

SERMON: FORGIVENESS AND FELLOWSHIP

[SLIDE 2] The title of the sermon today is “FORGIVENESS AND FELLOWSHIP.”

Introduction to Forgiveness and Fellowship

Today, we need to talk about a VERY IMPORTANT topic and see what the Bible says about this. We’re talking about forgiveness and fellowship. What does that mean?

Well, NUMBER 1, we’re going to talk about God’s forgiveness and fellowship with God. And NUMBER 2, we’re going to talk about forgiveness of fellow men and women and fellowship with them.

So we’ll talk forgiveness from God and fellowship with God. And then we’ll talk about forgiveness from man and fellowship with man.

There are 98 occurrences of the word forgive and its related words like forgiveness and forgiven in the Bible. In other words, this is a very important topic that not many people understand correctly. This world today has confused everyone greatly when it comes to forgiveness.

Churches have confused their members. People believe they must repent of their sins to be saved and to go to heaven. Some people believe they must ask for forgiveness daily in order to make it to heaven. There’s so much confusion out there regarding God’s forgiveness and man’s forgiveness.

Verses like this one are confusing because people don’t understand the Bible as a whole.

[SLIDE 3] 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

People will say: “SEE, YOU MUST CONFESS YOUR SINS TO GET TO HEAVEN.” They’ll say, “If you don’t, you won’t go to heaven.” So they teach that YOU better ask for forgiveness every single day in order to make it to heaven.

For those same people, when you try to give them the TRUE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, the one that says FAITH ALONE in Jesus Christ is all you need to get to heaven, they will reject it because it doesn’t match what their Church has taught them.

And it’s a very, very sad thing because anyone who doesn’t put all their trust on Jesus to save them; they won’t make it to heaven. If they’ve never trusted Jesus 100%, they aren’t saved. If they’ve ALWAYS trusted in their works, Jesus will say I NEVER KNEW YOU. Depart from me.

That’s a very sad thing that should hurt your heart. Right here. You should feel upset for that person.

So again, understanding forgiveness and fellowship is a VERY IMPORTANT thing. And we’re going to go over that in detail today so you completely and fully understand it. Then, when we talk with people who are really trying but are trusting in themselves, we can explain it properly from a Biblical view point.

You Are Forgiven Of Your Sins Already

I want to first talk about the FACT that once you believe on Jesus Christ ALL YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN. This means you are saved. This means you're getting into heaven.

You've already been translated into the Kingdom of Heaven. You are in HIS FAMILY right now. And He's not kicking you out of heaven. He promised you eternal life. Your sins are forgiven once you believe on Jesus Christ. Your soul is saved.

I want to read you several verses from the Old Testament and the New Testament that says you are FORGIVEN (past tense) for your sin. You are forgiven. I want to start in my favorite book of the Bible; the book of Jeremiah.

[SLIDE 4] Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

God will not remember your sin. He has forgiven you.

[SLIDE 5] Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

[SLIDE 6] Psalm 85:2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

[SLIDE 7] Psalm 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

[SLIDE 8] Romans 4:7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

[SLIDE 9] Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

[SLIDE 10] Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

[SLIDE 11] Colossians 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

[SLIDE 12] Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Quickened right there in that verse means brought to life! Your Spirit is now life through Jesus Christ. Look at the end of that verse. It says He has FORGIVEN YOU ALL YOUR TRESPASSES.

Which ones has He forgiven? All of them. Past, present, and future. You have eternal life the Bible says at the moment you believe on Jesus Christ.

This next verse is one of my favorites of all time. I love this verse.

[SLIDE 13] Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Listen, He says, "AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST (That's pretty far) SO FAR HATH HE REMOVED OUR TRANSGRESSIONS (OR SIN) FROM US." He's removed them. He's taken them away. He's forgiven us.

Listen to this next part because it's VERY, VERY important to understand. There's a forgiveness that takes place at the exact moment of SALVATION. Once you're saved, your sins are forgiven. You have eternal life.

Think of this: You have all of this sin that you would have had to pay for in hell. But God forgives you of all those sins. All of those sins would have sent you to hell. They would have been counted to your soul and took you to hell. But He forgives you and seals your soul with the Holy Spirit so sin is no longer counted to your soul.

