

# Authority to Forgive Sins

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn again to your Bibles before the preaching of God's Word. Mark chapter 2. Mark chapter 2.

We're going to read this morning of Christ's power to heal bodies and his power to transform hearts. Mark chapter 2 verses 1 through 12.

This is the Word of God. A few days later when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered there that was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.

Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, Why does this fellow talk like that?

[ 1 : 14 ] He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts.

And he said to them, Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Get up, take your mat, and walk?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home.

He got up, took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone, and they praised God, saying, We have never seen anything like this.

Amen. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. It could be said of the religions of the world, when we think about forgiveness of sins, that we have never heard of anything like this.

[ 2 : 14 ] The forgiveness of all of our sins, through the blood of Jesus. And yet nothing is more taken for granted than the forgiveness of sins.

Nothing is more belittled and undervalued. J.I. Packer, in his book, Knowing God, speaks of an ungodly man, who had lived an immoral life, and was now on his deathbed.

And the minister visiting him asked him, Do you think God will forgive your sins? And he replied, Of course, that's his job. Many today think the same, as if God owes all people forgiveness, because, after all, that's his job.

And nothing could be further from the truth. What God owes all men is hell, the eternal punishment for our sins against him. He's the righteous judge that we just read of in 1 Peter, and his job is to punish sins wherever they are found.

And if he does forgive sins, well, it'll be all of grace. It will be totally undeserved, and only if the sinner confesses and renounces his sins, and trusts in God's only sacrifice to atone for sin, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, of which we've sung this morning.

[ 3 : 38 ] Now, this is the very heart of the gospel, the good news that Jesus Christ came to preach, that your sins that have brought you under God's wrath can be forgiven in full.

This is the very reason the Son of God came to earth, to suffer the punishment in the place of his people, that their sins might be forgiven. For only in Christ do we have redemption, through his blood the forgiveness of sins.

Well, here we are in Mark chapter 2, and on this day in Capernaum, our Lord Jesus made it clear that he has authority on earth to forgive sins.

So far in the gospel of Mark, we've seen Christ's divine authority in preaching. It came with power and authority. We've seen his authority over demons.

Just a word and they're gone. We've seen his authority over diseases. And in today's text, he's going to reveal his authority to forgive sins.

[ 4 : 48 ] Now, something was fishy that day in the house where Jesus was preaching. There were way too many Pharisees and teachers of the law present. Luke's account tells us, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem were sitting there.

We wondered that there's any room for anyone else if that many Pharisees and teachers of the law had come. And there they are. The religious police had shown up in full force and were sitting there in the judge's seat.

They were there to check out this new popular rabbi and miracle worker, Jesus of Nazareth. And they were not at all happy that the crowds were going over to him to listen to Jesus.

But they were not the only ones in the house that day. The people heard that he had come home to Capernaum because Capernaum had become his new home, his new home base of ministry since his hometown of Nazareth had rejected him and tried to kill him.

Well, in fact, verse 2 says, so many gathered there that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. So the house was packed, and outside of the door, people were huddled around to hear, and inside, Jesus preached the word to them.

[ 6 : 23 ] Once again, we're met with the priority of preaching in Jesus' public ministry. Men and women needed to know God, what he says about himself, what he says about us, what he says about sin, what he says about Christ.

And so Jesus was preaching the word. Men and women, boys and girls today are still needing to hear the word. The devil's lies are carrying people to hell by the thousands.

And we need to know what God's word has to say about the most important things of life, even things that affect our eternal destiny. And it's here in the word of God.

That's what Jesus was preaching. Now for Jesus, the word of God was the Old Testament. And so Jesus is preaching from somewhere in those 39 books of the Old Testament.

Well, what did he preach that day? Well, we're not told. But I wouldn't be surprised if what he was preaching had to do with the forgiveness of sins. And the reason I say that is because the forgiveness of sins was so central to his message, why he'd come.

[ 7 : 38 ] And this wonderful, amazing idea that your sins against God that have exposed you to his wrath can all be forgiven. But another reason I say that he could have been preaching on the forgiveness of sins is that because his miracles often illustrated the very points that he was preaching on.

And his miracle this day drove home what truth? That he, as the Son of Man, had authority to forgive sins.

