

He Has Pardoned Us

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Date: 15 December 2024

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[0 : 00] Let's open tonight to the prophet Micah, chapter 7, Micah 7, Jonah Micah, Nahum Habakkuk.

Recently, we've heard a lot of how President Biden, in an unprecedented move, issued a full pardon for his son, Hunter, a pardon for all of his criminal activity over the last 10 years of his life. That means all the crimes that he's been convicted of and found guilty of have been wiped away and that any criminal activity committed during the last 10 years, whether investigated or not, is pardoned, forgiven, and therefore unable to ever be punished for anything.

That he did during those 10 years. Now, some have cheered the President's actions. Others have decried the self-serving nature of the pardon. But setting all of that aside for this evening, I would like to use that pardon as the backdrop to compare and contrast the pardon that Almighty God has given to everyone here tonight who is in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes things that are familiar become devalued, belittled, not appreciated as we ought.

[1 : 31] And sometimes we need to be shocked at the wonder of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. He has pardoned us. He's pardoned us.

That's the language of Scripture. And I wonder if this current event could throw some light upon this wonder that our God has pardoned us and wake us up to the marvel of it.

Great God of wonders, who is a pardoning God like thee? And who gives grace so rich and free?

Well, here in Micah chapter 7, verses 18 and 19, the prophet asked just that question.

Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy.

You will again have compassion on us. You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. That's what happens to crimes that are pardoned.

[2 : 40] They're thrown into the depths of the deepest sea where they can never be found out, never be condemned for, never be judged. Who is a pardoning God like thee?

Nehemiah says you're a God ready to pardon, not reluctant to pardon, but rather favorably disposed. To pardon.

The Lord himself says in Jeremiah 33, 8, I will pardon all their iniquities. And because he is a pardoning God, we find men like David praying in Psalm 25, 11, for your namesake, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

And we find Isaiah inviting, let the wicked man, man like Hunter, man like me, man like you.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

[3 : 49] Amen. Now there was no question as to our guilt, our deservingness of punishment. We were guilty of crimes of deepest dye.

All of us were caught in treasonous behavior, rebelling against our kind creator and taking the side of his arch enemy, Satan. Serving him and ourselves instead of God.

And so we were convicted by the law as lawbreakers, as guilty and under the judgment of condemnation. And yet, though we were guilty, vile and helpless, on death row, as it were, just waiting for the final fires of hell, wonder of wonders, God has pardoned us.

He's given us a pardon, not just for crimes over the past 10 years, but for all the crimes of all our years, past, present.

And if you can believe it, even in the future, the entire swath of our whole life has been pardoned by God. That's unheard of.

[5 : 02] That's otherworldly. That's a wonder of wonders. That's a divine pardon. Now, the president's pardon of his son cost him nothing, just his signature on a document.

But God's pardon of us cost him his purest delight. His own beloved son. That he had delighted in for all eternity. It cost God crushing him.

Not sparing him any of the torment that we had coming. So God couldn't just issue a pardon with no one to pay for the crimes committed. His justice, his righteousness would not allow him to do such. He cannot pardon us in a way that violates any of his attributes of who he is. It cost the father his only son.

Furthermore, God's pardon of our sin cost the sinless savior his life laid down. It was a pardon bought with Jesus' blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

[6 : 07] There's no pardon possible without blood, without a life laid down. And so Revelation 1, 5 says, Unto him who has loved us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

By his blood. Christian, that was the price of our pardon. And you know, as in the Old Testament, when a sacrificial lamb was brought to the temple, the guilty would lay their hands upon its head and confess their sins, thereby symbolizing the transfer of sins from me, the guilty one, onto this innocent substitutionary sacrifice.

And from that point on, the lamb was treated as the guilty one deserved, and the guilty sinner was treated as the innocent lamb deserved.

Well, what was done symbolically to the lamb at the temple altar was actually done to Jesus, the lamb of God, at the altar on Calvary.

Because the Lord had laid on him the iniquities of us all. Because he who had no sin was made sin for us.

[7 : 30] And when our sins were laid upon him at that moment, he was treated as the guilty criminal. And so what happens to him then?