All of your sins are covered by the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

There's Forgiveness But There's ALSO Fellowship

But look, now that you're saved YOU'RE STILL LIVING YOUR LIFE here on Earth. The Good News is that no matter what you do, you're going to heaven. You've been forgiven of your sins, but there's fellowship with God that you don't want to break here in THIS LIFE OR EVER.

In other words, just because you're saved, you don't have a license to sin and do whatever you want. If you do, you're breaking fellowship with God Almighty. You'll be in heaven, but you will be punished here in this life and you will lose rewards in heaven due to the evil works you're doing after you're saved.

You're in His family now. He's a good Father. He will punish you if you go against Him because that's loving.

[SLIDE 14] Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

He says He will punish you because He loves you. He only punishes you to get you back on track to Him. He's saying, "HEY, WAKE UP! I'M RIGHT HERE. I'M WATCHING." He's saying don't make me look bad. You're in my family now. I am the leader. Please do what I ask.

When we do something against Him. When we commit an awful sin, it creates a rift or a break in our fellowship with God. He HATES sin. He hates when we sin against Him. When it comes to salvation, He's already forgiven us for those sins BUT the closeness we have with God is broken. It's degraded. It's hurt. God is hurt when we sin.

We can choose to walk with God or break fellowship with Him. For example, the Bible says that both Enoch and Noah WALKED WITH GOD.

[SLIDE 15] Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

[SLIDE 16] Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

God loved Enoch so much that He took Him. Enoch didn't die. God took Him up. Enoch walked with God. He had fellowship with God daily. Same thing with Noah. He walked with God.

These 2 men walked with God. Now, we can choose to be like them OR we can choose to continue sinning and going against God's rules and commandments for us.

You can't LOSE YOUR SALVATION, but you can break your fellowship with God. If we don't confess our sins, this breaks our fellowship with God. If we don't repent of our sin, this breaks our fellowship with God. You aren't losing your salvation BECAUSE you're saved BUT you're damaging fellowship with God.

This means He can and will PUNISH in this life. This means He hasn't forgiven you of those sins in this life because you don't care He says. If you don't care what God wants and want to go against God, your FATHER, He will punish you He says.

Understand that difference today. There's a difference in your soul being saved and your flesh being saved. The difference is very CLEAR throughout the Bible. You have a soul, and you have a body.

And look, I'm not making this up so it fits my views or my beliefs. This comes straight from the Bible. We need to understand the difference in the soul being saved and the flesh being saved.

The Book of 1 John is written to saved people. They already HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. Let's see what it says in Chapter 1. We're going to read the entire Chapter because it's short. Only 10 verses. I want you to see this so please turn to 1 John Chapter 1 in your Bibles. It's the 5th book from the very back of your Bibles.

I want to start there in verse 1. I want you to notice again that these are 100% saved people who HAVE the gift of ETERNAL LIFE already.

[SLIDE 17] 1 John 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Throughout the book of 1 John, you'll find that these are saved people. He's constantly saying "WE" because He's saved and the people he's writing to are saved.

He's saying you're saved but keep the fellowship with God and with us so your joy may be full. That's the only way to be joyful is to keep fellowship with God Almighty and with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

When you sin, you're being separated from this fellowship. If you understand who God is, you'll know that He cannot be close to sin. He won't tolerate it and doesn't want to be around it. Your fellowship is broken if you don't confess those sins. And let's see what He says next.

Let's continue in verse 5.

[SLIDE 18] 1 John 1:5-10 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

GOD IS LIGHT verse 5 says. He has no darkness at all. Verse 6 says that "If we SAY that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we are liars." You can't have fellowship with God and continue to sin and go against Him.

Verse 7 says that if we walk in the light as HE IS IN THE LIGHT, we not only have fellowship with one another BUT we have fellowship with God. We are forgiven for our sins in this life and Jesus cleanses us from those sins.

Verse 8 says if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves. Look, it's saying that you're going to sin and mess up. This breaks fellowship with God if we don't confess those sins. Verse 9 says that if we confess those sins, GOD IS FAITHFUL and just to forgive us our sins.

He won't punish us for those sins if we truly confess those sins and are trying our best not to do those things which we should HATE.