So whether he was preaching on that text having to do with the forgiveness of sins or not, what we find is that, as verse 3 says, some men came bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four of them.

Kids, when you got up this morning, you didn't think twice about walking, did you? You walked out to the table for breakfast. You walked back to your room to get dressed.

You walked in to get in the car or the truck. You walked to your Sunday school class and you walked back to sit down here. You just did it without thinking. Not so this man.

[ 8 : 58 ] This man couldn't walk. Something was wrong with his legs. They wouldn't move. They were paralyzed. And though he wanted to move and wanted to go places, his legs would not respond.

Do you thank God for your legs working? Do you thank Him that you can walk? This man had to be carried everywhere he went.

How would you like that? To have to be carried everywhere you went. Well, it was good for this man that he had some real friends who would do this service for him.

They felt sorry for him. They wanted to bring him to Jesus. They believed that Jesus could heal him and enable him to walk. And so four of them are carrying him.

One on each corner of the mat that he's lying on. But when they come to the house, they find that it's so packed that they can't get him inside the door. Well, they didn't say, oh, well, we tried.

[ 10 : 12 ] Guess we'll go back home now. Maybe some people are like that, but not these fellas, not these friends. Verse four says, since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus.

And after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. Now, here are some true friends, not easily discouraged. Where there's a will, there's a way.

And they had a will to get this man to Jesus. Do you have friends like that? They want to get you to Jesus.

They know your greatest need is Jesus. And so they want to bring you to him. Maybe it's your parents. Maybe it's your brother or sister. A friend.

And they bring you to Jesus when they pray. They bring your name, you, before the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. They bring you to church that you might meet Jesus as he's found in his word, as we just sang.

[ 11 : 27 ] Those are your best friends. This man had at least four of them. And then, are you that kind of friend to others? Are you that kind of friend who brings others to Jesus in your prayers, in your inviting, and in your bringing them to meet Jesus in his word and in his worship?

Are you bringing them to Jesus by your witness? This is the most important work that any of us have to do. wherever God has put us to bring others to Jesus.

He himself is the greatest need everyone has. Everyone you ever meet, you know their greatest need is Jesus.

Well, what a surprise that day as Jesus is preaching to the crowd in this packed house. Must have been quiet because of Jesus' preaching came with authority.

They must have been hanging on every word as he preached. And then they hear some feet shuffling around up above them on the flat roof. And then, some dust starts to fall down.

[ 12 : 42 ] And then there's a little hole with sunlight coming into the house. And then the hole gets bigger as they're pulling back the tiles of the roof.

And then there's four eyeballs staring down through this big hole. And then there's this mat. And as it's lowered down, they come to see that there's a man lying on it.

This paralytic is lying on the mat. And it comes down, down, down, and it stops right in front of Jesus. Jesus. I've had some surprises while preaching, but never anything like that.

What an amazing scene this is here in this house in Capernaum. But our Lord turns it into a powerful preaching opportunity. A powerful preaching point to drive home perhaps the very point he was preaching on that day.

And what Jesus said next was not what anyone was expecting. The man obviously needed healing. But Jesus didn't say to him, get up and walk.

[ 13 : 52 ] Instead he said, son, your sins are forgiven. Your sins are forgiven. It says, when Jesus saw their faith, that is the paralytic and the four men lowering him in.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven. Faith is an invisible thing. But Jesus can see it in the hearts of these men.

Because nothing is hidden from him. He doesn't need man's testimony about man because he knows what's in a man. And he can see faith wherever it is.

It may just be a mustard seed size faith. Just a little faith. It may be so small that the man or woman or child themselves wonder whether they have any faith at all.

But Jesus sees faith in him where it is. And he encourages it. He doesn't stamp it out because it's small.

[ 15 : 00 ] He encourages it. And so as soon as Jesus sees this faith, he says, son, your sins are forgiven. And as soon as he said that, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were thrown into a mental tailspin as they were thinking to themselves.

Not aloud. Not talking to one another. Just thinking to themselves, holding court in their minds and saying to themselves, why does this fellow talk like that?

That's what he's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? So the religious policemen are right and they are wrong.

