

41-11-01-Our Trust in the Forgiveness of Sins
 Creed, forgiveness, pardon, forgiving, sins, faith
 Mark 11:25

Jesus turns His forgiveness of us into our forgiveness of others.

INTRODUCTION:

–“I believe in... the forgiveness of sins,” reminds us of *being forgiven*, as in 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. But this promise is *conditional* (“If we confess...”), and *starts a process* (“he... will purify us”). God’s pardon is *by grace*, but it’s a ‘package deal’ with *conditions* and *consequences*. – Mark 11:25, *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.* Because God is *forgiving*, He sent *Jesus*. When we *embrace Christ*, we receive His *forgiving nature*. This *transformational consequence* of being *forgiven* is: “he... will... purify us from all unrighteousness.” One *major target* of this *purifying process* is *our unforgiveness*. So, the Creed’s “*forgiveness of sins*” speaks about a *forgiven life* and a *forgiving lifestyle*. **HOM.idea.**

I. Jesus Wants to Make Us into Mountain-Movers

- A. The context of forgiveness in v.25 is v.23, “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself **into the sea**,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”
1. Jesus fulfilled a prophecy about His removing our *mountain of sins*– Micah 7:19, You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities **into the depths of the sea**.
 2. Some fear their personal mountain is too big: “I’m too far gone... the weight of my sins is too great!” (Jesus answers, “Have faith in God,” and the Creed says, “I believe in... the forgiveness of sins.”)
- B. But once our personal weight of sin is removed, there’s *another mountain* that can weigh even more heavily: “I hate them for what they did to me. I’ll never forgive them! They don’t deserve it!” (Indeed, they don’t. No one does... that’s why [“Jesus paid it all!” / All to Him I owe. / Sin had left a crimson stain. / He washed it white as snow.”])

TRANS: Jesus moved mountains to get us to be *mountain-movers*. He forgave us so we could forgive others. He said, “Freely, freely, you have

received, / Freely, freely give. / Go in my name, and because you believe, / Others will know that I live.”] Sharing His love means giving what we received: forgiveness. Will others know He lives because we believe, not just in our own “*forgiveness of sins*,” but in a *lifestyle of forgiving others*?

II. Jesus Wants to Make Us into Sin Releasers

- A. Prayer connects us to divine resources, but it’s hindered “if [we] *hold anything against anyone*.” *Why does our “hold” hinder prayer?*
1. We can’t “*stand praying*” [for divine resources], if we’re standing in God’s position as Judge over sinners. (If we’re to keep ourselves from usurping His role as *God*, we must “*Let go and let God*.”)
 2. Forgiving others releases our “hold” on them. [NT forgive = sending away, releasing, letting go.] (We stop holding them accountable to us and release them to the *One Who ultimately settles all accounts*.)
- B. On the Cross, while paying for humanity’s forgiveness, Jesus got personal with those who crucified Him: “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’” (He was showing why He came: to bring us forgiveness and to teach us to be forgiving.)
1. v.25 says, “if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (God wants to release us, but His justice holds Him back until we have released others.)
 2. God won’t violate our free will! If we insist on gripping tight to the sins others against us, we have *no open hand* to receive His blessing of forgiveness. (*Unforgiveness is a self-defeating sin*.)

CONCLUSION:

–In so many NT passages *being forgiven* is tied to *forgiving others*: Eph 4:32, Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Jesus had us pray, “Forgive us our debts as forgive our debtors.” He said in Luke 6:37b, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” His spiritual goal is to **turn His forgiveness of us into our forgiveness of others**. –This twin **trust in the forgiveness of sins** isn’t automatic. The 1st kind comes by answering His call, “Come unto Me.” But the 2nd kind comes by a *daily response to Christ’s ongoing call*, “Follow Me.” So, whenever we say, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins,” let’s rejoice in being forgiven personally but also trust that Jesus will lead us in manifesting the grace of *His forgiving nature*, as we follow Him in forgiving others.