Well, he's treated like the criminal. He's arrested. Those hands that had touched and embraced and healed, thousands were now bound as if he were a guilty convict.

He was hauled off to trial, falsely accused, declared guilty of blasphemy for claiming to be God, turned over to the Romans who found nothing wrong, and yet Pilate caved into the pressure and the cry, crucify him, crucify him.

And so Pilate released Barabbas, a convicted criminal, and delivered the innocent Savior to be crucified. They pulled out his beard. They scourged him with whips.

They blindfolded him and took turns beating him, mocking his office as the prophet of his people, by saying, prophesy, who hit you?

[8 : 38] Until his face was smashed beyond human recognition. And then mocking his office as our king, they pounded a crown of thorns into his head and drove nails through his hands and feet and hung him up naked between two other criminals so that it looked like there were three criminals that day, for he indeed was numbered with the transgressors.

The mockery, the shame of it all. And he felt the shame as much as the nails and the thorn. It was the painful and shameful death of the cross.

And so we sing, many hands were raised to wound him. None would interpose to save. But the deepest wound that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave.

God's justice. So man beat him and did all that to him in injustice. But the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave.

When God, the righteous judge, dealt with him as he deserved, not for his own sins, but for ours that were now placed upon him.

[9 : 51] We don't hear him crying out when men and devils did their worst against him. For as a sheep before her shears is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

But when bearing our sins in his body to the tree, there the wrath of God was unleashed upon him. During those three dark hours from noon till three o'clock, all went dark at midday.

A strange darkness that was only matched in the darkness of our soul, the soul of our Savior. Blotted out was the light of God's love.

All he knew was the wrath of God upon sin. And out of the darkness of that wrath, he cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

He was, this was the outer darkness. This was the torments that we deserved and would have known for all eternity as hell came to Calvary that day with Jesus taking our place under God's holy wrath.

[11 : 10] Your hell, my hell, that all the redeemed of all the ages would have suffered concentrated down into that one cup that the Father put in his hands to drink.

This was the cup that he was contemplating just hours earlier, the night before, in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the part we'll never understand.

You know the poet that wrote the song, There Were Ninety and Nine, about the shepherd who left the ninety and nine and went looking for the one lost.

He writes, But none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through, ere he found his sheep that was lost.

None of the apostles had ever known, and I don't know that we'll ever know, just what he bore as he suffered in our place. As he came into Gethsemane that night, he said to his disciples, Sit here while I go and pray.

[12 : 21] And he took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. The one who had told his disciples earlier that night, Don't be anxious.

Don't be troubled. Let not your hearts be troubled. He is now himself deeply distressed and troubled. And then he said to them, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Overwhelmed. Like a man in the sea with the waves overwhelming him. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

He hasn't even had nail one driven, but this is what he's feeling. The pains upon his soul as he's just thinking about drinking that cup on the morrow.

Can you remember the joy that you had when you first realized that the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ was put to your account? Reckoned to you.

[13 : 30] Imputed to you. Oh, the joy of it. That I get to stand before my judge dressed not in my own righteousness, which are filthy rags, but in the righteousness of Jesus.

The joy of it. I delight greatly and rejoice that I'm robed in his righteousness. Well, if that's true, so is the converse of it.

Can you even imagine Jesus' terror and agony at the prospect of having all of our sins imputed to him? Laid upon him.

Sins that exposed him to the Father's condemnation and wrath. The very thought of it nearly killed him. Overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

And no one knew the wrath of God more and better than the Son of God did. He had seen his Father's wrath poured out on the world in Noah's day, flooding, killing everyone but eight.

[14 : 34] He had seen the wrath of God come down in fire and brimstone on those cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. He had seen the wrath of God where the earth opened up and swallowed Dathan and Abiram's families when they rebelled against God.

Psalms 90:11, Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. Jesus knew it. Jesus feared it.

It was only natural then that he as a man would cringe and recoil before such wrath.

And so intense was his terror and sorrow that we find him face down on the ground, planted on the earth. Pouring out his prayers, we're told, with loud cries and tears that if possible, this cup might pass from me.

