

The Land of Forgetfulness

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There is a scenic spot in New England that I often travel to. It is along the banks of the Merrimack River in Newburyport, Massachusetts. This is the spot where the old ferry would cross and deposit George Whitfield on the bank of the river. There on high ground stood an old inn and it was there that the great British evangelist would often stay and preach. On one occasion in 1744, while it was Whitfield's third visit to America, he visited this little town in New England. He came to the town of Newburyport and as the ferry brought him across the Merrimack River, to his amazement there stood 200 people waiting for him to disembark and preach for them. Even though it was late at night, they stood there with their torches and lanterns. Whitfield climbed the little rise up to where the old inn was and he addressed the gathered crowd. He preached in the open air and gave a brief sermon, an exhortation, he called it. He exhorted them from scripture and gave them a word of encouragement before retiring for bed.

Today friends, I will do the same. I will present to you a brief exhortation to encourage you, to give you hope. My message today is entitled "The Land of Forgetfulness." What is this land of forgetfulness? Allow me to read you our text from Psalm 103 and verse 12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

That is our focus today, the forgiveness of sin. You see friend, there is a place called the Land of Forgetfulness and this is the place spoken of here in Psalm 103. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Notice it does not say, "As far as the north is from the south," because there is a pole there that connects them. No sir, it speaks of a place where the distance is so vast that there is no meeting between the east and west, they never come together.

And my Bible says in Ephesians, "In him we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins." In the gospel of John we read, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Where does he take them? He takes them to the cross, to the Land of Forgetfulness where, "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath removed our transgressions from us."

As believers, our sins are under his blood. He has removed them from us, far from us. He has not only removed, he's forgotten all about them. They exist no more. When we confess our sins, turn from them in repentance, they go to the cross to that sin substitute that hung there in our stead. Those sins are forgiven with such finality that we see a

picture of this from the book of Micah in chapter 7 and verse 19 which declares, “He will turn again. He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities and thou wilt cast all of their sins into the depths of the sea.” Some parts of the sea are so deep they cannot be fathomed so it is with our sins, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Listen friends, Satan wants to discourage us, to thwart us, to sideline us from service to the King. He wants to hinder our walk with God and our usefulness to God. He will try to put a guilt trip on you and shackle you with the guilt of sins committed. But with Christ, they are all washed away. Like a spring rain washed the earth, so the blood of the Lamb washes all our sins away. How far away? From the east is to the west, that’s how far.

Listen to the following verses taken from the book of Hebrews. He by himself purged our sins and now “once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” And Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Did you hear that? To bear the sins of many. As the scapegoat under the law had upon his head all the iniquities of the children of Israel and so was sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, so the Lord Jesus whom that goat was a type had all the iniquities of his elect laid upon him by God his Father. And bearing them, he took them away.

“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” Where did he take them? He took them to the Land of Forgetfulness. They are forgiven and forgotten in the Land of Forgetfulness never to rise again against us. His blood is on our soul.

Listen friends, as believers who are washed in the blood we can stand on this statement, the past is under the blood, the future is with God and the present is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The past is under his blood. Picture in your mind a garment that has a stain on it. Put a stain remover on it and wash it and what happens? When a stain is washed away, it is removed forever. Now, listen to the word of God, “Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” I repeat, our sins are taken away by the blood to the Land of Forgetfulness.

The Bible says, “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.” Listen to Romans 5:9, “Much more then being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him.” You see friends, God hates sin. Because of sin God will pour his wrath out on all sinners in hell for all eternity but that verse in Romans declares that we are saved from that wrath by his blood.

Listen to this verse from Colossians 1:20, “And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” You see, the trouble with a lot of preaching today is that they omit the blood. Listen brother preacher, you have to preach the blood, you have to preach the cross. Preach the cross and preach the blood. There is only peace and reconciliation through what? The blood, the blood of Christ stained that cross on Calvary, it marked it crimson red. As your sins are scarlet and crimson red so Christ made that bloody cross crimson red with his precious blood.

When a person comes to Christ and that cross, that cross and repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ then those rotten bloody sins are washed away by his blood. They are taken to the Land of Forgetfulness where east never meets west and where they are cast into the depths of the sea never to be brought up again.

O dear friends, listen to the following true story. Years ago, there was a cruel and bloody war taking place in a foreign land and the commander took an oath in the presence of his troops that he would slaughter the entire population of a certain town. As some of these marauding soldiers invaded the town they broke into a house and killed an entire family inside. And on leaving the house, one of the soldiers dipped a cloth into a pool of blood and splashed it on the door as a token to any who might follow of what had taken place inside. Well, a man was hiding in a bush watching all this as the slaughter took place. He ran from the bush to a large house in the center of town where a number of his friends were concealed and he breathlessly told them what he had just seen. At once it flashed upon them what to do. A goat was in the yard. Immediately, they took the goat, killed it and took its blood and splashed it on the door. Scarcely had they closed the door when a band of soldiers rushed into their street but when they came to the blood marked door, they made no attempt to enter. The sword so they thought, had already entered therein and performed its bloody work. So while many around them were slain, all who were within the blood marked door were saved.

Did this not occur in the book of Exodus? God told Moses to tell the people to take a lamb without blemish and kill it in the evening and ye shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood. And the text reads, "For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians. And when he seeth the blood, the Lord will pass over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."

O friends, the precious blood of Christ when God sees it's seal on us, we have peace with him. Our sins are taken away to the Land of Forgetfulness to be forgotten forever and ever and ever. For all eternity.

Let me ask you friend, "Have you by faith applied yourself to that precious blood? Are you washed in the blood and born from above?" "If you have any doubts, then come to Christ now. Run to the cross, to the Christ who takes away the sins of the world. Turn from your sins, repent towards God and place your faith in his dear Son Jesus Christ. That is the only shelter and safety from the judgment of God that will soon break forth upon this dark, sinful Christless world. Come to Jesus and place your trust and faith in him and your sins will be removed as far as the east is from the west.

Allow me to close this exhortation with the following wise comments from the Puritan, Matthew Henry, regarding our verse found in Psalm 103:12. "East is from the west. If we thoroughly forsake our transgressions God will forgive them. The sins of believers shall be remembered no more, shall not be mentioned unto them. They shall be sought for and

not found so that they shall never be laid to our charge nor rise up into judgment against us.”

O friends, Matthew Henry was right. What peace we have knowing that all our sins are taken to the Land of Forgetfulness through the blood of the Lamb.