

Lesson 6 --- February 15, 2018

1. Review last month's lesson & share a truth that enhanced your understanding of Romans.

2. Consider the biblical teaching on forbearance by answering the following ---
 - a. How does God show forbearance to mankind in general?

 - b. How does God show forbearance in the Old Testament sacrificial system?

 - c. How does God show forbearance eternally?

3. Briefly summarize three areas where we tend to boast, and explain why self-evaluation is important.

4. Utilize the attached excerpt from the sermon "Only One Way to God" to respond to do you agree/disagree with the ecumenical movement. Explain your answer. Does your response impact your daily life? If so, how?

5. Reflect on Psalm 32 where David is an example of how God credits righteousness to a sinner's account. List results of sin and results of forgiveness ---
 - results of sin:

 - results of forgiveness:

Notes for Lesson 6

Question 2 (“Just and the Justifier”, 11/5/17, pp. 6-8)

Consider the biblical teaching on forbearance by answering the following ---

a. How does God show forbearance to mankind in general?

We must understand that, at the point of man's rebellion against God, God does not owe mankind anything. I have told you before that if God had taken Adam and Eve after the fall and immediately cast them into the lake of fire, He would have been just, and they would have received their full consequences.

More than that, if God had waited and allowed Adam and Eve to populate the earth for thousands of years and then brushed all of mankind into eternal judgment, the holy angels in heaven would have glorified God singing, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. The earth is full of Your glory.” In fact, God did judge most of mankind via a worldwide flood but was gracious to eight people: Noah and his family. But we must know and understand that God owes absolutely nothing to man.

Instead of judging man instantly, God has continually poured out blessing and grace upon mankind as a whole. This is the forbearance of God. I am not even referring to the supreme act of mercy in His giving His only Son, but rather I am simply focusing on God's goodness to unsaved mankind. For example, let's say that you are not a believer in the Gospel and yet you are still alive and not in hell. That is God's forbearance. Instead of hell, you are on earth in good health and alive and eating well and clothed and enjoying shelter. That is the grace of God; that is His forbearance.

You come home from your job and your child greets you or your parent comes home from work and gives you a hug. That is God's grace. You go into your house and enjoy all the luxuries of modern living. You turn on your air conditioner or fire up your heater in the winter; you have running water; you sleep in a comfortable bed. That is God's forbearance. So even though we have no excuse for our sin against God and we are all guilty before Him, yet He, in His forbearance, gives grace.

God's forbearance enables man to live in peace, to gain wealth, and to live in health. All that is the result of the riches of God's kindness, His tolerance, forbearance, patience, and long-suffering. In Greek these words are generally used of a holding back, a delaying.

2 Peter 3:8-10 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to re- pentance. 10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, & the earth and its works will be burned up.

b. How does God show forbearance in the OT sacrificial system?

So God in His forbearance passed over sin previously committed in the Old Testament. That does not mean that He winked at sin and did nothing about it. God still judged sin even in the Old Testament. The question is: How did He judge sin? He judged it by accepting the death of a substitute and therefore covering sin.

We learn that the sins of God's people in the Old Testament were “covered” at the time when they committed them. Their sins were not utterly removed, but they were covered. The Hebrew word for “atonement” is “kippur” which means “to cover.” You may have heard of “Yom Kippur”--- the Day of Atonement, the day of covering.

The Day of Atonement in the Old Testament was a yearly reminder that the daily, weekly, and monthly sacrifices made at the altar were not sufficient to remove sin. Even at the altar, the worshipper stood “far off,” unable to approach the holy presence of God. God's presence was represented in the Holy of Holies. One day a year, on Yom Kippur, the covering blood was brought into the holy of holies by the high priest as the representative of the people.

But the shed blood of sacrifices could only cover the sin of God's people in the Old Testament. It could not provide eternal justification. It was not until Jesus came in the flesh and offered Himself as a sacrifice that God's wrath could be satisfied.

Hebrews 10:1-4 *For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* The sacrifices could not take away sin, but they could cover sin until a later time.

c. How does God show forbearance eternally?

Hebrews 9:11-12,15 *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . 15For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

There on the cross, God took the sins previously committed by God's people in the Old Testament and our sin and placed them upon Jesus and poured out His wrath upon Him. By doing so, God showed for all of time that He is just and righteous and without compromise. The atheist's problem is that they stopped at the Old Testament and missed the whole point of the New Testament. So when Jesus died, the sins which had been covered in the Old Testament were uncovered, placed upon Jesus (the Lamb of God as John the Baptist called Him), and Jesus satisfied the wrath of God.

