

Lessons from the God Who Forgets

Jerry Lawson: Daystar Church – 3/7/04

Ps 103:1-13 NIV

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Mic 7:18-19 NKJV

18 Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Introduction:

- A. **Illustration:** Old man is asked if he believes in the “here-after.” “Yes, every time I get up to go to the other room, I ask myself, ‘What am I here after?’”
1. Being forgetful is not one of the most desirable traits.
 2. See elderly illustrations...
- B. One of the greatest characteristics of our Father is His forgetfulness.
1. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent – You can never hide from Him (“eyes roam to and fro throughout all the earth...”)

2. Yet, He has chosen to FORGET the iniquities of the repentant.
- C. I grew up hearing dynamic “impromptu” sermons where the pastor just flipped the Bible open and God spoke to Him:
1. I once tried it; it didn’t work!
 2. “Judas went out and hanged Himself...Go ye and do likewise...”
- D. We will use the lives of Peter and Judas to learn lessons from the God Who Forgets:

I. Both Peter and Judas Loved the Lord.

- A. Peter left everything he had as soon as Jesus called him.
1. Peter is the one who answered Jesus question, “Will you also leave me” Answer: “Lord where would we go. You have the words of eternal life.”
 2. Peter also said: “You are the Christ the Son of the living God...”
 3. No one questions how much Peter loved Jesus.
- B. There has been much debate about Judas’ love of Jesus.
1. But Jesus breathed on him and he received the Holy Spirit in Jn 20:22.
 2. Acts 1:17 says that “he was numbered (with the believers) and had part in the ministry.”
 3. Luke 22:3 records the moment when Satan entered Judas’ heart.
- C. So What Happened???
1. One man’s passion kept him close to God.

2. Another man's lack of passion allowed him to fall away
3. We must strive to live passionately for God every day of our lives – for Satan desires to pull us away.

2 Tim 3:5 NIV

(Paul warns against) having a form of godliness but denying its power

Lesson # 1: Having a Form of Godliness is Not Enough!

II. Both Peter and Judas Betrayed Jesus.

- A. In fact, one place in the story encapsulates this dual betrayal.

Luke 22:47-61 NIV

47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" ... 54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance (afar off).

1. Here we notice Judas' obvious betrayal.
 2. But do you see the beginnings of Peter's backsliding?
 3. Peter "followed" but "at a distance."
- B. Peter fell for the oldest trick in the book.
1. He thought that it was okay to slip back as long as he continued to follow.
 2. Following "at a distance" is the most dangerous place you can be – b/c you are deceiving yourself.
 3. You think everything is okay – BUT TROUBLE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!!!

55 But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. 58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. 59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." 60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."

Lesson #2: We have all betrayed Jesus – “all we like sheep have gone astray...” Isa 53:6

C. Take a close look at where you are today.

1. Don't judge it by where someone else is.
2. Judge it by where you have been before.
3. One question: Are you closer to the Lord today than you have ever been in your life?
4. If not, you are following at a distance – DISASTER IS LURKING AROUND THE CORNER!!!

III. Jesus Forgave Both Peter and Judas.

A. Before Judas even betrayed Him, Jesus forgave him.

John 13:27 NIV

"What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him

1. Jesus actually washed Judas' feet, knowing he would betray Him.

2. And knowing full well that Peter would deny Him, Jesus passionately warned him:

Luke 22:31-32 TLB

31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, 32 but I have pleaded in prayer for you that your faith should not completely fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers."

B. Can you see the incredible power of forgiveness that Jesus has?

1. This is why Jesus told of the shepherd who would leave the 99 to find the one.
2. He turned and told them, "I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep!"

C. NO ONE TOOK THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST!

1. He freely laid it down for you and me!
2. If he would not let even death separate you from His love, what makes you think He can't remove your sin?

Rom 8:35-39 NIV

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 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.

Lesson #3: You Cannot Earn Forgiveness; Jesus Just Gives It

Titus 3:5 NKJV

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us

D. Jesus actually singled out Peter through the words of an angel when giving instructions to His disciples after the resurrection (Mk 16:6, 7).

- The only thing that can keep you from the love of God is your willful decision to reject His love!

IV. Both Peter and Judas Were Full of Remorse.

A. As soon as Peter realized what he had done, “he went outside and wept bitterly” (Lu 22:62).

B. Judas also quickly regretted what he had done:

Matt 27:3-5 NIV

3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Lesson #4: Remorse, Alone, Will Get You Nowhere!

V. Peter Repented. Judas Did Not.

A. Rather than deal with his guilt (repentance), Judas allowed it to destroy him.

B. Simon Peter moved beyond regret (remorse) and repented!

1. Peter was actually the first disciple in the empty tomb.
2. While Judas was hanging from a tree, Peter was being gloriously restored.

C. It is clear that Peter (& other NT writers) learned about repentance & restoration:

1 Peter 5:10 NIV

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Rom 4:7-8 NIV

7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

John 3:17 NIV

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Rom 8:1 NIV

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Lesson #5: Repentance (only) Will Break The Chains of Bondage!

Conclusion:

A. Illustration:

Unbeliever tests to see if believer actually talks with God. "I committed a horrible deed many years ago and told no one but God when I asked Him to forgive me. If you talk to God, ask Him what it is and then I will know that you talk to God and He talks to you." "Okay, I will." Later: "Did you talk to God about me?" "Yes." "Did you ask Him what I did?" "Yes." "What did tell you what I did?" "No. He told me he could not remember what you had done. He has cast it in the sea of forgetfulness!"

Lesson #6: God Has Selective Divine Amnesia

- B. He chooses to forget everything that you have put under the blood of Jesus.
- C. He simply cannot forget the good that you have done, and cannot remember the sins you have been forgiven of.

Heb 6:10 TLB

For God is not unfair. How can he forget your hard work for him, or forget the way you used to show your love for him-

Micah 7:19

He will again have compassion on us, and ... cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Closing Song: *"What Sin" or "I Can't Remember Yesterday"*