**The Blessing of Forgiveness**

**Introduction:**

The Bible affirms that man sinned against God (Genesis 3) and against his fellow man. (Genesis 4) Sin was so serious that it would bring both physical and spiritual death. (Genesis 2:15-17) “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’ ” NKJV Sin, for Adam and Eve as well as for us today, was a departure from God’s standard, His Word.

**Body:**

1. **Sin Separates**

* Sin is what separates man from God. (Isaiah 59:1-2) “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” NKJV
* Both the Patriarchs and the Israelites were told to offer animal sacrifices to bridge that gap between man and God. (Leviticus 4:20) “And he shall do with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.” NKJV But these sacrifices were not sufficient. (Hebrews 10:1-4) “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” NKJV
* Forgiveness is man’s greatest need. God desires a close relationship with mankind, His ultimate creation. But the Father’s holiness keeps Him from fellowshipping that which is unholy and sinful. (Habakkuk 1:13a) “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.” NKJV
* Since Jehovah could not overlook man’s sins, something had to be done to bring man and God together. A ransom had to be paid. (John 3:16) “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” NKJV
* This bringing together is called reconciliation. (II Corinthians 5:18-21) “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” NKJV Christ’s death and resurrection were essential in bringing about this reconciliation.

1. **Blood Unites**

* Specifically, Christ’s blood unites. His shed blood is an essential element of man’s forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22, 26b) “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. 26b He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” NKJV Since sin could not just fade away and since it could not be ignored, it had to be dealt with.
* By dying on Calvary’s cross and shedding His blood, Jesus satisfied God’s requirement of mankind. We call this “propitiation.” (Romans 3:25) “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,” NKJV (I John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” NKJV
* By shedding His blood, Jesus removed the guilt and punishment for our sins. He blotted them out. (Matthew 26:28) “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” NKJV (Ephesians 1:7) “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” NKJV
* When Christ died on the cross, He brought man and God back together. They were reconciled. Notice the role of Christ’s blood. (Romans 5:8-11) “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” NKJV
* When Christ died on Calvary, He paid to God what man owed. He “redeemed” us by His life. (I Peter 1:17-19) “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

When we understand the importance of Christ’s blood that He shed, we will pray more fervently for the forgiveness of our sins. What a great blessing forgiveness is!

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