Some people don't believe they sin any more. What's verse 10 say? It says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Confessing Your Sins To Receive Forgiveness

When we sin, we can keep fellowship with God if we confess those sins. And once you do, you can know that God forgives you immediately. You'll keep the fellowship with God, and He won't punish here in this life because you're forgiven. Do you see that? Do you see the difference in being forgiven for salvation and being forgiven in this life?

There's evidence within yourself and within your life that what 1 John Chapter 1 is saying here is the truth. For example, when you sin, you're separated from God and it breaks fellowship with Him. You don't want to pray to Him when you do something bad that you know you shouldn't have done. You don't want to read the Bible. You stay away from God. That fellowship is broken.

You don't want to go to Church. You don't want to hear about God. When we go see people during Soul Winning, they might not want to hear about God because they feel guilty. And they'll show it. If a man and woman know they shouldn't be living together and should be married, they'll even mention it to you. They show their guilt immediately.

Breaking fellowship with God has happened to me in my life MANY, MANY times. Sin separates us from God.

Look at Adam and Eve. They were ashamed when they sinned. This is God's design for us. They hid from God because they were ashamed. They didn't do what He asked. God must get away from sin. You don't want to face God because of you're sin against Him.

Children show their guilt very quickly. A guilty conscience is very easy for parents to see. Same thing goes for God. He already knows. Don't lie to God. Don't hide from God. He already knows. HE IS GOD.

If you break fellowship with God, you will have less and less joy in your life. You know that's true. If you keep that fellowship with God by confessing your sin, you will have great joy. If you HATE the sin that you do, you will confess those to God. Don't ignore what you do. HATE the sins you commit and ask God for forgiveness. When you ask, know that He's already forgiven you 100%.

When you HATE the sin that you do, you'll stop doing them. You'll begin to walk more and more in the light, and you'll see the darkness in this world. You'll see more and more of that darkness. And it's sad. And you will HATE IT, and you won't want to be around the darkness.

That's how you walk in the light. And don't be afraid of the darkness BECAUSE you are the light JESUS SAYS. You have HIS LIGHT now.

[SLIDE 19] John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Understand that you need to be walking in the light. Stay in the light. When you mess up, confess that sin to God Almighty and ask for His forgiveness. Know that you're forgiven immediately. Understand that today. This is VERY important to understand TODAY!

You can't lose your salvation but you can lose fellowship with God. But you can get it back immediately by confessing that sin and doing your best to stay in the light.

If you draw NEAR to God, He says He will draw near to you. If you want God to stay away, He will.

Listen to this awesome passage of Scripture from the book of James. This will help all of this come together for you.

[SLIDE 20] James 4:6-10 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

When you're down because of sin in your life, go to God. He says, "Come near, and I will come near to you." Don't run from Him. Go to Him. Be humble, confess those sins, and God says, "He will lift you up from that sin" and you are forgiven. Understand that right now.

God is a forgiving God. Some people think they do things and that God won't forgive them. God will forgive your sins if you do what He says in His Word.

God says He will forgive His people in this life and for salvation. Restore fellowship with God by doing right and confessing those sins when you don't do right.

God Won't Forgive Your Sins In This Life If You Do This

Now, there is something that you can do in which God will not forgive you of your sins. This is where your fellow humans come into play.

If we won't forgive others for what they've done to us, God says He will not forgive us here in this life. So remember, He's already forgiven you when it comes to salvation BUT you're still alive here in this life. He can punish you very harshly in this life when you don't forgive others.

[SLIDE 21] Mark 11:25-26 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

When you go to God in prayer, you better forgive others for what they've done to you. This only makes sense, right? Do you see this? God says, "I'm forgiving you." He says, "You're coming to me for forgiveness AND you want me to forgive YOU!!!" He says, "HEY, YOU FORGIVE OTHERS, AND I WILL FORGIVE YOU!!!"

God is a JUST and FAIR GOD at all times. God is saying to forgive others whenever we come to HIM in prayer. He's saying, "Forgive others or I will not hear your prayers." Okay, this is VERY important to understand today.

You might be thinking: "Well, God will hear my prayers no matter what." Is that what the Bible says? Nope, it sure doesn't say that.

