

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #24 — IS THERE FORGIVENESS AFTER BAPTISM?

But a good question that arises when we think about forgiveness of sins is: What happens if we sin after we're baptized? Has God made cleansing of sins possible for us after baptism? And we know that the answer is yes. But let's look at what the Scriptures say. First of all, are we bad if we sin after being baptized? In other words, is God going to condemn us because we commit a few sins? Well, we need to keep in mind the price that God paid to make forgiveness of sins possible. And that price was the blood of His Son, Jesus the Christ (1 Peter 1, verse 19). So yes, we should hurt when we commit sin. And we should recognize that our sins hurt God and caused the necessity of Jesus dying on the cross. But, we must also think about something else. And Lord willing, we will continue our study of this subject.

TRANSITION

We're thankful that we can continue our study of lesson number 2: Man's problem from the beginning: his sin. And God's abundant solution. His love as seen in the giving of His Son Jesus, and in Jesus' giving of his own body and blood, as the once for all sacrifice for sin. We've seen how man expresses his faith in such a way to receive the initial forgiveness of our sins, by hearing the gospel, believing that gospel message, repenting of our sins, confessing the Lord with our mouths, and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of our past sins. And at the end of last class, we began another subject: What happens if we sin, after we're baptized? Has God made provision for the forgiveness of our sins? And we will see that the answer is yes, He has.

Last time, we talked about, does the fact that we commit sin after we're baptized make us bad? And we began by noticing, well, we first have to take notice of the fact that the price that was paid to make forgiveness possible was a tremendous price, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 19). But we also must temper that with the knowledge that God knows that we are going to fall short. We are going to commit sin occasionally in our life, because we are human beings. Now, we cannot use that as an excuse to just live a life of sin, and not try to do our best. But we must remember that God knows that we will fall occasionally. For example, in Romans chapter 3, verse 23, God said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And in 1 John, chapter 1, verse 8, God said through John, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." So God knows that we're going to sin. He paid a tremendous price to motivate us not to sin. And we need to blend those two thoughts together.

But God, knowing us very well and loving us very deeply, has provided for our continued forgiveness of sins, if we meet His conditions. And that's a very important "if" — if we meet His conditions. Let's look at several passages which teach us that. First of all, the memory verse

that we just assigned, 1 John, chapter 1, verse 7. 1 John 1, verse 7. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." That's a beautiful promise. But as with so many of God's promises, there are conditions. Notice the first word in this verse. "If we walk in the light." If we meet this condition, then the promise that God makes here will be ours. But what does it mean to walk in the light? As we've seen in the Scriptures, light represents God, good, righteousness, His Word.

The Psalmist said, in Psalm 119, verse 105, that God's word is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet. And he said in verse 130, that the entrance of God's Word gives light. So God is saying here, if we walk, if we live, in accordance with His Word, two things occur. We have fellowship with one another. That is, we share in common, we jointly participate, in the wonderful blessings and privileges, and responsibilities of being a child of God, of being a Christian. So if we walk in the light, if we strive to the best of our human ability, to live by God's Word, we have fellowship with each other. And, he says, the blood of His Son cleanses us from all sin. Literally, the blood of His Son continues to cleanse us from sin, as we walk in the light, as we strive to live according to God's wonderful standard, His Word. So yes, we can have continual cleansing from our sin through the blood of Christ if we live a life of godliness. If we'll strive to do what is right, every day of our life. Try to be more like Jesus. Not perfect. We can't be perfect like He was perfect, but striving to eliminate sin, and to sin as infrequently as we possibly can. So there's one of God's conditions: walk in the light, live a godly life.

Others are shown in the book of Acts. In Acts chapter 8, for example, and verse 22. Acts the eighth chapter, and verse 22. Here God said, through Peter, "Repent, therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." The man who spoke was Peter, by the inspiration of God. He was talking to Simon the sorcerer, a man who had heard the gospel, believed the gospel, and obeyed the gospel, including being baptized into Christ. But after that, he sinned, he violated God's Word. So was it necessary for him to be baptized again to receive forgiveness? That's not what God said. What did he say? He needed to repent. And repentance, of course, means a change of mind. And that change of mind leads to a change in behavior. So we need to change our minds and say, "I don't want to sin any more. I don't want to fall into that trap anymore." And we need to change our behavior accordingly. But God also said through Peter, that Simon needed to pray to God, that God would forgive the thoughts of his heart, the evil thought, the sinful thought, the sinful thing that he had done.

