

I BELIEVE IN FORGIVENESS

I John 1:8-10

May 4, 2008 Sunday p.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. We are very near the end of our study of the Apostle's Creed (Review).
 - 1. It was written in the middle of the 2nd century.
 - 2. It was not written by the Apostle's .
 - 3. It is Trinitarian in form.
 - 4. It is a brief statement of faith, not intended to be comprehensive.
 - 5. It may have been a baptismal confession of faith.
 - 6. It is not authoritative any more than our "Baptist Faith and Message" is.
- B. Today's statement is "I believe in forgiveness".
 - 1. **Martin Luther**, the father of what we call the "Protestant Reformation" said, "**I believe in the forgiveness of sins' was the most important article in the Apostle's Creed. If that is not true, what does it matter whether God is almighty or Jesus Christ was born and died and rose again? It is because these things have a bearing upon my forgiveness that they are important to me.**"
 - 2. Let's consider two important questions about forgiveness.

I. FIRST, WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

- A. First, let's see what forgiveness is not.
 - 1. It's not saying our sin doesn't matter.
 - a. It matters to those we may have hurt.
 - b. It matters to God.
 - 2. It's not saying that in time we will get over it.
 - a. Those we may hurt don't get over it.
 - b. God doesn't just get over it either.
 - 3. It's not saying there are no consequences for our sin.
 - a. There may be with those we hurt.
 - b. There are with God too.
- B. Well, what is forgiveness? Charles Stanley, pastor of FBC, Atlanta says three things are necessary for genuine forgiveness to take place.
 - 1. First, an injury must occur-some wrong, pain, or hurt.
 - 2. Second, a debt is due-some consequence will follow our actions.
 - 3. Third, the debt is cancelled, but not necessarily the consequences.

Psalms 130:3-4.

³ **If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?**

⁴ **But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared. (Or worshipped).**

II. SECOND, HOW CAN WE EXPERIENCE FORGIVENESS?

- A. An exasperated salesman abandoned his car in a “No Parking” zone and left this note: “I’ve circled this block 20 times. I have an appointment and must keep it or lose my job. *Forgive us our trespasses.*” He returned to find a ticket under his wiper blade with this note attached: “I’ve circled this block 20 years. If I don’t give you a ticket, “I’ll love my job. *Lead us not into temptation.*”
- B. Unlike a traffic cop, God forgives, but what steps are involved.
1. First, we must acknowledge our sin.
I John 1:8 & 10.
⁸ **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.**
¹⁰ **If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**
 2. Second, we must confess our sin.
I John 1:9a.
⁹ **If we confess our sins.....**
 3. Third, we must receive God’s forgiveness.
I John 1:9b.
.....he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

CONCLUSION

- A. In his Christian book titled, **Blue Like Jazz**, **Donald Miller** tells the story of his atheist friend, Laura. She had been struggling with the idea of God for some time, and was now on the verge of believing. Don was trying to persuade her to take that final step. **He said to her: “God wants a relationship with you , and that starts by confessing directly to him. He is offering forgiveness.” His friend said: “You’re not making this easy, Don. I don’t exactly believe I need a God to forgive me of anything.”**
- B. Do you need a God to forgive you of anything? The Apostle’s Creed confirms that forgiveness is available, “I believe in forgiveness.” Do you?