God always had in mind the death of Christ for the sins of all the world for all of time. We find in the Scriptures that Christ's death was not a knee-jerk response by God to fix man's sin. God had planned the death of Christ beforehand. God announced in the Old Testament that He would provide His Messiah who would die for sin.

Isaiah 53:5-6,10 *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. 6All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. . . . 10But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering.*

Peter's first sermon in Acts 2:23 states that Jesus was "*delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.*"

So God was gracious and forbearing as He dealt with His people in the Old Testament. God provided a covering of sin through the shed blood of innocent animals until the time of Christ--- the eternal Lamb of God, the innocent Son of God who shed His blood to satisfy the justice of God & the wrath of God.

Question 3 ("Only One Way to God", 11/12/17, pp. 6,7)

Briefly summarize three areas where we tend to boast, and explain why self evaluation is important.

We considered some of the grounds on which we boast or try to take credit; for example, morality. Most people think that they can save themselves by being moral, or doing good things. They believe that they are more moral than other people; and therefore, God approves of them.

Apart from God, we all draw up our own little systems of morality, and then we live by our own sets of laws and rules expecting God to approve of us based on our efforts and achievements. Salvation through the work of Christ undercuts all of that. Again, Christianity assaults your pride.

Another ground for boasting is one's feelings. For some people, their focus is not on morality but their feelings.

We saw that their thoughts go something like this: "I have such warm thoughts about God whenever I come to church. I know that I am not a very moral person, but my heart is so tender. I feel close to God. At times tears even come to my eyes. Surely God must approve of such a sensitive person as me."

We saw that this kind of thinking is not new. In every generation, there have been people pushing a kind of emotional/mystical agenda that focuses on feelings and emotions. Even back in Spurgeon's day, this type of emphasis was prevalent. Spurgeon wrote this about religious feelings. "This is works in its most damnable shape. Works says, 'I will rely upon what I do.' But if you rely upon what you feel, you shall as certainly know eternal judgment as if you trust in what you do." He goes on to discuss the difference between remorseful feelings and repentance. One can feel sorry for sin, but repentance is an action word. Repentance takes steps to turn from sin.

So we cannot pride ourselves in our morality or our feelings. Lastly, we saw that we cannot take pride in our knowledge. Some people think that they are going to be saved by their superior religious knowledge, and they take pride in that. They may not be really moral and even "feeling" oriented, but they know a great deal of doctrine and have a very sound theological system. You will find this mindset in seminaries. Some think, "How could God possibly condemn me when I understand the doctrine of the Trinity so well? Or salvation, or election, or end times, or creationism?" The list goes on. First Corinthians 8:1 says that knowledge makes arrogant or puffs up.

We considered that no one will be saved by mere knowledge. Saving faith includes knowing the truth, but knowledge is not faith. The devil understands more doctrine than any man, but he is going to know eternal judgment.

Question 4 ("Only One Way to God", 11/12/17, pp. 14,15)

Do you agree/disagree with the ecumenical movement? Explain your answer. Does your response impact your daily life? If so, how?

Beginning with Cain and Abel, there have always been only two systems of religion in the world. One is God's system of what He accomplishes for man, and the other is man's system of human achievement. One is the religion of God's grace, and the other the religion of men's works.

Within man's system there are thousands of religious forms and names, but they are all built on the achievements of man, and they are inspired by Satan. Evaluate any and all man-made religions and you will find a works religion whereby man attempts to live a good life and ultimately make it to God or break the cycle of reincarnation.

Then there is Christianity that tells the plain truth about man, that his attempts at righteous acts are offensive to God. If man is going to make it to God, he must confess that he is evil and sinful and that he needs God to provide an avenue of reconciliation. Man must trust in the person of Jesus Christ: that He is God in human flesh and that He died in the place of sinful man and rose from the dead. Man must repent and trust in what God has accomplished for him.

There are two and only two choices when it comes down to the most important reality in your life. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus says, "*Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few those who find it.*"

There are two gates or two ways: the narrow and the broad. There are two destinations: life or destruction. There are two groups: the few and the many. There are two kinds of trees: the good and the bad; which produce two kinds of fruit: the good and the bad. There are two kinds of people who profess faith in Christ" the sincere and the false. There are two kinds of builders: the wise and the foolish; who build on two kinds of foundations: the rock and the sand.

God makes it very simple. There are only two paths that you have to choose from, God's way or man's way. I was driving this past week and came across a billboard that spelled the word "coexist" by using symbols of

Islam, Judaism, Christianity, male and female, and some others. The sad thing is that a Christian church was the sponsor. The mindset today is unity at any cost. "Just boil down your particular way of thinking to the most basic common denominator, and let's just get ecumenical."