[SLIDE 22] 1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

That verse says, "HUSBANDS, your prayers will be hindered if you do not honour your wife." Obviously, your prayers can be hindered the Bible says.

[SLIDE 23] Psalm 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Do you remember when the Lord left King Saul? He left Him and didn't answer Him any more. Saul stopped seeking the Lord so the Lord punished Him. God heard him no more.

If you want God to hear your prayers, you've got to LOVE HIM and follow His commandments. That's what the Bible says.

Do you remember what the Lord's Prayer says about forgiving others? Let's see in Matthew 6:12.

[SLIDE 24] Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

If you're asking God to forgive you for everything you do, you better be forgiving others who have done bad things to you. Do you see how God's fair and just to all people? He simply wants you to forgive as He forgives you.

Don't hold grudges and be bitter in your heart towards no one. Let it go. If it's been days, weeks, months, years, and even decades with holding a grudge, you've got to let it go. God says so.

And why is God telling us to forgive? To let it go? Because it turns out for the best for us. He tells us this to guide us in the right direction. He tells us what to do because He only wants the best for us. He loves us.

If you want to hold a grudge and not forgive someone, THAT'S going against God's commandments DIRECTLY and it won't turn out good AT ALL.

[SLIDE 25] Leviticus 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

Listen to God. Forgive others, and He will forgive you. God's easy. He makes it simple to understand.

If you won't forgive others, what's God say in Matthew 6 verse 15?

[SLIDE 26] Matthew 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Do you want to be forgiven by God? Or, do you want God's wrath upon you? I want to be forgiven for what I do wrong. Guess what? I'm going to forgive others and let it go.

Say Something If Someone Sins Against You!!!

If someone sins against you, OR if someone does something bad to you, do you not say anything and just let it boil up inside of you? Do you have thoughts about getting back at them?

Let's see what the Bible says because the Bible has an answer for EVERY IMPORTANT thing in this life. Understand that today.

[SLIDE 27] Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

What's that say there? It says, "If your brother trespass against thee, REBUKE HIM!" Don't just let it go. Say something. The Bible says to say something. Many times, we don't and it just builds up inside of us. Things get worse when that happens.

You can be kind about it too. You can say, "Hey, you've done wrong to me. This is what you did, and it's not right."

The way you say something will help someone to be sorry for what they've done to you. If you scream, cuss, and yell at them, the response isn't going to be good 99.99% of the time. Remember that. Do it with kindness that person can be forgiven.

You should want them to be forgiven. When you mess up, you want to be forgiven. Think of the people who do wrong to you. You need to tell them immediately. Rebuke them. If they're sorry, forgive them.

If those people are sorry for what they've done to you and you still won't forgive them, that's not right.

If someone continues to do wrong to us and they're truly sorry for it each time, how many times do we put up with it and continue to forgive them?

[SLIDE 28] Luke 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

God says to continue to forgive someone when they're sorry for what they do to you. Let's put it this way. How many times do you sin against God each day? It's probably much more than 7 times.

Again, God is going to forgive you the same way you forgive others. This is all throughout the Bible.

Not forgiving someone who is truly sorry for what they've done to you is EVIL. Forgive others.

Forgiving Someone Leads To That Person Loving You More

Think about this: "Forgiving someone over and over again throughout life will lead to that person loving you IF they are sorry for what they've done to you." If you don't forgive them, it leads to bitterness on both sides. It leads to broken relationships.

Let's look at a story from Luke Chapter 7.

[SLIDE 29] Luke 7:36-38 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

So picture this. This Pharisee wanted Jesus to come and eat with him at his home. Jesus went in and sat down to eat. A woman, who was a sinner, brought ointment and stood behind Jesus weeping. She began to wash his feet with her tears. She used her hair to wipe his feet to clean his feet. Picture that.

Then, let's see what happens next.

[SLIDE 30] Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

So, this Pharisee thought to himself that Jesus sure wouldn't want this woman touching Him if He knew who she was and what she had done. The Pharisee is thinking to himself that Jesus isn't even a prophet because He would have known this woman and wouldn't let her get near Him.

The Pharisee sure didn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Do you see that? The Pharisee didn't say it out loud, but guess what? Jesus heard it.