Notice, some people say that Peter was the first Pope, and that Peter therefore had the ability to forgive sins. Peter didn't say pray to me. That's not what he said. He said, "You pray to God. You pray to God and ask for the forgiveness of your sins." So what have we seen in these verses? We need to be walking in the light, living in accordance with God's Word. We need to repent of our sins, and we need to be willing to pray to God, that He would forgive us.

And then in 1 John again, this time, 1 John, chapter 1, verse 9. 1 John 1, verse 9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What a bright ray of hope, that passage, that verse, is at the end of this passage, in 1 John. God says, if we confess our sins to Him. We have to recognize that we will have had to have been a Christian, be walking in the light, repent of those sins. But if we are

willing to confess those sins to God, He is just, and He will forgive us, and He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness, as we repent, and confess those sins to Him. There's no sin that is too horrible to be covered by the blood of Christ. And we can rejoice in that fact and have peace; and love God, and be grateful to him, that He has made it possible for us to have the forgiveness of our sins.

So how can we summarize those verses that teach God's will on this subject? We need to walk in the light, live by the standard of God's word to the best of our ability. We need to repent of our past sins, those sins that we've committed against God, and mankind. We need to confess those sins to God as we pray to Him. And we asked Him for the forgiveness of those sins. That's God's pattern, His second law of pardon, if you will, that is, after a person has received that initial forgiveness, through obedience to the gospel, This is how we can receive forgiveness.

But that brings us to a very important point, our next point on our outline, we must not be deceived. We are in for a very serious struggle and battle against sin. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived. We are going to have to fight a battle against sin. Let's consider some scriptures that we are in this constant battle against sin.

The first one is in 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 8. 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 8. This tells us some of the battle in which we are to be engaged. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Now God tells us, "You be serious. You take control of your mind. You Be sober, be vigilant. That means "be on guard, be aware, watch out." Why God? Because we have an adversary, an enemy, one who is against us. And he is fierce. He is strong. He is Satan, the one who is opposed to those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

And notice how God describes him. He's not some fictional character, some make believe character, that has this red outfit and a pitchfork, and he's made fun of. No, that's not how God describes the devil. He says he goes about like a roaring lion. Now, when you think of the creatures of the Earth, who are ferocious, and bring fear to the heart of man, the lion is one of the most fearsome ones. And God describes Satan as a lion. What's he doing? He's going around, seeking whom he may devour. He wants to tempt us to commit sin, and to continue a life of sin, so that we serve him instead of God. So we've got to be careful, and we've got to be aware, we're in this battle, and we have a fierce enemy, a foe, one who's opposed to us.

Then in the book of Luke, in Luke, the 22nd chapter, and verse 31. Luke 22, verse 31. Here's what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to Peter. The Lord said, "Simon, Simon, indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat." That's what Satan wants concerning all of us. He wants to get us, and he wants to sift us as wheat. He wants us to come to Him, and obey Him, rather than obeying the Father and His beloved Son. And he's stalking. He's going around throughout the world, looking for those who will choose to follow him. He can't make us do anything. We need to understand that from the Scriptures. And we'll see that momentarily. But he was looking for those whom he can devour, whom he can convince, to follow him.

And then in the book of Ephesians, the sixth chapter, verse 12. Ephesians 6, verse 12. God tells us, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in

the heavenly places.” God, in this passage talks about a wrestling, a battle, a struggle that we must fight. But he says, this is not physical warfare. This is not military combat of a carnal nature, of a physical nature. But we’re wrestling, fighting against, spiritual forces. Now he talks about principalities and powers, and the forces of darkness. He’s talking about, we believe, those evil spirit beings who exist in such a way that we cannot see them. They’re behind the scenes. They do not have bodies of flesh and blood. But there is a warfare going on. And those evil spirits that serve Satan are battling against those good spirits, those angels who serve the Lord. And they want us to fall in line with and be in the army of Satan. But God wants us to be on His side, and to fight His battles. And so we have a warfare. It’s a spiritual warfare, but it’s a warfare that God calls me, and he calls you, to fight in his army, not in Satan’s army. So there’s a fearsome picture of this enemy that we have to fight against.