Well, that is not Jesus' message. Jesus said that He is going to the Father to prepare a place for those who follow Him. He instructs His followers on how to get to the Father. He not only shows mankind the way to the Father by revelation, but He makes clear that He is the only way to get there. The answer to Larry King's question, "Are there many ways to God?" Jesus says, "No! 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

Question 5 ("The Accounting of Salvation", 12/10/17, pp. 9-14)

Reflect on Psalm 32 where David is an example of how God credits righteousness to a sinner's account. List results of sin and results of forgiveness ---

Psalm 32, a Psalm of David. A Maskil.

1How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! 2How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! 3When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

Notice the effect that unconfessed sin had on David. His conscience so provoked him that it affected him physically. His body was in pain seen by his groaning. He could not sleep. He had fever. This reiterates that we are psychosomatic beings. How we think will affect our bodies. I need go no further than to mention ulcers that are caused by excessive worry. Anxiety can eat a hole in the stomach lining. I believe many of our psychiatric and physical problems stem from sin that has not been addressed by the Gospel. A conscience that will not be silenced causes havoc in a person's life.

5I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Confession of sin has been a fundamental doctrine thus far in Romans. Paul has taken great pains to reveal the depths of mankind's depravity. Here David is one who confessed that he was ungodly and thus made himself eligible to be credited with righteousness by faith. David no longer attempted to hide his sin from God. He openly called sin for what it is.

The forgiveness that David found was monumental. We fail to appreciate the effects of forgiveness on our thought process and our conscience. When a sinner begins to grasp that there is no more condemnation, the emotional well-being that results is significant.

6Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. 7You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.

David exhorts those who would be godly to seek God in prayer for forgiveness during the day of grace. There will be a day when grace will cease, but today is the day of grace. When a person is made right with God through grace, he finds God as a sure foundation, a rock and fortress. God de-livers people, not necessarily out of their hardship, but through it . . . and then God speaks in verse 8.

8I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. 9Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.

Here God Himself speaks. He affirms that He will instruct the believer and teach him to walk in godly paths; in the New Testament, this is sanctification. God says that He will give counsel with a never-closing eye upon the believer. This past week, I was talking with some women in the church as they were getting ready for the women's Christmas party. We were agreeing how God puts a hunger and thirst in the hearts of believers for

God's Word.

God admonishes the strong-willed heart of men who are like stubborn mules who will not come to those who would take care of them unless they are dragged.

*10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.
11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.*

David ends this amazing psalm with reassurance of those who trust in the Lord. "Lovingkindness" in the Old Testament is synonymous with the New Testament words for "mercy" and "grace." Mercy and grace surround those who place their trust in Christ. Sorrow surrounds the wicked.

I believe when you turn 50 years old and older you really begin to see that this is true. Very few wicked people die happy. Most live in sorrow. But I see many believers who love the Lord and are growing in the Lord are glad in the Lord, and they rejoice. There is joy in the hearts of those who love God no matter what.

David knew the terrible burden of sin as a result of his transgression. He attempted to "cover" his own sin by hiding it, but the guilt was still there. It was when David confessed his sin to God and knew he was not credited with sin but with righteousness that he was freed from guilt and counted himself blessed of God.

Are you suffering from guilt for some past sin? Does your mind return again and again to the wrong you have done? Is guilt always at your side? If so, you need to learn what David learned of God's grace in reference to sin. Go back to Romans 4:7 . . .

7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED."

This word here translated "forgiven" carries the idea "to send away, to divorce permanently." The idea is separation. Applied to a person's sin, forgiveness means that God will separate the sinner's depravity and guilt from the sinner. When mankind punishes sin, he always punishes the sinner. But God is able to impute our sin to Christ and pour out His wrath and justice on Him in our place.

Psalm 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

Hebrews 9:27-28 *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear [bear away, carry away] the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.*

1 Peter 2:24 *He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

Back to Romans 4:8 . . . *"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."*

Here is a phrase which uses the picture of economics --- *will not take into account*. This is the bookkeeping term that we have been emphasizing. The point is that God would not list the sins of those He saves in their ledgers. He wipes the slate clean forever. God says in Jeremiah 31:34, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

In our human relationships, even when we have the best intentions, we do not forget wrongs done to us (except for me as my forgetfulness grows). We want to forget but actually an offense done to us lingers in our minds even years afterwards, and we will bring it back up occasionally. It can be very hurtful.

This text from Jeremiah 31:34 tells us that God is not like that. It tells us that once He has forgiven us for our sin through the work of Christ, He will never ever bring it up to us again. He will not bring it up in this life nor for eternity.