

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Love and Forgiveness****Love and Forgiveness - posted by CofG (), on: 2021/8/8 9:58**

I have a question that I hope to have an answer to. It concerns this well known passage:

Mark 12:32-34

And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Under the Old Covenant, God gave the grace of forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of unblemished animals. Yet, Jesus confirmed that love of God, love of neighbor (and now love of spiritual brothers) is "far more important" than forgiveness. Is that true also in the New Covenant?

Please note that I am not suggesting in the least that forgiveness is unimportant. My understanding of the New Covenant is that we have a new heart, cleansed through the blood and forgiveness and also have the Spirit who causes us to obey which primarily means to love Jesus and especially the brethren. My question is again, isn't forgiveness secondary to our love for Jesus, the brothers and sisters and the world. Is love that God pours into our hearts purchased by Christ's blood still far more important?

If so, am I right to suggest that much of preaching is preoccupied with the lesser blessing (by comparison) of the New Covenant? Has our own forgiveness gained a higher position of priority than our love of God and others? Please don't say we don't have to choose. I know that. But the focus of church by emphasis shows a choice all the time.

Re: Love and Forgiveness - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/8/8 13:14

"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."
Hebrews 10:4

Isn't that why love of God and neighbor should take priority?

Plus, I think God detested folks who offered a sacrifice to "get off the hook" but who, when finished went back to ignoring God and treating others like dirt.

Re: Love and Forgiveness - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2021/8/8 16:17

Brother,
You can't separate the love of God from forgiveness. If we love God we will keep His commandments. Many Christians are not getting their prayers answered because of unforgiveness.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:5

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2021/8/9 8:01

Hi Todd and Mike, thanks for your input,

I wrote this up as a part of seeking an answer to my question.

How can you know that you truly, I mean truly know that you really are: 1) believing in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, 2) truly someone who loves and knows God, 3) truly someone who is born again, 4). truly abiding in Jesus, truly abiding in His love, 5) truly a friend of Jesus, 6). truly a son or daughter of God, and, finally, in that Day of the Lord, 7) truly one of His sheep who goes to heaven and not a goat who doesn't ?

Could there be 7 more important questions for us ? God would be remiss not to help us in this would He not ?

To keep it simple for sheep, He gives one repetitive response that answers all 7 questions. Only one.

1). * Faith or belief or trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of one's sins is dead and of no use unless it manifests love, especially love for the saints.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love..... For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

2). **. To say we love God and Jesus without loving the brethren is to not speak the truth.

1 John 4:20

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

3). ***. Being born again, by definition, means loving the brethren. "Knowing God, by definition, is proved by loving the brethren.

1 John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

4). **** We only abide in Jesus and abide in Jesus' love if we love the brethren.

John 15:10

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.....This is my commandment that you love one another.

5). *****. You are only a friend of Jesus if you love the brethren.

John 15:12-14

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

6). *****. You are only a son or daughter of God if.....you love the brethren.

1 John 3:10

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

7).*****. Only sheep who love the brethren go to heaven.

Matthew 25:31-40

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

Seven extremely important questions for those who profess Jesus as Lord and only One answer. I get that love of the brethren is a fruit of salvation and that you can't earn salvation with fruit. I get that faith precedes love. But if we don't have this one fruit, we aren't a good tree planted by the Lord with our roots in Him. God is so clear on this that you would have to shut your ears and your heart to avoid this truth.

Forgiveness of sin is a glorious grace filled and precious gift and it is the point of reconciled entry into the life of Jesus, the love of Jesus, being made manifest. However, Christlikeness, shown most in love to the brethren, is the ultimate intention and purpose of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the gate, the race belongs to love, and the finish line is perfect Christ likeness. This is the order of importance is it not ?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/8/9 11:29

Paul had strong views on changed character being the proof of genuine conversion. If the Spirit of Christ had come to a man, the "fruits of the Spirit" would appear.

For example, it would have been revolutionary to teach a slave that he should no longer lie and cheat, but what was more astonishing was the (converted) slave's discovery that he no longer wanted to lie and cheat, and now loved the owner he had formerly resented and feared.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2021/8/9 19:48

If we consider the covenant of loving intimate marriage and oneness in spirit with Jesus as the essence and foundation of our salvation, then clearly forgiveness and cleansing are essential to prepare the Bride for her Husband. However, of far more importance is adoring sacrificial love to the Groom's heart than merely that she is thankful to be forgiven. The Groom redeemed a Bride to be intimate in love forever. That's the point of my post and question I think. And the crazy part is that the Groom says to His treasured possession that we should love each other as He loved and loves us.