

Sins are Forgiven? **10-7-18**

The forgiveness of sins is the great pursuit of man. All sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We know that this applies to anyone of an adult mind who knows right from wrong. In fact, the forgiveness (also called remission) of sins is described as being equal to being saved (compare Acts 2:38 with Mark 16:16). We know that this is the meaning of the Gospel – Jesus died to take away sin.

1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Some feel forgiven WHEN THEY ARE NOT, some feel guilty WHEN THEY ARE NOT. One of the great truths of the bible is that feelings are of no value in determining important truths. Scientists in a lab do not say “I feel that this experiment worked”; they can only determine this by a measurable means. So too is the forgiveness of sin. Feelings are a dangerous thing when trusted:

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?
Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

How can we KNOW our sins are forgiven?

1. Need to be baptized for that purpose – Acts 22:16
 - a. Baptized into Christ, NOT into a church
 - b. Baptized into Christ FOR the removal of sin, not because of
 - c. BAPTIZED into Christ, not just sprinkled or having an experience
2. Need to confess your sins – 1 John 1:9-11
 - a. Admission of our sins to God, NOT making excuses for them
 - b. We cannot blame others for our sins and hope for forgiveness
3. Need to repent of your sins – 2 Corinthians 7:9-10
 - a. Attempting to change, NOT just regretting sin
 - b. Repentance is two things: regret AND change
4. Need to forgive others of their sins – Matthew 6
 - a. Genuine from the heart – Matthew 18:35

If these things are yours, you should be confident that your sins were forgiven. You may not FEEL that they are taken away, but you may KNOW that you have had your sins forgiven. This is the key idea of faith: we believe something to be true because of what God has said, not that we believe something to be true because of how we feel.

What is NOT involved in obtaining forgiveness:

1. Confessing sins to others for forgiveness from God

We are told to confess sins to one another only in one place – James 5:16. In that circumstance, the point is NOT that we need to be forgiven by each other, but that we need to support each other. We need to be willing to confess our sins because we are humble and want to overcome them. There is NOTHING IN the bible that says that this confession is part of the forgiveness process. TO say otherwise validates the RCC confessional booth.

2. The need to make restitution

Restitution could be seen as an important part of the right attitude for a repentant, contrite heart. But it is not always possible, and therefore not necessary to receive forgiveness. Paul could not make restitution for his crimes against the brethren in Jerusalem (Acts 22:4) when he was lost, but instead he could do what was right before them. It is not restitution that repairs things, but a right attitude moving forward that makes things right.