So exhausting was his sorrow that an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him. Grief and sorrow is exhausting.

[15 : 46] He's out of energy and an angel is sent to strengthen him. What does he do with that strength? He prays all the more intensely, all the more earnestly.

And so he's enabled to go on praying and so agonizing was the pressure that the blood burst through the sweat glands as Luke tells us. Dr. Luke says his sweat was his great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

But each time he prayed, he showed that his desire to obey his father's will was greater than his desire to be spared from drinking that cup of God's concentrated wrath.

not my will but yours be done. That's what I'm here for. That's what I want. Your will be done. This was his unwavering obedience to the father even unto death, the death of the cross.

And if the shadow of the cross in Gethsemane was so devastating to our Lord, what must the actual crucifixion been to him the next day?

[17 : 00] If just the view of the cup in Gethsemane nearly killed him, what must the drinking of the cup of God's wrath been for him? No wonder it wrenched that loud cry of dereliction and

forsakenness from him as he bore the full brunt of God's wrath for our sins.

And that, dear brothers and sisters, is what your pardon cost. A pardon bought with Jesus' blood. Who would not love him?

Who would not serve him? Who would not worship him? So, we're here tonight to remember the cost of our pardon, to remember his sufferings.

And I want to ask this question, what motivated him to endure to the end? When beginning on Calvary to drink the cup of God's wrath and his body and soul cried out for it to stop, what kept him from quitting?

When the mocking onlookers challenged him to prove that he was the son of God by coming down from the cross, tempting him to quit, why didn't he come down?

[18:20] And when he knew at any moment he could call for legions of angels to set him free, why didn't he call for them? An hour in, two hours in, tongues sticking to the roof of his mouth, thirsty, getting harder to breathe, feeling forsaken by God and man experiencing the torments of the damned, what held him to the cross?

Until he could cry in triumph, it is finished. What's finished? The cup that I was given to drink, it's done. There's nothing left in it for my people to drink.

What was it that enabled him to endure? Because what helped him to endure can help us to endure in our race that's been marked out for us?

I have three answers, more could be said, I'm sure, but what enabled our Lord to endure to the end? First of all, the Holy Spirit was upholding his weak humanity.

The Holy Spirit upholding his weak humanity. We sing the song, O who am I that for my sake the Lord should take frail flesh and die.

[19:35] The humanity that he took upon himself was not superhuman humanity, it was frail flesh. Your human nature that knows weakness, tiredness, exhaustion, pain, need, because he became like us in every way, sin only accepted.

And so he endured because his frail human nature was upheld by God the Spirit. Isaiah 42 records the words of God the Father to his servant son, here is my servant, the Father says, here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom I delight, I will put my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

He will not falter or be discouraged until he establishes justice on earth. So how does the Father uphold his servant son? By putting his spirit on him to endure to the end of his mission.

Though he remained God in becoming man, he so humbled himself by not drawing upon his divine nature, to fight temptation, to go through trials, but was as dependent as we are upon the spirit of God that upheld him.

So that Hebrews 9:14 says, it was through the Holy Spirit that he, Christ, offered himself unblemished to God. You remember at his baptism, what happened?

[21:16] The dove, the Holy Spirit coming upon him, the spirit coming to empower him for his ministry that included the cross, enduring the cross to the end.

There he is now being upheld in his frail humanity on Calvary, strengthened, enabled to endure to the end.

How else can a man endure infinite wrath but for the power of God the Spirit. But secondly, it was not only the Holy Spirit that enabled him to endure, it was love that enabled him to endure to the end.

Love brought him down out of heaven in the first place and it was love that kept him on mission. His face set as flint, unswerved, undeterred. It was love.

And yes, love for us to be sure, but first of all, it was love for his heavenly father. The plan of salvation doesn't revolve around it. Yes, we're caught up in it, blessed be God, but it revolves around God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit glorifying themselves.

[22:31] And I want to start where we ought to start, and that's with the Lord Jesus' love for his father. That's what kept him on the cross. In John 14, 30 and 31, he's eaten the Passover meal.

