



**what it
means
to be**

FORGIVEN

Suppose you accidentally hit your neighbor's daughter with your car. No doubt you would tell the family how sorry you were, and would offer to do anything to help the girl recover.

You would feel terrible if the parents refused to forgive you. But wouldn't you feel good if both the parents and the girl forgave you with open arms?

The Need

No matter how good a person may be, we must admit that no one is totally free from doing, saying, or thinking wrong things. And God agrees: "There is none who does good, no, not one. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:12,23). But God stands with open arms ready to completely forgive and receive all who come to Him confessing they have sinned against Him.

The Basis

In the Bible, God tells us that He can forgive us because His Son has already suffered and died as our Substitute: "In Him (Jesus) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Sinners do not gain forgiveness by begging

or working. They are forgiven because Jesus died for them: "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The Means

However, sinners are not automatically saved. If we do nothing about our sinful condition we will be lost forever. Forgiveness must be received by believing in Jesus, whose blood was shed for us: "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). How do we know? Because the Bible says so, and to doubt God's Word is to call Him a liar (1 John 1:10). You don't want to be guilty of that!

Suppose you owe a lot of money, and are unable to pay it. Hearing of your trouble, a friend pays your debt and gives you a receipt marked, "paid in full." Wouldn't you accept it? How would you know the bill was paid? By the receipt. What assurance!

The Bible says we are forgiven: "The blood of Jesus Christ His (God's) Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). "He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has

passed from death into life” (John 5:24). What greater proof do we need?

The Way

Jesus told a story about two men. The one who was self-righteous boasted about all his good deeds. He didn’t think he needed forgiveness. The other one was an outcast of society who knew he was a sinner. He prayed, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus said, “This man went down to his house justified rather than the other” (Luke 18:13-14).

The worst sin is refusing to admit that you are a sinner needing forgiveness. Don’t fall into that trap. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Confess your sins and God will forgive you!

— *Sam Hadley*

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