



New Creation (9)
ACTS Prayer (2)

1 John 1:8-10

#1 Confession and Forgiveness

One of the important roles of Christian prayer is to allow us to repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness.



Forgiveness is a very important subject that is found throughout the Bible. It is also at the center of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because our sin is the main reason behind the severance of our relationship with God, **the forgiveness of sin is at the forefront of our reconciliation with Him.**

#2 God's Dilemma: Love and Righteousness

However, God's forgiveness isn't simple. We can't just say "God forgives because He loves" because another characteristic of God, His righteousness, shows us how frightening His wrath and judgment toward sin are.

God wants to forgive us our sins because He loves us so much, but at the same time He has to punish and pour out His wrath on our sin because He is so righteous.

"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation" (Ex 34:6-7)

Here we see both God's forgiveness and His punishment for sin at the same time. It is amazing to see how these two assertions seem to contradict each other and yet coexist.

#3 The Forgiveness of God

The Bible depicts God as the Forgiver despite His punishment for sin.

“But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you... Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins” (Ps 130:4, 7-8)

This passage beautifully describes God’s forgiveness and salvation of sinners out of His unfailing love for them.

God indeed appears as the forgiver in the Old Testament. But the difference was that He always required the Israelites to offer Him sacrifices for their sins.



That was how God allowed His people to receive forgiveness for their sins without they themselves experiencing God’s wrath and punishment.

#4 The Forgiveness of God

The same principle is applied in the New Testament. But what changed was who was sacrificed.

In the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself by being crucified to open the new and living way for us to be forgiven.



“God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood to be received by faith.” (Rm 3:25)

Because of Christ’s great work of salvation, both God’s love and righteousness were able to be perfectly fulfilled. Because Jesus paid the ransom for all people’s sin, the curse of sin can no longer affect all those who believe in Him and receive His salvation by faith.

This truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ must be the foundation of our confession of sin and repentance.

#5 The Forgiveness of God

If our confession is not based on God's grace and unconditional love and Jesus' amazing sacrifice on the cross, the purpose of our repentance would become nothing more than calming God's wrath.

However, the gospel says that **Jesus Christ already suffered because He bore all our sins in His body**. So, technically speaking, we don't have to suffer to be forgiven by God.

Even though confession of sin in Christianity also includes sincere, penitent hearts and tears, **what's most important in confession and repentance is to receive the forgiveness achieved by Jesus Christ on the cross by faith.**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"
(1Jn 1:9)

We don't need to do anything to be forgiven. We don't have to distress ourselves. That's because the new and living way for us to be forgiven was already opened when Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross and rose again.

#6 The Forgiveness of God

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins**, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1Jn 2:1-2)

Because Jesus already paid the ransom for our sins, it is impossible for God to refuse to forgive all those who rely on Him and confess their sins.

That’s the confidence we should have when we go before God. No matter what we have done, and no matter how serious we think our sin is, **all those who believe in Jesus and put their faith in Him will be forgiven.**

To have this confidence changes our repentance. One of the reasons that repentance is hard is because of the misguided belief that we don’t deserve to be forgiven.

However, **if we really understand that true forgiveness was already achieved in Christ**, we can always go before God’s presence in every situation, confessing our sins no matter what serious sins we’ve committed before.

#7 Forgiveness and Repentance

Nevertheless, we should never make light of forgiveness. Even though it's freely given to us, Jesus sacrificed His own life in order to give us that forgiveness.

We must never forget that “the wages of sin is death” (Rm 6:23). If we were to pay the price of sin, no payment would be ever enough to receive forgiveness for our sins.

Forgetting this truth makes our confession **shallow and superficial**, which never results in true changes in our lives.

The reason we repeat the same sin again and again even after confessing it before God is not only because we're too weak to overcome our sinful nature on our own, but also because **we don't really understand what it cost Jesus. It cost Him His blood and His life.**

For us to commit the same sin repeatedly means that we underestimate, ignore, and show disrespect for the value of the noble sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“They are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace” (Heb 6:6)

#8 Forgiveness and Repentance

Our confession of sin must include a strong determination to stop repeating the specific sin. When repenting of our sins, we must remember that our repentance must include two aspects—recognition and rejection.

Right after we confess our sins, **we must take a determined step to reject and avoid them.** Without this, our confessions will never allow us to experience true forgiveness.

We should remember that repentance that's not accompanied by certain changes in our lives is not true repentance, but only a means of self-satisfaction

We're to remember what Jesus said to the woman who had been caught in the act of adultery.

“Neither do I condemn you. **Go now and leave your life of sin.**”
(Jn 8:11)



Memory Verses

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1Jn 1:9) (1)

“But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you... Put your hope in the Lord, for **with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.** He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins” (Ps 130:4, 7-8) (2)

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins,** and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1Jn 2:1-2) (2)

Questions

1) What do you think is the difference between Christian confession and confession in other religions? What do you think are essential elements of Christian confession that make it genuine? What's the foundation of forgiveness and repentance in Christianity?

2) How often do you confess in your prayers? What kind of sin (not specifically but generally) do you think you confess the most? Why do you think confession is essential in Christian faith and life? Have you experienced your confession bringing forth certain good changes in your life? When and how?