They are right that God alone can forgive sins. If I told a lie about Maxwell and then I started feeling guilty about it and felt sorry and repentant and I came over here to Theron and I said, Theron, I told a lie about Maxwell.

Will you please forgive me? Well, he'd say, I don't have anything to do with that. Your offense was against Maxwell. Only Maxwell can forgive your sin.

[ 16 : 26 ] And you see, it's that way with God. All of our sins are against God. Now, we might have trampled on other people as well in the process, but they are especially against God and therefore, only God can forgive the sin.

So, for someone other than God to claim to have authority to do what only God can do, well, that's blaspheming. That's claiming something that only God has and that's punishable by death in Scripture.

Jesus was handing out forgiveness of sins as if it was his prerogative to do so. So, they're right that only God, God alone, can forgive sins.

And again, they're correct that it would be blaspheming God's holy name for a mere man to claim authority to forgive sins. But here's where they were dead wrong.

That this Jesus whom they were sneeringly calling this fellow, a derogatory term, is no mere man, but is in fact God in the flesh.

[ 17 : 44 ] Why does this fellow talk like that? Because he is God. The God against whom everyone sins. And so it is his rightful authority as God to forgive sins.

He's doing a God-like thing because he's God. Well, you see, they had no room in their theology for God in the flesh.

And for this very claim, they would crucify the Lord Jesus within two years' time. I wonder if we understand how easily our own preconceived ideas can blind us to the most important truths even when they're standing there so obvious like Jesus' deity was that day.

Are you aware that you have a tendency to believe what you want to believe? And that tendency follows us every day that we come to this book and read.

We still have remaining sin in ourselves that wants to believe what we want to believe, that will push us to believe what we want to believe about what we read.

[ 19 : 01 ] Are we aware of the power of our desires to shape what we believe about God and sin and salvation? How true then is it that he who trusts himself is a fool but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe?

How we should cry then, the Spirit of God, open my eyes that I might see. I might see what you're saying here and not just what I want to see here in the text.

Teach me. Give me understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus or we'll miss him all together and we will shape a Jesus in our own image, the one that we like.

Well, immediately, Jesus knew in his Spirit that this is what they were thinking in their hearts. And so he said to them, why are you thinking these things?

Jesus turns to this large group of Pharisees and teachers of the law and addresses their thoughts. They were saying to themselves, why is he saying these things?

[ 20 : 08 ] And Jesus replies to their thoughts, why are you thinking these things? what Jesus was saying was true. He has authority to forgive sins.

What they were thinking was evil. Listen to Matthew's account, Matthew 9, 4. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?

It's evil to charge Jesus with the sin of blasphemy. And Jesus calls them out for it. I wonder, do you know that it matters to Jesus what you think about him?

Not just what you do. You know, there's a lot of people that think they're fine for heaven because of what they do. They're pretty kind people and they do a lot of good.

But they've never even thought that God is concerned about their thought life and what they think and especially what they think about him. Jesus is concerned about what you think about him.

[ 21 : 13 ] Are they right thoughts? Are they biblical thoughts? Are they big thoughts? Or have you domesticated him and shrunk him down into the size that you've made him out to be?

Or is he the glorious Lord Jesus Christ revealed in scriptures, the God-man, the eternal God who took on our humanity to save us from our sins, the God to be worshipped, the God to be learned from, the God to be served, worshipped, adored, feared, obeyed.

We want to know Christ, not as we imagine him to be, but as he really is and as we will one day meet him face to face. Oh, how many, when they come to meet Jesus, the judge, will have no clue because the Jesus they had formed in their minds was not like that.

But that day will wake them up to reality. How blessed we are to have this book. It sets forth Jesus Christ. Are you learning of him? Are you getting to know him?

Are you hungering and thirsting to know him better? It matters to Jesus what you think about him. And so the Son of God is reading their thoughts like an open book.

[ 22 : 36 ] Which in itself is proof that he is God, right? For who but God knows the thoughts of a man. David says, O Lord, you have searched me and you have known me.

You perceive my thoughts from afar. And before a word is on my tongue, you know it all together. There is one at the right hand of the throne of God right now who knows every thought that's ever passed through your mind.

