

February 3, 2013

THERE IS FORGIVENESS

Psalm 130: 1-4

Look at Psalms 130: 1-2 “**Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.**

**2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.”**

Look at Psalm 130: 3 “**If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”**

The one word answer to this question is: NO ONE! **NONE** will *stand*. **If God** ömarks iniquitiesö, **NONE** will *stand*. **NONE** will stand *justified*. **NONE** will stand *forgiven*. **NONE** will stand *blessed of God*. **NONE** will stand in the *favor of God*. **If God** ömarks iniquitiesö, **NONE** will *stand*.

The thought conveyed by the word östandö is endurance. **Who** will *endure*? **Who** will *go on* östandingö? **The** issue here is who will stand, **ULTIMATELY**? **Who** will **CONTINUE** standing? **Who** will stand **IN THE END**? **Who** will stand **AT THE JUDGMENT**?

**Where** God ömarks iniquitiesö, **ALL** are condemned. **Where** God ömarks iniquitiesö, **ALL** will suffer the eternal misery Godø justice demands.

**In** comparing the öblessed manö with the öungodlyö, Psalms 1 says of the öblessedö man that he is delivered from öthe counsel of the ungodlyö and “**the way of sinners**”. It says, “**whatsoever he doeth shall prosper**”. **But**, it says something very different of the öungodlyö.

Look at Psalms 1: 4-5 “**The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**”

The ultimate fate of the öungodlyö is clearly recorded for all who will see. **But**, the question we must always answer is, öWho are the öungodlyö? **Everyone** knows that the lawless and the perverse, and the religiously unconcerned in each generation are the öungodlyö. **But**, Psalm 1 is dealing with the (spiritually) öungodlyö.

The öungodlyö are “**like the chaff which the wind driveth away.**” Like öchaffö, the öungodlyö are those who have an **APPEARANCE** of good. **They** are religious. **They** are zealous. **They** are sincere and dedicated. **They** öappear righteous **UNTO MEN**ö.

**They** are those ötrusting **IN THEMSELVES** that they are righteous and despising othersö. **But**, their **APPEARANCE** is just a öshellö (like chaff) without substance. **They** are ötossed to and fro by every wind of doctrineö. **They** reject Godø Gospel. **They** reject Godø Savior. **They** reject Godø salvation in Christ **ALONE**. **They** are ömarked with iniquitiesö. **These** are those will not stand (at the judgment).

Look back at Psalms 130: 3 “**If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?**”

It doesn't take much to see that the ömarking of iniquitiesö is a serious, a vital, a life and death issue, certainly one worthy of our consideration.

**What** does it mean to ðMARK iniquitiesö? The word means to ðkeepö, to ðretainö, to ðtreasure upö (hold in memory). **Those** ðmarked with iniquitiesö are those ðchargedö with the (legal) guilt of sin. **They** are those who must bear (in themselves) the (just) punishment their sin deserves.

**Illustration:** **The** last time you drove your vehicle, you broke (numerous) laws. **Which** violation are you concerned/worried about? **You** are only concerned about the one you were CITED for. **You** are only anxious about the one an officer wrote you a ðticketö for; the one that was ðmarkedö against you. **Why?** **That** is the ONLY one that requires you to stand before a judge and answer the CHARGE against you. **No** ðchargeö, no worry!

**Man's** laws are much LESS rigid; much MORE flexible than God's are. **We** break the law every day and are seldom cited. **The** law of the land seldom ðmarksö anything against us. **But**, when it does, when we are ðchargedö, the charges MUST BE answered. **You** cannot just throw the ticket away or ignore it. **That** would only bring more charges.

**Under** God's law, EVERY sin brings a ðchargeö. **God** sees everything. **Nothing** is overlooked by God. **And**, every ðchargeö demands payment. **Every** ðchargeö demands punishment. **And**, the punishment for every ðchargeö is eternal death.

