penance
  - b. You cannot pay for or buy forgiveness
2. Will God forgive?
  - a. Yes, He most certainly will
  - b. He sent Christ

1. Old Testament shows God willing to forgive
2. But New Testament in Christ shows God seeking to forgive
- c. Christ came seeking the sinner to bring him forgiveness
  1. God is not only willing to forgive, but He seeks the sinner out that He may forgive Him.
3. Forgiveness is through Christ
  - a. He died to pay the penalty
    1. Wages of sin is death
    2. He came and died
  - b. But He would take away that rebellious heart
    1. We see in Christ love of God
    2. We see our own rebellious heart
    3. Will want it removed, changed made new
    4. Christ comes into our hearts to crucify self and make God supreme
    5. He comes to dwell in us to drive out this obedience to self and put in its place obedience to God
  - c. Until a man has this, he has not been forgiven
    1. No Pardon Without Repentance

“In the Richmond Register this case is recorded. A man named Samuel Holmes, who was in Frankfort jail undergoing punishment for murder, received a visit from his old school mate, Lucien Young. The Kentucky legislature had recorded, some years before, its appreciation of Young’s bravery in rescuing several lives from a wrecked vessel, and when Young moved by Holmes’ condition, made an appeal to Governor Blackburn for his pardon, the governor, remembering his brave action, relented and signed the pardon for his sake. With the document in his pocket, Young hastened back to the prison to tell the good news to his friend. Before telling him, however, that he had come to make him a free man, Young after talking awhile upon other subjects, said, ‘Sam, if you were turned loose and fully pardoned, what would be the first thing you would do?’ The convict at once responded, ‘I would go to Lancaster and murder Judge Owsley; and then a man who was a witness against me.’ Young uttered not a word, but turned mournfully away, went outside and prison wall, took the pardon from his pocket and tore it into fragments!

Observe, the pardon of the governor was granted absolutely and alone for the sake of the prisoner’s friend. The character of the convict, his state of mind at the time, his conduct while in prison – these are similar considerations had nothing whatever to do in the influencing of the governor to issue the pardon.

Again, the friend of the prisoner carried to his cell a full and unconditional forgiveness. The governor did not say to him, ‘Go do the culprit and talk with him, and if you find him to be one to whom I consistently show mercy, I will consider the case.’ On the contrary, he sent an unconditional

pardon to him. The bearer carried it in his pocket, signed and sealed, and ready to be delivered. He could say to the condemned man, not, 'The governor will forgive you,' but, 'He has forgiven you, and I am authorized to declare to you the fact.'

And finally, the prisoner remained under condemnation in spite of the governor's pardon, because he had no penitent heart to receive forgiveness. Did the governor condemn him? No; he pardoned him. Why was he executed then? Because he would not abandon his sin. Did the friend who came with the message sentence him to death? No; he brought the announcement of deliverance from death. What, then, was the condemnation? That the executive would not relieve him? No; this was his condemnation, that when forgiveness was offered him he would not be forgiven, because of the hardness and impenitence of his heart. Shall God's grace have been extended to you in vain, O souls for whom Christ died? Answer, now, while the messenger of Christ has the pardon in his hand."

-The Dawn

### Conclusion

1. There is as I have said a very real place for confession
  - a. Come confess your transgression to God and ask His forgiveness through Christ.
  - b. Confess your sinful and rebellious nature and ask Him to take it away through cleansing blood of Christ.
2. What a marvelous experience
  - a. Overwhelming
  - b. Some people I am sure think I am not nearly so hard on sinners as I should be, but, beloved, I am so bad myself and God has forgiven me that I find it increasingly difficult to sit in judgment upon others.
  - c. Rather I would rather try to show them that God hates their sin and we would forgive them if they would come and ask Him for it.
3. Will you come tonight just as you are and ask God's forgiveness?
  - a. He is calling you
  - b. He will receive and forgive