Every word, deed, motive, desire, plan of your heart. This is the Christ we have to do with. And so Jesus says to these religious leaders, which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven or to say, get up, take your mat and walk?

Well, think about it. Both are impossible to man. Both are things that only God can do. To forgive with the word.

To heal with the word. Therefore, to do the one is to prove the other. If Jesus can forgive sins, well, then he can heal with the word.

[ 23 : 50 ] He can do anything that God can do. But forgiveness of sins cannot be seen by men. Can it? I can't see if your sins are forgiven.

Because that's a transaction in heaven. There are books in heaven that are being kept. And Revelation 20 says they'll be opened in the day of judgment.

And I can't read your page. I can't even read my page. So, forgiveness of sins is a transaction in heaven where sins are forgiven.

They're blotted out. They're taken away. They're marked, paid in full, and therefore, they're remembered no more. We can't see into the books of heaven. But a paralyzed man getting up and walking, that we can easily see.

So, if he can do that, then he can do the other. Both are God-like acts. And so, Jesus still addressing the religious leaders says, but that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

[ 25 : 00 ] He says to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take up your mat, and go home. And he got up, he took his mat, and he walked out in full view of them all.

And the effect on the crowd was electrifying. It amazed everyone. And they praised God, saying, we have never seen anything like this.

You see, that was something they couldn't miss. A paralytic responding to the word of Jesus and being healed on the spot so strong to immediately take up his mat and walk.

They couldn't miss it. And the healing that they saw was meant to prove to them what they could not see. That in the books of heaven, sins can be forgiven as Jesus Christ has authority on earth to forgive sins.

So that when he says, Son, your sins are forgiven, you can know for certainty that they're blotted out in heaven. They are remembered no more.

[ 26 : 10 ] They are forgiven. Well, a few observations and applications from this event in the life of our Lord. The first is just that forgiveness of sins is our greatest need and it's a blessing greater than healing our physical diseases.

It's interesting how we see these two things brought together. Healing and forgiveness. They're the two main elements in this story, aren't they? They're brought side by side and Jesus gave to the man first of all the greatest blessing of the two which is forgiveness of sins.

Even greater than being healed of his paralysis. These two blessings are also brought side by side in Psalm 103 when David tells himself, self, praise the Lord O my soul all my inmost being praise his holy name praise the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

There they are again. Forgiveness and healing of diseases and which takes the priority when David would praise God for blessing him. All my sins have been forgiven.

O soul let all your inmost being praise his holy name that all your sins are forgiven. I wonder if you view it that way.

[ 27 : 49 ] Is that the pinnacle of your blessing higher than healing of diseases? When Joe Scott got cancer and we were in and out of hospitals and clinics we found them packed with people seeking to be healed of their diseases.

Well we were too. We were looking for that too. But what I've witnessed every week for 40 years in the ministry of the gospel is that people are not packing out churches to learn how to have all their sins forgiven.

A few here a few there but most don't have the slightest interest in the matter at all. And yet think if those seeking cures for diseases are successful in their seeking what will they have?

Maybe another year of life? Three years? Ten? twenty? Thirty years? And then what? And then they'll die. And if their sins are not forgiven they will spend eternity in hell suffering the punishment for their sins.

there's a hell to pay there's a hell to pay for sins. Whereas if men and women were as concerned about having their sins forgiven and gave themselves no rest until they knew that they were forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ well then whenever they die of whatever physical problem fullness of joy eternal pleasures at God's right hand await them and when Jesus returns in glory to make all things new the forgiven will receive new bodies like Jesus' body bodies that will never get sick and get diseased and die.

[ 29 : 52 ] you see the difference? Getting my sins forgiven is the greatest problem in life. It's greater than any sickness disease or death for if just one sin remains unforgiven by God there's hell to pay for that sin.

Sin is just that offensive to God. And if you don't think that that's right by you it only shows that you haven't a clue of how holy God is and how wicked every single sin is.

How much arrogance is involved in every sin. How much ingratitude is involved in every sin. How much rebellion is involved in every sin. It was one sin in the garden one sin in the garden for which they lost eternal life and only through the blood of Jesus could it ever be recovered.

