

“He Is a Forgiving God”
(Isaiah 55:6-7)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation: Why should you love God?

1. Of course you should because,
 - a. He brought you into existence,
 - b. He has taken care of you your whole life,
 - c. Every good thing you’ve every had – from parents, to brothers and sisters, to friends, to opportunities to do worthwhile things – He’s given you,
 - d. He’s answered all your prayers,
 - e. He’s promised to provide everything you need throughout your entire life,
 - f. And He’s promised not only to keep you in existence, but to take care of you for the rest of time.
 - g. You wouldn’t be what you are or where you are – you wouldn’t even be – if it weren’t for Him.

2. But we’ve been looking at the fact that you should especially love Him because of the kind of person He is:
 - a. He is gracious: You don’t deserve *any* of these things.
 - b. He is compassionate: Everything He’s given has been an act of mercy towards you.
 - c. He is abounding in lovingkindness: He’s planned these good things from eternity.
 - d. In short, He is love.

B. Preview.

1. This evening, let’s consider another attribute of God, something else that flows from His love, something else that’s true about Him that should make us love Him: His forgiveness.
 - a. This is something we so often take for granted,
 - (i) That He is forgiving,
 - (ii) That He will overlook our sins.

 - b. More often than not, instead of being thankful and loving Him more for this,
 - (i) We tend to take advantage of it.
 - (ii) As Paul says we shouldn’t do – we sin that grace might abound (Rom. 6:1).
 - (iii) We return another offense for His love.

2. Let’s consider four things:
 - a. What it means that God is forgiving.
 - b. Why the Lord can be forgiving.
 - c. What you must do to receive this forgiveness.

d. And why you should love Him more and not less for it.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, what does it mean that God is forgiving? It means He won't hold you accountable for the sins you've committed.
1. You can appreciate this more when you consider what your sins would have cost you.
 - a. Each of them is infinitely offensive to God.
 - b. He would have weighed each one in His scales of justice.
 - c. Each one would have pushed you further down into hell.
 - d. You would have had to endure unimaginable suffering.
 - e. They would have condemned you forever.
 2. When He forgives, the slate is wiped absolutely clean.
 - a. He says through Isaiah, "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool'" (1:18).
 - b. He will remove them from you as far as they can be removed – the psalmist writes, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (103:12).
 - c. He will no longer remember them against you in judgment. The prophet Micah writes, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (7:18-19).
 - (i) It's not that He doesn't remember what they are.
 - (ii) But He won't bring them up against you in judgment.
 - (iii) He won't allow them to influence His opinion of you anymore.
 - d. His pardon is full and complete – not one of your sins is left.
 - (i) His pardon is also final – no sin will ever condemn you from that time forward.
 - (ii) Jesus says, "And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).
 - (iii) This could only be true if all your sins are fully and finally dealt with.
 - (iv) That's exactly what He does.
- B. Second, why can the Lord forgive?
1. God is absolutely holy and absolutely just.
 - a. He can't just overlook your sins.
 - (i) How do you feel when you see injustices go unaddressed?
 - (a) When you see murderers live after they've deprived someone else of their life?
 - (b) Or when you see anyone not justly punished for their crimes?