**God's** justice will not, (it cannot) fail to ðchargeö. **Nor** can it let a ðchargeö go unpunished (unanswered). **Every** sin must (and shall) be dealt with according to the strict and inflexible justice of God. **Every** sin will be paid the ðwagesö it has earned. ðThe wages of sin is (eternal) death.ö

**If** God ðmarks iniquitiesö, if He ðchargesö ANY sinner with sin, if He leaves ANY sinner to bear their own just punishment, NONE will stand.

**Thankfully**, there is more to this Psalm.

**Look** at Psalm 130: 4 "**But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**"

"**But**", here, is a word of contrast. "**If** God marks iniquities, NONE will stand. "**But**", God does not ðmark iniquitiesö in ALL. **He** does NOT ðimputeö sin to EVERYONE.

"**There** is forgiveness. "**Forgiveness** is found where God does NOT ðimpute sinö; it is found where God does NOT ðmark iniquitiesö. **This** is an act of God toward the objects of His love.

**The** scriptures teach that God's people ARE (already) forgiven for Christ's sake. **His** blood (continually) ðcleanses them from all unrighteousnessö. **God** will not ðtreasure upö; **He** will not hold in memory; **He** will not ðmark againstö; **He** will not ðrememberö the sins and iniquities of His people. **We** see that twice in the book of Hebrews.

**Look** at Hebrews 8: 10-12 and "**For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:**

**11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.**

**12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.**

That phrase is repeated in Hebrews 10:17. We will deal with it more in a moment.

The scriptures also teach that God has separated His people from their sins ðas far as the east is from the westö (I.e. infinitely).

**Look at Psalms 103: 10 “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.**

**This** does not say that God has not dealt *with our sins*. **For** God to NOT deal with sin would be injustice. **He** must (and shall) deal with EVERY sin.

**This** says that God has not dealt with us ðafterö (according to) our sins. **He** has not ðrewarded us ACCORDING TO our iniquitiesö. **What** does God’s justice demand of any sinner who is ðrewardedö ACCORDING TO their iniquities?

ðThe wages of sin is death.ö **If God** gives any sinner the wages that sinner has earned, He must send us to eternal misery. **He** must separate Himself from us eternally.

(Leave 103: 10 up). **Look on at Psalms 103: 11-12 “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.**

**12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.**”

**What** does it mean that God has ðremoved the transgressionsö of His people ðas far as the east is from the westö? **Does** that mean that His people are NO LONGER sinners? Does it mean they are WITHOUT sin? **Of** course, not! **In** this life ALL are still under the presence and (very powerful) influence of sin. **We** ALL (are) and will remain sinners until the day we die.

**What** does it mean that God will ðremember the sins and iniquities of His people no moreö? **Can** God FORGET? **Does** He LOSE His memory? **Again**, of course, not!

**These** terms mean that God has ðremovedö the judgment, the condemnation, (the punishment) of sins from His people. **He** will not ðrememberö their sins IN JUDGMENT. **He** will not ðrememberö them in the WAY OF PUNISHMENT. **He** has separated them from the (legal) guilt of sin ðas far as the East is from the Westö.

**It** means He will not ðmarkö them. **He** will not ðchargeö the legal guilt, the just condemnation of the sins and iniquities of His people TO THEM.

**God’s** elect people have been ðblessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenliesö IN CHRIST. **One** of those ðblessingsö is ðthe forgiveness of sinö. **It is** the non- imputation of sin. **Sin** is not ðimputedö to those ðblessed of Godö. **The** Psalmist is clear about this issue.

**Look at Psalm 32: 1-2 “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

**2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”**

**The** õblessedö are those who are not õchargedö with sin. **The** blessed are those whose sins are not õimputedö to them. **The** õblessedö are those whose iniquities are not õmarkedö against them. **The** õblessedö are those who have (already) been õforgivenö.