Let's see what Jesus says to this Pharisee who thinks he's so much better than this woman weeping for forgiveness from Jesus. This woman is seriously sorry for what she's done.

[SLIDE 31] Luke 7:40-42 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

So, look, if you've done MUCH WRONG against God in your life, and He forgives you of everything you've ever done and will do, you're going to LOVE HIM MORE than someone who has lived a near perfect life. Do you see that?

Do you see the end of verse 42? Jesus is teaching right here that forgiveness leads to greater love. This is very powerful to know and to understand. Forgive others who are sorry for what they've done. They will love you and respect you more than ever.

[SLIDE 32] Luke 7:43-48 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

If you've done something wrong to someone, be sorry for what you've done. Ask that person for forgiveness. Tell them you're sorry. People don't do that much any more. No one is sorry. It's always the other person's fault.

Do you see the difference in the Pharisee and the sinner woman in the story?

That woman admits she is a sinner and is sorry for what she's done. Jesus doesn't forgive someone who doesn't think they've done something wrong. They won't ask for forgiveness because they think they are perfect.

Let's finish this story in verse 49 and 50.

[SLIDE 33] Luke 7:49-50 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

They start to realize that Jesus is more than a prophet. Then Jesus says, "THY FAITH HAS SAVED THEE." And notice that it says, "YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU."

And that's the truth. Your faith on Jesus Christ saves you. And that's it. Faith alone saves! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is right there in that verse.

Show The Kindness of God To Others Through Forgiveness

The Bible tells us to be kind to one another. It's not optional. It's a command to be kind to one another. If we're kind, it's much easier to forgive.

[SLIDE 34] Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Your heart should not be hardened. You should have a tender heart. What's that mean to have a tender heart? Let's look at an example from King David.

[SLIDE 35] 2 Samuel 9:1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

King David is looking for a way to show kindness to ANYONE in Saul's house for the sake of his friend Jonathan. Remember, King Saul is now dead and so is his son Jonathan. Most Kings would then go to their family and get rid of the rest of them as they would be a threat to them.

King David is doing the opposite for his very dear friend, Jonathan. And Remember what King Saul did to David. He tried to kill him multiple times. He wanted him dead. He took his wife away. He attempted to destroy his life in every way possible.

[SLIDE 36] Ephesians 4:32 tells us to forgive others as God has forgiven us for Christ's sake. Since we believe on Jesus Christ, God forgives us for Christ's sake. Do you see that?

King David is forgiving for Jonathan's sake. How does King David show kindness? Let's see.

[SLIDE 37] 2 Samuel 9:2-5 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. 3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. 4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. 5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

Ziba, a servant of Saul and now a servant of David, tells David that Jonathan's lame son is still there. David calls for him to be sent there.

King David then shows the kindness that God asks us to show to others.

[SLIDE 38] 2 Samuel 9:6-7 *Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! 7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.*

Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, hadn't done anything to deserve this kindness from King David. But King David gave forgiveness to the house of Saul and showed kindness for Jonathan's sake. Did he have to do this? No, he could have been like all the other Kings.

We MUST Confess Our Sins To God

Don't hide your sins and act like you never did anything wrong. As soon as you mess up, confess those sins to God and ask for His forgiveness.

[SLIDE 39] Proverbs 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

So, look, we can confess our sins or we can cover them and hide them. We must move on from the past. We have to confess those sins and be forgiven.

Know that God forgives you immediately once you confess your sins. There is no question whether or not He will forgive you if you're truly seeking His forgiveness.

Do not hold onto the past. You can be forgiven because God says so.

[SLIDE 40] Philippians 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

We MUST forget those things which are behind because God will forgive us for those things. We must reach forth to greater things. Forget those things from the past. Get over the past.

People who won't confess their sins hold onto those sins and continue to have guilt and continue to live a much tougher life.

Paul didn't make excuses. Paul confessed what he did. He told us he was wrong.

Think about divorce. People make mistakes. They didn't know the Bible at the time. They messed up. They admit they were wrong. They ask for forgiveness from God. They are forgiven. They understand the truth now, and they will stay with their next husband or wife because they understand the Bible now. They will now serve God for the rest of their life.

