

#74 “Grace that Is Greater than All Our Sin”

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The Bible gives us a great promise in 1 John 1:9 when it says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Although this verse is in the context of a sinner coming to salvation, it is also true that God forgives His children when they sin if only they would come to Him and, in an attitude of repentance, ask to be forgiven. God’s grace is so great that it can cleanse the sinner from his sin so that he or she can become a child of God, and it is so great that even when we as the children of God stumble, we can be forgiven still.

In Matthew 18:21-22, we read, “Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” Peter was probably thinking that he was being generous. Rather than repay a person who had committed a sin against him with equal retribution, Peter suggested giving the brother some leeway, say, up to seven times. But the eighth time, forgiveness and grace would run out. But Christ challenged the rules of Peter’s suggested economy of grace by saying that forgiveness is infinite for those who are truly seeking it. This is only possible because of the infinite grace of God which is made possible through the shed blood of Christ on the cross. Because of Christ’s forgiving power, we can always be made clean after we sin if we humbly seek it. Furthermore, those who sin against us need to be forgiven time after time as long as they are truly repentant.

It is not Biblical to suppose that a person could sin habitually and continually as a lifestyle and still be a believer (1 John 3:8-9), though it is possible to give in to the ways of the world so extensively that we make shipwreck of our faith (1 Timothy 1:18-20). We as believers do stumble (James 3:2), and if we are not careful, we could really veer off course. All of us have weaknesses that we may or may not be aware of. These the devil exploits, and, though we need not fall because of God’s sufficient grace, sometimes we do because we rely upon our insufficient strength. Sometimes we fall badly. When our faith grows weak, and we, like Peter, deny our Lord in word or in life (Matthew 26:75), there is still a chance to repent and be forgiven of our sin. David was certainly a believer, a man after God’s own heart. Yet he sinned by committing adultery, deceit, and murder. Then he refused to admit it for some time. Yet even he was forgiven by God when he repented, though he did have to face the consequences of his sin and the discipline of God. There is no place we can go that God’s grace cannot reach, and there is no depth to which we can sink that God is no longer able to pull us out. His grace is greater than all of our sin, no matter how small or big we might view what we have done. Whether we are just starting to wander off course or if we are already sinking and drowning in our sin, grace can be received.

One of the devil’s traps is to get us into thinking that there is no hope in that there is no

possibility that we can be forgiven, healed, and restored. He will try to get us to feel consumed and entrapped by false guilt such that we do not feel worthy of God's forgiveness any longer. But since when were we ever worthy of grace? Grace is a gift. When we sin, the Spirit will convict us of sin such that a godly sorrow should result (2 Corinthians 7:11). He will not condemn our souls as if there is no hope, for there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). The Spirit's conviction is a work of love and grace. The devil's work is to condemn and make us feel as if God has abandoned us. We need to refuse to listen to the devil's wiles that God's grace cannot come to us. God loves His children, and He desires us to call to Him in repentance. He will forgive because He is faithful and just. **Based upon the work His Son accomplished on the cross, if He is to maintain His holiness and righteousness, He must forgive those who humbly ask.** The grace of God is there for us to receive. It is pride that says that we don't need it or cannot have it. Let us not fall for such deceptions. Grace is not an excuse to sin, and it dare not be abused, meaning that sin must be called sin and that it cannot be treated as if it is innocuous. Unrepentant believers need to be lovingly confronted and guided to freedom, and unbelievers need to be told that they need to repent. Yet let us also emphasize the remedy, for we have been given grace upon grace (John 1:16). It is how we live, how we are saved, how we are sanctified, and how we will be kept and glorified. We who are God's children are benefactors of grace, without which we would have nothing. So let us not refuse to be gracious to others who are humble and seek our forgiveness. Freely we have received, and freely we should give (Matthew 10:8). Let us also receive grace ourselves when we sin by repenting and confessing our sin to God. Why live filthy when Christ offers to make us clean and whole?