

# Biblical Topics

## Forgiveness

Every sin is committed against God.

- Psalm 51:4: “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”

God alone can forgive.

- Mark 2:7: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

The Bible assures me that God daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers. From no other book can I learn this blessed fact.

- Psalm 103:2-3: “<sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits <sup>3</sup>who Forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”
  - Psalm 130:3-4: “<sup>3</sup>If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup>But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

God forgives my sins, not because of any merit or worthiness in me. He does this because of His grace for Christ’s sake. God does not forgive our evil works because of some good works we think we have done. Even a thousand good works cannot undo and one sin. We cannot make up for any of our shortcomings and thus try to persuade God to forgive them. The unmerited love of God for man moved Him to forgive us our sins.

- Romans 3:22-24: “<sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
- Ephesians 2:7: “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Christ lived and died for all men, therefore He is the forgiveness for the sins of the world. His resurrection proves that God accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world, and therefore He no longer charges men for their trespasses. This means that the sins of all men are not only atoned for, but they are also forgiven by God. This is called universal justification.

- 1 John 2:2: “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:15: “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:19: “that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

The fact that God forgives sins to men and gives them the righteousness of Christ is not known to man by nature. God revealed to us only in the Gospel.

- Romans 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”
- Luke 24:47: “repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:19: “...And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

The Gospel speaks not of a possible forgiveness, or a future forgiveness, BUT it proclaims forgiveness as an accomplished fact. We need not roam the earth to find it, nor do we have to wait long before we can get it. It is ready for us and near to us in the Gospel. Because this Gospel is preached in the Christian Church, we confess, “In which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers”. “Daily” means that this offer of forgiveness is open for us at all times, every hour of the day. And as we daily sin much, we should daily reassure ourselves of this forgiveness from the promises of the Gospel. “Richly” means that this treasure of forgiveness cannot be exhausted, that God forgives not in part, half-ways, but completely, fully, not only some sins, but all sins.

- Psalm 130:7: “O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.”
- Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

I accept this forgiveness by believing the Gospel. Food may be ready for you on the table, but if you refuse to eat it, it will not benefit you. So the forgiveness of your sins is ready for you in the Gospel, but if you refuse to accept it, it will not help you. Where there is no faith, the Gospel does not profit.

- Romans 3:28: “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”
- Genesis 15:6: “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”
- Hebrews 4:2: “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”

Every believer can and should be certain of the forgiveness of his sins and of his salvation. This is so because God’s promise is sure.

- 2 Timothy 1:12: “That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”
- Romans 8:38-39: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,<sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Much of the above information is taken from: “Luther’s Small Catechism” annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.