

THE WORD OF FORGIVENESS

The Seven Greatest Words of Love, Part 1: Luke 23:27-37

Rev. Steve Norman

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MEMORY VERSE

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon." Isaiah 55:7

"Great crowds trailed along behind him, including many grief-stricken women. But Jesus turned and said to them, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves.' ...Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. Finally, they came to a place called The Skull. All three were crucified there—Jesus on the center cross, and the two criminals on either side. Then Jesus said, 'FATHER FORGIVE THEM, for they do not know what they are doing.' And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched, and the leaders laughed and scoffed. 'He saved others,' they said, 'let him save himself if he really is God's Chosen One, the Messiah.' The soldiers mocked him too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!'" Luke 23:27-37 (NLT/NIV)

WHAT WE USUALLY DO WITH OUR GUILT

1. WE BURY IT

"When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long... My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, 'I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.' And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone." Psalm 32:3-5 (NLT)

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." Pro. 28:13 (NIV)

2. WE BLAME OTHERS

"The man said, 'The woman you put here with me--she gave Me Some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'" Genesis 3:12 (NIV)

"People's own foolishness ruins their lives, but in their minds they blame the LORD." Proverbs 19:3 (NCV)

3. WE BEAT OURSELVES UP

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear... I am bowed down and brought low; all day long I go about mourning." Psalm 38:4, 6 (NIV)

WHAT JESUS WANTS US TO DO WITH OUR GUILT

1. ADMIT IT

"The Lord gave us a mind and a conscience. We cannot hide from ourselves." Proverbs 20:27 (GN)

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

"Let us examine our ways and test them..." Lam. 3:40 (NIV)

2. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

"I recognize my faults; I am conscious of my sins..." Psalm 51:3 (TEV)

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16 (NIV)

3. ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

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

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)

WHAT JESUS DOES WITH MY GUILT

- **HE FORGIVES ME INSTANTLY**

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” Isaiah 55:7 (NIV)

- **HE FORGIVES ME COMPLETELY**

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave ALL our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross.” Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

- **HE FORGIVES ME REPEATEDLY**

“Therefore he (Christ) is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Hebrews 7:25 (NIV)

- **HE FORGIVES ME FREELY**

“For by the sacrificial death of Christ we are SET FREE, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the GRACE of God!” Ephesians 1:7 (GN)

“He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our FREEDOM through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.” Ephesians 1:7-8 (NLT)

“Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!” Psalm 32:1-2 (NLT)

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Dear God, You know everything about me. You know everything that I am ashamed of. You know my regrets, my sins. You know my mistakes. You know my habits. You know my actions and attitudes that cause me to feel guilt.

Today, Jesus Christ, I admit again that I need Your forgiveness. I agree with You that I have done wrong and that I have sinned. Often, I have done what I wanted to do rather than doing what is right. Today, I not only admit my sin, I accept responsibility for it. I am not going to blame anyone else in my life. I am not going to make excuses. Instead, I am going to own up to what is wrong in me and in my life.

Lord, I want to change. I want to follow Your way. I repent of my sin. I want to follow You, and I want to trust You completely. Jesus Christ, thank You for what You did and what You said on the cross when you said, “Father, forgive them.” I believe your words include Your forgiving me, and so I ask You to forgive me for the things I have done wrong, for the things that I am not aware of which I have done wrong, and for the things I should have done but chose not to do. Take away all my guilt. Thank You for paying for my sins on the cross so I could be forgiven. Your Word says that in faith, I can be forgiven, so I accept Your gift of forgiveness and salvation. Thank You for forgiving me instantly and completely and yes, God, thank You that You forgive me repeatedly, and most of all, thank You that You forgive me freely. Please help me to know and feel forgiven. Help me to forgive myself and to forgive everyone else around me who has caused me an offense. In Jesus' name, Amen.