Well the greater these two blessings then healing or forgiveness can also be seen by the comparative cost to the Lord Jesus. Which is the higher value?

Well which cost Jesus the most? What did it cost Jesus to heal this man? Some words out of his mouth. Get up take your mat and walk and he did.

[ 31 : 21 ] What does it cost Jesus to say to him son your sins are forgiven? Oh that will cost him.

That will cost him what we read at the end of Mark's gospel. That will cost him his whole life. That will cost his life's blood poured out for the sinner.

for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness and he will be the one the only one in the universe that can shed that blood to forgive our sins.

Oh I trust that even in seeing it that way we see forgiveness of sins of such higher value and what it does it also purchases along with it the bonus of our bodies being healed forever if Christ is our savior.

So let's let's let's get the priority right. Forgiveness of sins far more important than healing of our diseases. Secondly sin can only be forgiven then if they're paid for in full.

[ 32 : 28 ] Our Lord has taught us to pray forgive us our debts. Sin incurs a debt with God and that debt must be paid on the books of heaven every time we sin there's a debt.

Our debt goes higher. A hell to pay for sin and only if paid for can they be forgiven. Now who will pay the sin debt? Well either the sinner himself in hell forever without ever making the final payment.

He's a finite man a finite boy a girl a woman and it's infinite wrath that she or he deserves. The finite can never satisfy the infinite and that's why there is no exit door in hell forever and ever without relief.

Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and that's where sins must be paid for or the only other alternative in the universe is that Jesus Christ would pay them himself on the cross who is himself infinite and able to suffer the infinite wrath of God in three short hours of darkness as God's wrath was poured out on him to pay for our sin debt and that's exactly what he was doing there on the cross.

He was assuming our debt. There's my debt, my sins more than the hairs of my head, more than a mountain of sin and your sins if you're able to, they were all put on Jesus.

[ 34 : 15 ] He who knew no sin became sin for us. The father laid on him the iniquities of us all and then he bore our sins in his body to the tree and there Christ died for sins once for all time.

The righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God to pay the price of our sin. That kept us out of heaven, that separated us from God. He paid that price.

He satisfied God's just demands. Jesus paid it all and since he did, there's nothing left for me, the forgiven sinner to pay. The debt was paid.

It's blotted out in the blood of Jesus. It's remembered no more. For God the just is satisfied to look on him. And pardon me.

Justice smiles and asks no more. And that's why there's no more condemnation for anyone who is in Christ Jesus because Jesus was condemned to pay the price for our sins.

[ 35 : 21 ] sins. Now that's true freedom. To be free from sin and guilt is to be out of debt. So no, that when I face God in judgment, there will not be one iota of debt that I owe, but that Jesus' blood has already paid for.

Do you have that freedom? Or have you come in here with sin and guilt pulling you down? Like Jesus says, you're weary and heavy laden.

We weren't meant to carry sin debt. And yet we sin and we carry that debt. And Jesus has come to say, roll it over on me.

Put your trust in me. And I will pay the debt. You know, every Lord's Supper is like a mortgage burning ceremony. Sometimes when, I remember the church in the past when we had taken out a loan and it paid off that debt, we had a mortgage burning Sunday.

And we burned the mortgage because it was paid and it was just a piece of paper anymore. We didn't owe anything and we were celebrating the fact that we're free of debt.

[ 36 : 36 ] Wonderful thing, whether church or personal finances. Oh, but what is it to be free of debt in the bar of heaven? And that's what we celebrate.

Every Lord's Supper. Are you here for every Lord's Supper? That's what we're celebrating. That we're sin debt free. Jesus paid it all.

Matthew 26, 28, this is what Jesus said as he instituted the Lord's Supper. He said to his disciples, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

That's what we're remembering at the Lord's Supper. That blood that paid the debt for our sins to be forgiven. heaven. It's the blood of the covenant, that new covenant.

His blood guarantees the promises of the new covenant, the crowning promise, which is that their wickedness I will forgive and their sins I will remember no more.

[ 37 : 40 ] That's the blood of the covenant. So. Your trust is in Christ, you are a blessed man, woman, boy or girl. You know, David puts it this way, blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered.



Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him. Are you that blessed man this morning? Are you that happy woman, that to be envied child?