He's instituted what we're going to do tonight, the Lord's Supper for his church, to the end of the age. And now it's time to go from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane and to the arrest, the betrayal and the arrest.

And Jesus says to the disciples, I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but listen, but the world must learn that I love the father and that I

do exactly what my father has commanded me.

Come now, let's go. Jesus wants the world to know that he loves the father. How will he show that to the world? By doing exactly what his father commanded him.

By the way, that's the way you and I show our love, isn't it? If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And that's how the Lord Jesus was going to show the world that he loves the father.

[23 : 43] How? By obeying his commands. What had the father commanded him? Before time began in that covenant of redemption between the father and the son, the father gave a people to his son and commanded him, you go to the cross and you die in their place under my wrath that they deserve.

Jesus responded, yes, I was thinking the same thing, I'm willing to go. He came willingly, but he was commanded to come. And it was the hardest command that's ever been given to anyone, anywhere.

Go and be damned for them. And so humbling himself, he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

It was obedience to show his love to the father. father. You remember when Jesus was near the tomb of Lazarus and he met Mary and she's weeping and the others with her are weeping.

The Bible says that he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled and Jesus wept. Remember what the Jews said when they saw it? They said, behold how he loved him.

[25 : 00] Behold how he loved him. As we stand tonight by way of remembrance at the middle cross on Golgotha and we see Jesus crying in a loud voice, it is finished and then giving up his spirit and breathing his last.

How we should say, behold how he loved him. He obeyed the hardest command ever given, did exactly what his father had told him.

So his blood was flowing down to the ground but his love flowed in two directions, upward to his father. Out of love he endured to the end but also downward to sinners that he stood in for like you and me.

It was love for us that held him there. He loved me and gave himself for me, the apostle Paul can say in Galatians 2.20. And this is how we even know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

Yes, it was love for us that held him there and constrained him to die for us, enduring to the end. So it was the Holy Spirit upholding him.

[26 : 17] It was love to the Father and love to his people that held him there to the end. And thirdly, it was joy that motivated him to endure to the end. You're familiar with Hebrews 12.2.

let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who what? Who for the joy that was set upon him, the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, treated it as nothing, and continued enduring the cross, and then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He endured the painful and shameful death of the cross for the joy that was set before him. That's future joy. It was for future joy that he did it.

And though it was a future joy, it breathed endurance into the present trial of Jesus, the present temptation of the man of sorrows that enabled him to persevere under the greatest strain until he could say it is finished.

So what was this future joy that gave Jesus such strength to stay on the cross for us? Well, first of all, it was the joy of his father, the joy of his father's joy and pleasure in him as he returns to heaven having completed the mission.

[27 : 46] The father sends him on the mission. He comes, and as he's in the thick of it, it's hard going for him, and he's thinking, ah, yes, but I'm going back to my father.

And what a joy it will be when I'm able to stand before him and say, here I am, father, and the children you have given me. You sent me to go. I went, and here's the fruit of my suffering.

I was faithful to the end, and to see the father's face, to see his pleasure in his son, his full obedience, that was the joy that was set before him.

And though he saw nothing of that love of the father, there was this promise, you see, you go and die for them, I'll raise you from the dead and receive you back into heaven. And for the joy set before him, the joy of bringing to pass what was sealed in that book in Revelation 5, all those

decrees from the beginning, before the creation of the world, that the father had designed, his plan of salvation, who can unlock those seals and bring those decrees to pass?

Jesus for the joy of saying, Father, here, all the decrees, they've been fulfilled, I've gone and fulfilled them in fulfillment of the plan. The father's joy in seeing his will prosper in the hands of his servant son, Isaiah 53, 10.

[29 : 08] And so just anticipating that joy of the father in him kept him on the cross for us. And then it was the joy set before him, the joy of bringing many sons and daughters home to glory by tasting death for us, Hebrews 2, 9, and 10.

To see us safely home at last, redeemed, redeemed by his precious blood to present us to the father and himself without fault and with great joy.