- (ii) God feels this infinitely more.
 - b. Every sin has to be fully paid, every injustice fully required.
 - (i) God can't pass over even the smallest sin.
 - (ii) He just can't brush it away or pretend it didn't happen.
 - (iii) If He is to forgive, He must have a just reason.
2. Thankfully, He does in Jesus Christ: Jesus made a full payment on the cross for everyone who would trust Him.
- a. Again, your sins were infinite.
 - (i) Any one of them was enough to condemn you forever.
 - (ii) But you committed far more than one –
 - (a) Every thought you've ever thought was sinful,
 - (b) Every word, every action, the same.
 - (c) Every one of them before you came to Christ,
 - (d) Even those afterwards, since not even one has ever been absolutely pure.
 - (e) All of these have offended the infinitely holy God.
 - b. But Jesus made an infinite payment.
 - (i) There's no way you could ever have paid for them.
 - (a) You couldn't have worked them off.
 - (b) You owed Him perfect obedience anyway.
 - (1) You could only have offered Him imperfect works –
 - (2) Which don't deserve reward, but only more punishment.
 - (ii) Only Jesus could have paid for them.
 - (a) That's what He did when He suffered on the cross.
 - (b) All the sins of those who would trust Him were laid on Him,
 - (c) God poured His wrath out on Him,
 - (d) And His justice was satisfied fully and finally.
- C. Third, what do you need to do to receive His forgiveness?
- 1. Of course, you have to trust in Jesus.
 - a. You have to trust in His obedience,
 - b. And in His death on the cross/His atonement,
 - c. To take away your sins and to make you right with God.
 - 2. But as our text reminds us, you must also repent.
 - a. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7).
 - b. You must turn from the things that offend God.
 - (i) Even from the things you think that are sinful.
 - (ii) And return to the Lord.
 - (a) You fell away in Adam,

- (b) You must return now in Jesus.
- (c) If you do, He will have compassion on you.
- (d) He will pardon you abundantly.
 - (1) You won't just squeak by.
 - (2) You will be fully and finally pardoned.

D. Finally, why should you love Him more and not less for His forgiveness?

1. As I said at the beginning: so many use forgiveness as a reason to sin more.
 - a. If the Lord's going to forgive you, why not sin?
 - b. Why not indulge in the things of the world, when you can still have heaven?
 - c. Why not have your cake and eat it too?

2. You can't because God won't allow it.
 - a. As we saw this morning,
 - (i) If you choose to hold onto your life in this world,
 - (ii) You will lose your life.
 - (iii) You must die to yourself in this life,
 - (iv) To gain the life to come.

 - b. The new nature He gives you won't allow you to do this either.
 - (i) Paul writes, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:1-2).
 - (ii) You can only trust Jesus by the help of His Spirit.
 - (a) But where the Spirit gives this help, He changes the heart.
 - (b) You won't look at sin as desirable/as cake any more.
 - (c) You'll see it for what it really is: filth, dung.
 - (1) Sadly, your corruption will still make it appear far too often as cake.
 - (2) But the grace in you will help you see it as it really is.
 - (3) You won't want to continue in it.

 - c. Either way, you won't use God's grace as an excuse to sin.
 - (i) His forgiveness won't encourage you to keep doing the things that offend Him.
 - (ii) These things will offend you too.
 - (iii) Instead, you will love and thank Him more for delivering you from sin.
 - (iv) Especially when you consider what it cost Him to forgive you – His Son.

3. God is a forgiving God: Can you love a God like this?
 - a. For those of you who haven't trusted in His Son.
 - (i) Do you realize that He offers you full and complete forgiveness?
 - (a) You are like a condemned convict – heading to execution –
 - (b) Worse, heading to everlasting punishment for your many many crimes.
 - (c) And yet the Judge offers you a full pardon.

- (ii) All you have to do is receive it.
 - (a) Just look to His Son Jesus,
 - (b) To His perfect life,
 - (c) To His sacrifice on the cross,
 - (d) And trust Him to save you.
 - (e) Believe His promise that if you will just turn from your sins and come to Him, He will freely, fully and finally pardon you.
 - (f) Will you receive His forgiveness and live,
 - (g) Or turn away from Him and die?

- b. If you are already a believer here this evening, realize that this is where you were, and that He has forgiven you.
 - (i) He has set you free from an eternity of suffering –
 - (ii) Something that you justly deserved.
 - (iii) And now what should you do for Him?
 - (iii) Far from continuing to offend Him by sinning,
 - (iv) You should love Him.
 - (v) Do you love Him?

- c. Do you realize that He's also perfectly willing to forgive whoever will come to Him.
 - (i) Shouldn't this encourage you to offer it to others,
 - (ii) So they might be forgiven as well?
 - (iii) If we don't, they will perish in their sins forever.
 - (iv) May the Lord increase our love for the lost,
 - (v) So that we would bring this good news to them. Amen.

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