We aren't perfect people. We have to move on from our mistakes. It's between you and God. Don't come up with excuses or blame it on anyone else. Take responsibility, ask for forgiveness, and get on with your life.

God will forgive if you are a forgiving person. Understand that today.

[SLIDE 41] 2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

We MUST humble ourselves, pray to God, seek God, and turn from the wickedness that we commit. God then says, "I hear you!!!" God says, "I will forgive your sin!!!"

A Couple of Perversions Regarding Forgiveness of Sins

Now, look, we MUST confess our sins to God. But that's between you and Him. It's not between some Catholic priest, you, and God. The priest then says, "I forgive you. Do this many HAIL MARY'S and you will be forgiven." Guess what? That priest has NO POWER to forgive your sins, but he sits there and fakes it.

[SLIDE 42] 1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Jesus is the ONLY MEDIATOR between us and God. Pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus and ask for forgiveness. For Christ's sake, God will forgive you. A Catholic priest who calls himself "FATHER" does not forgive your sins. We don't need them for ANYTHING!!! The confessional booth is a wicked perversion of the Bible.

James Chapter 5 is another part of the Bible that's been perverted by so many churches like the Pentecostals with their demon speaking tongues that is NEVER seen in the Bible. NEVER. Never does someone speak in some unknown heavenly language that doesn't exist on this planet. Not once.

What else do they pervert? They pervert healing and sickness.

[SLIDE 43] James 5:14-15 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

When people are deathly ill, this means they are sick. This doesn't mean a cold. This means SICK!!! How do we know that it means deathly sick? Because verse 15 says "AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK." Does this mean save in terms of eternal life and salvation? No, it means to save his/her life; to SAVE THE FLESH.

God will raise the sick up it says. The deathly sick will be healed. Look at the next verse 16.

[SLIDE 44] James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

This is why we don't have to confess our sins to ONE PRIEST. We confess our FAULTS one to another. This doesn't mean we confess every sin that we've ever done to each other. There's not one person to confess your sins to. If you sin against someone, go to that person and confess it to him or her.

Don't let perversions of the Bible by other denominations keep you away from what the Bible says to do.

If someone is deathly sick and wants prayer, we can go to them and anoint them with oil and pray over them. This is Biblical. The Bible says the prayer of faith will save that person's life. Don't go and pray, though, if you don't have the faith.

Don't Hide Your Faults and Your Sins

Don't hide your faults and your sins. Don't hold onto bitterness, wrath, anger, and grudges.

I want to look at Ephesians Chapter 4.

[SLIDE 45] Ephesians 4:24-26 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Put on the new man. Put away lying. Speak truth. You can be angry but don't sin in anger. Don't let the sun go down when you're angry.

[SLIDE 46] Ephesians 4:27-28 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Don't give place to the devil by sinning against God. Don't steal. Instead, get to work so we can give to people who need it.

[SLIDE 47] Ephesians 4:29-30 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Don't speak with bad words. Use your words wisely. Speak the truth. Don't sin and grieve the Spirit of God which lives within you.

[SLIDE 48] Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Let go of things. Get rid of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour (clamming up), and evil speaking. If people are speaking evil words around you, get away from them. Put it away and don't do it yourself.

[SLIDE 49] Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

To close, we need to be kind to one another. We MUST have a tender heart. Don't harden your heart. It's a VERY SAD thing to see the older people in this area who HATE GOD and their hearts have been hardened throughout their life.

Young people are more tender hearted and can accept God at a young age. This is why it's so MUCH easier to be saved when you're younger. The Bible says to be tender hearted. This is so we can be closer to God. A hardened heart makes it very difficult to forgive. And God won't forgive you.

If you're a forgiving person, you can know that God will forgive you in this life when you ask Him. If you harden your heart, you're going to have issues in this life. You don't want God to be angry with you in this life. It will not turn out good.

If you want to stay in FELLOWSHIP with God, stay tender hearted, forgive others, be sorry for what you've done, admit when you're wrong, ask for forgiveness from others, and ask for forgiveness from God when you do things wrong.

You will be forgiven, and your fellowship with God will NOT be broken. Follow His commandments and stay in HIS LOVE. Remember, following God's commandments is love.

Let's pray.