Yes, he sees that day by faith. It's been promised and his faith lays hold of it. And so it gives him strength to endure the greatest hardship any man has ever gone through.

So brothers and sisters, we've not thought enough about Jesus' joy in saving us. The joy set before him. The joy that he had as a look forward to that joy of seeing us stunned as we cross over into heaven.

Amazed with one surprise after another. Seeing him face to face. Seeing our joy in that day. That's part of the joy that was set before him.

[30 : 24] Parents, you know something of that joy. The joy on Christmas morning and the kids are opening up the presents and they're so excited and the joy on their face does what to you? It makes you joyful.

You rejoice to see them joyful. Maybe it's at their wedding. You've had a wedding for one of your daughters or sons and you see their joy and you rejoice to see them joyful.

That's the way Jesus is going to be in that day. And for the joy set before him of seeing us safe home, rejoicing in heaven, he endured the cross and the pain.

For the ransom to the Lord will return. They will enter, Zion was singing, everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away and there will be only one with more joy than us and that will be our Savior rejoicing to see us delighting in him.

When the chosen, called, and faithful stand before the Lord, what will he say? Matthew 25. Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

[31 : 40] That's where we're going. The joy of the Lord. And for the joy that was set before him, seeing us entering into his joy, he endures the cross. He was thinking of us.

He was thinking of this on that very night before the hellish cross as he prayed in John 17. Father, I want those you've given me to be with me where I am to see my glory. I want to see the look on their face when they see me as I really am.

Not veiled in flesh the Godhead see, but when they see me in my glory, the glory I had with you before the creation of the world. I want them with me to see that. And yes, even to share in that glory.

Not the glory of his deity, but the glory of perfection as to our humanity and our moral perfection.

This was the joy set before him that enabled him to endure wave upon wave of the Father's wrath without stopping, without coming down from the cross, but remaining.

Let's take up his yoke and learn from him the secret of endurance, how future joy, seen with the eye of faith, can enable us to endure. You see, future joy is not a luxury we can do without.

[32 : 58] We just don't live right without the joy set before us. I think that's why the Bible ends with two chapters of just future joys.

I think we need to be, maybe our next memory pack should be on those two chapters. That's how the book ends. We're to remember the joys that are before us.

And it's out of that future joy that we find strength to persevere. In fact, that's the whole context of Hebrews 12 to, let me read the verses before and after.

Therefore, since we're surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

There's our need. Perseverance in this race. It's sometimes uphill. It's through dark woods. It's down in valleys, uphill difficulties. How are we going to run the race with perseverance?

[33 : 56] Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scoring its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. So let's come alongside him, put our neck in the oak and learn from him.

How is it that we can endure faithful to the end? Well, one thing is to remember the Holy Spirit upholding us. Yes. Love.

Love we have in our hearts for him, but his love for us. And then also the joy that awaits us for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

So let us fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. All the joys set before us.

[34 : 56] All because Jesus paid the price for our pardon on Calvary. And so at the Lord's Supper, we're tasting afresh this love that he has for the Father, for us.

We're tasting afresh something of his joy and saving us. There's a forward look to the supper as well as a backward look because in this supper we proclaim his death until he comes.

And so we look forward to that joyous day when he will come. So when you take the bread tonight, remember his body. It was a real body just like yours that felt pain no differently than yours does.

And as you take the cup, remember his lifeblood was poured out in death for you. Remember he drank the cup of God's wrath so that you might drink the cup of salvation.

That you might drink the cup of communion tonight until we drink it anew in the kingdom of God when he returns. He became the man of sorrows that we might be a pardoned people of never fading joys.

[36 : 06] pity the man who lives his life in this veil of tears and has no joy set before him.

Only the certain judgment of God that will come upon him for his sins. What a sad prospect. Oh, but my friend, if you're outside of Christ today, your sin is real, your guilt is real, and so is the pardon that is in the hand of Jesus, offered to anyone who will take it.

Receive him tonight and enter into that joy. Okay. Perfectly. Thank you. Okay? glaubecid Hasta Total O haar Music Thank you. Go toession■ To sait Norates get ■■■■■■ F The Uibilidad