**A question** should arise out of this reasoning. **How** can God õmark the iniquitiesö of **SOME**, but, **NOT** õmark the iniquitiesö of **OTHERS**? **Upon** what basis can He õimpute sinö to **SOME**, but, **NOT** õimpute sinö to **OTHERS**? **How** can He õchargeö some with sin, but, õforgive and cleanseö others from all sin? **Upon** what basis **ARE** sinners õblessed of Godö?

“**How** can God be Just and õforgiveö **ANY** sinner? **How** can He remain Just (be doing right) and **NOT** charge any sinner with sin? **How** can He be Just and **NOT** punish **EVERY** sinner with the just punishment that **EVERY** sinner deserves?ö **How** can He be Just and õforgiveö one sinner's sins while holding another eternally accountable for theirs? We are considering the **BASIS** of (true) õforgivenessö.

**The** regenerate sinner, (the one õtaught of Godö; the one brought to õfear Godö), is the **ONLY** one (in any generation) whoö knows the answers to these questions. **Old** Testament õsaintsö knew the answers to these questions. **Paul**, the Apostle, considers two of these õsaintsö in the first verses of Romans 4.

**First**, Paul considers Abraham (the **BASIS** of his justification before God).

**Look** at Romans 4: 1-2 “**What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?**

**2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”**

**Look** at Romans 4: 3 “**For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”**

**Look** at Romans 4: 4-5 “**Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**

**5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”**

**Paul** also considers David. **Look** at Romans 4: 6-8 “**Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,**

**7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**

**8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”**

**As** you can see, verses 7 and 8 are a quote from Psalms 32. **What** I want you to see is this New Testament commentary on what David was explaining in Psalms 32.

**See** it in verse 6.

**Paul** had just explained that Abraham was one õblessedö of God because God charged to him the righteousness Christ (the Messiah) would establish when He came. **Now**, he says that David **ALSO** describes the õblessednessö of the man to whom God imputes righteousness.

**David** does not mention the imputation of righteousness in Psalms 32. **But**, the Apostle Paul's commentary is: **That** is what David is explaining. **That** is what he is õdescribingö in Psalms 32.

**He is** stating the bottom line on the sinner õblessed of Godö. **He is** stating the bottom line of **WHY** one sinner is õforgivenö and another is not. **What** is that bottom line? **God** imputes righteousness to the one and õblessesö him based on that righteousness **ALONE**. **God** charges to him the righteousness of his Substitute.

**And**, He imputes righteousness to him **WITHOUT WORKS**ö. **I.e.** **WITHOUT** any contribution from the sinner; **WITHOUT** any consideration of what the sinner has done or been enabled to do.

**The** bottom line is: **God** imputes to the õblessedö sinner the righteousness **HE** provided; **the** one Christ established by His obedience unto death; **the** one the Holy Spirit points sinners to for all of salvation.

**And**, that, my friend, is the **ONE** reason why God will not õmark iniquitiesö to any sinner. **That** is the **ONE** reason why **ANY** sinner is õforgivenö. **That** is the **ONE** reason why God will not õimputeö sin to any sinner. **That** is the **ONE** reason why any sinner is not facing the eternal wrath of God which **EVERY** sinner justly deserves.

**The** reason: Because Christ represented a **CHOSEN** people. **And**, God õlaid on Him the iniquityö of that **CHOSEN** people. **He** õbore **THEIR** sins in His body on the treeö. **He** was delivered up to the Cross õbecause of **THEIR** offensesö.

**God** õmarked **THEIR** iniquitiesö to Him. **He** imputed/charged Christ with **THEIR** sins. **And**, Christ answered those charges. **He** paid **THEIR** sin debt **IN FULL**. **He** satisfied the law in precept and penalty. **He** established õthe righteousness of Godö, (the righteousness by which God justifies otherwise ungodly sinners).

**There** are no charges remaining against those Christ lived and died for. **Their** sins cannot be õchargedö. **Their** iniquities cannot be õmarkedö. **Those** Christ represented are **REMOVED** from those charges õas far as the East is from the Westö. **God** holds no õmemoryö of any charges against His elect.