Because wherever you go and whatever happens to you, you know all my sins are forgiven. I'm a happy man. How many psychological problems are caused just by this guilt of sin that people are carrying around?

When we could know the blessedness of being free of the guilt of our sin debt. Well, justice, forgiveness has a meritorious cause.

What's the what's the cause of forgiveness? Well, the meritorious cause is the blood of Jesus. That's what purchased our forgiveness. But there's also an instrumental cause.

[ 38 : 56 ] There's an instrumental cause for forgiveness. And this answers the question, how does this blood-bought forgiveness become mine?

Not an unimportant question since not everyone's sins are forgiven as the world seems to think. So how does this Jesus' blood-bought forgiveness, Jesus' merited forgiveness, how does it become mine?

How do I get my sins wiped out in the books of heaven? Well, the answer is through faith. Faith is the instrumental cause. Faith doesn't merit, doesn't earn forgiveness, but faith is what brings that blood-bought forgiveness to our account in heaven and wipes out our sins.

Acts 10, 43. It's by believing in Jesus that we're forgiven. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

That's it. It's faith. That's what Jesus saw when he saw their faith. He said, son, your sins are forgiven. And he'll say that to you.

[ 40 : 10 ] Son, daughter, your sins are forgiven. Where he sees you rolling all of your trust, your faith, your belief onto Christ and nothing on yourself.

Not, Lord, I'm better than her. I'm better than him. Not, I do some good things. No. You repudiate all of that. And you come and you ask for the free gift of forgiveness purchased by the blood of Jesus.

That faith, though unseen by men around you and we can't see it in heaven, but that faith just blots out sins in heaven and your page is white clean in the blood of Jesus.

There's, there's no reason for you to carry that, that burden any further. Believe him. Take him at his word. Those sins you cannot erase, you cannot undo, Jesus can forgive and remember them no more.

And he will. Believe him. Take him at his word. Doubt no more. He said, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and will cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

[ 41 : 20 ] Go to him, confessing and believing and have your sins forgiven. You may be a Christian and yet living under a cloud of guilt for your sins, past and present.

Don't diminish the value of Christ's blood. Don't diminish the value. Don't think so lowly of what he did. Do you know he suffered enough to forgive all of your sins?

Then believe him. Believe him. And join David singing his praises that he's the God who forgives all my sins.

Go to the cross and leave your heavy burden there. Psalm 103 says, he does not treat us, children of God, this is for you.

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. Why? Because he treated Christ as our sins deserve and he repaid him according to what our iniquities deserved.

[ 42 : 26 ] And therefore, as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. That's forgiveness. There's no end to that.

It's infinite. We're clean. The meritorious cause of forgiveness, Christ's atoning blood on the cross. The instrumental cause that brings that to my account in heaven is faith in Jesus.

And the source of forgiveness, where does it come from? It comes from the love of God. The love of God. Amazing love. That he would punish his son instead of us.

Rebels. Arrogant. Ungrateful wretches. What love is this that caused the father to send his son? When David has sunk into the sin of murder and adultery, where does he hang his hope for mercy?

On the love of God. Psalm 51.1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

[ 43 : 41 ] You see, that's the source of it all. It's what's in the heart of God. He's forgiving and he waits for us to come and to throw ourselves upon his mercy and he's more than willing to forgive.

Israel's mediator, Moses, in the desert, pleads for the sins of the Israelites to be forgiven. Numbers 14.19. In accordance with your great love, forgive the sins of your people.

That's it. Oh, we can come back to this love over and over. From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear him and out of that bottomless pit or ocean of love, he forgives and casts our sins into the bottomless sea and remembers them no more.

So one thing that we find in the Psalms is that this is a high point of joy in the Christian life. I trust we'll go from here.

Like the Psalms, rejoicing, how blessed, how favored, how to be envied is the man, the woman, the boy or girl whose sins are forgiven.

[ 44 : 55 ] Delight in this Savior. Delight in his salvation. From Micah 7, Who is a God like you who pardons sins and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

You do not stay angry forever, but delight to show mercy. Who's a God like that? Not only forgives our sins, but delights to do so.

May we delight in him today. Amen.