**God** sees **THOSE SINNERS** Christ represented **NOW** as He has **ALWAYS** seen them, unchangeably righteous based on Christ's righteousness imputed to them.

**God** does not õmark iniquitiesö against **ALL**. **There** is forgivenessö with God. **And**, that õforgivenessö comes to a sinner by the doing and dying of Christ **ALONE**.

**Look** back at Psalm 130: 4 "**But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**"

öIf God marks iniquities, NONE will stand.ö **But**, ALL are not ömarked with iniquitiesö. “**There** is forgivenessö with God. **He** has öchosenö a people. **He** has öimputedö to THEM the righteousness of Christ. **They** are (already) öforgivenö for Christ’s sake. **They** stand FOREVER (unchangeably) righteous before God.

**They** CANNOT be öchargedö with sin. **Their** sins have been punished IN FULL and PUT AWAY by the death of Christ.

**Now! Who** are THESE so unchangeably öblessedö? **Who** are these so unchangeably örighteousö? **Who** are these that cannot be öchargedö with sin? **Who** are these whose sins are ALREADY öforgivenö? **How** are they identified? **How** are they distinguished from the world?

**THEY** are those (in every generation) who öfear Godö. ö**There** is forgiveness with thee, **THAT** THOU MAYEST BE FEARED.ö **It is** through the knowledge of God’s öforgivenessö that sinners are taught to FEAR God. **It is** the Spirit’s power under the Gospel that brings sinners this FEAR.

**This** is not the (legal) FEAR all are born with. **This** is the (reverential) FEAR that God öputs in His peopleö.

**Look** at Jeremiah 32: 37-40 “**Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:**

**38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:**

**39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:**

**40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”**

God öputs His fearö in the hearts of people. **I.e. He** reveals to them that the ONLY way He can be Just (doing right) in saving them and giving them all the benefits and blessings of His mercy and grace is by the finished work of Christ ALONE. **He brings** us to Himself through Christ crucified.

**And**, He keeps us the same way. “**They shall not depart from me.**” **If you** öfearö God, you can’t leave. **He brings** us to Himself, the only true and living God, a Just God and Savior. **And**, He keeps us by the knowledge of the öforgivenessö that is found in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

**God** is FEARED, (**I.e.** He is revered; **He** is honored; **He** is worshipped), ONLY by sinners brought to rejoice and rest in Christ ALONE for all of salvation. **These** ALONE worship God öin Spirit and in truthö. **These** are those (in every generation) that God is öseeking to worship Himö. It is this öfearö of God (this öfearö that God öputs in His people) that distinguishes them in this world in every generation.

**Under** the law, a sinner can NEVER be CERTAIN. **No** matter how well you have obeyed the law in the past, it still demands your continued obedience if you are to find acceptance through it. **Any** öchargeö of misconduct must be answered by whatever punishment justice demands.

**But**, God's elect; those IN CHRIST; those called by the Gospel, are not under law. **They** are under grace. **They** are under salvation conditioned on and accomplished by Christ ALONE. **They** are forgiven for Christ's sake. **Their** sins were charged to Christ and put away by His death. **They** are forever righteous by the righteousness He earned charged to them.

Look back at Psalm 130: 4 **“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”**

**There** are always two categories of sinners in the world in any GIVEN generation. **In** Psalm 1 they are the blessed and the ungodly. **The** blessed will prosper. **The** ungodly will perish.

**In** this Psalm there are those marked (charged) with iniquity and those forgiven (not charged) with sin. They are distinguished from the rest of the world by their fear of God.

**See** the forgiveness that God has provided in Christ ALONE. **Find** your confidence before God in the imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. **God** is seeking sinners (in this generation) to revere and worship Him, a Just God and Savior, by the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

**“There** is forgiveness with God. That forgiveness is in Christ ALONE. **Will** you be one found in THAT forgiveness?

by Mark Pannell