

SABBATH THOUGHT 2026-10-24—WHY GOD FORGIVES SIN

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

It may seem a strange question, but why does God forgive sin? The Father made forgiveness possible by laying upon the Altar of Burnt Offerings His Son as the sacrificial Lamb for the Sin Offering. Through His sacrifice, Jesus Christ became the atonement for sins:

[DOUAY] ROMANS 3:25 **[Jesus Christ] Whom God hath [purposed] to be a propitiation [atonement],** through faith in his blood, to the shewing of his justice, **for the remission of former sins,**

Jesus Christ is *how* sins are forgiven, but not *why*. There are two reasons and the first is obvious:

JOHN 3:16-17 **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,** that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 **“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

God created mankind for the purpose of making them eternal children. But all have sinned so forgiveness was a necessity to save the world. When God forgives the sins of someone at baptism, they are rendered perfectly sinless. Living as a New Creation, however, does not mean no one ever sins again so repentance is still required when it occurs. There are also Sins of Ignorance, ones that are unintended and often unknown. God forgives sin through justification, which is when God renders a person as just or innocent through a judgment according to the Law. Therefore, forgiveness through justification is by the grace of God¹:

[DOUAY] ROMANS 3:24-26 Being **justified freely by His grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus,** 25 Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation *[atonement]*, through faith in His blood, to the shewing of His justice, for the remission of former sins, 26 through the forbearance of God, for the shewing of His justice in this time; that He himself may be just, and **the justifier of him,** who is of the faith of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: This is explained in greater depth in the [Bible Study - Sinless Before the Resurrection 2026-08-24](#).

Justification of sins is by the grace of God so no one is worthy of it or earns it. However, contrary to what is often taught, God's grace is not unconditional. What? Grace is a gift that is unmerited, so how can it be grace if something is required from people? Grace is like giving your teenager a car. It is still a gift even though the teen must obey all the traffic laws. Grace, too, requires something from us.

¹ Eph. 1:3-7; 1 Cor. 6:1; Titus 3:5; and Heb. 10:10; et al.

Justification of sins occurs when God hands down a verdict of innocence through a JUDGMENT. All judgment is based upon whether behaviors and actions are in accordance with the Law of God and His judgment is determined by five things:

- 1) FAITH in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Rom. 3:30; Rom. 4:5-8; Gal. 2:16, 20);
- 2) Our WORDS that we speak (Matt. 12:36-37);
- 3) A ministration of giving and receiving that is based upon GOOD WORKS (Rom. 2:13; 2 Cor. 9:8-13; Jas. 2:18, 20, 22, 24, 26);
- 4) AGAPE LOVE for God, brethren, and mankind (1 John 4:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:8; Prov. 10:12);
- 5) HUMILITY before God (Luke 18:10-14).

If we do these things, we can have confidence that He continues to justify our sins by His grace. But even if someone has faith greater than a mustard seed, speaks with tongues of men and angels, has greater works than Jesus Christ, is filled with agape love, and is as meek as Moses², God will withhold His forgiveness if they refuse to do one thing—forgive others:

MATTHEW 6:12, 14-15 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ... 14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 “But **if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Forgiveness of sin means a person is justified by God, and justification is the result of His judgment in accordance with the Law. Therefore, forgiveness of sin is justification and, even though it is by grace, it is the result of a JUDGMENT:

LUKE 6:37 “**Judge not [others for their sins], and you shall not be judged [for your own sins]. Condemn not [others for their sins], and you shall not be condemned [for your own sins]. Forgive [others for their sins], and you will be forgiven [for your own sins].**

Notice that forgiveness is the result of NOT being judged guilty and NOT being condemned or punished for sins. Forgiveness is one possible verdict of judgment and condemnation (rendering a verdict) in the judicial process. Jesus warned against judging or condemning others for *their* sins and offenses³. OUR judgment is determined by whether or not WE forgive others. Refusing to render forgiveness unto others for their sins and offenses means God will not forgive us. This is a statute of the Law of God⁴ and is similar to the Old Testament statute:

LEVITICUS 19:18 ‘**You shall not ... bear any grudge [anger, bitterness, resentment for offenses]** against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

² Matt. 17:20; John 14:12; 1 Cor. 13:1; Luke 7:47; and Num. 12:3.

³ Also Matt. 7:1-5.

⁴ Also Prov. 17:9.

Smith's translation puts it this way:

[SMITH'S] LEVITICUS 19:18 **Thou shalt not avenge thyself nor keep anger** with the sons of thy people, and didst love thy neighbor as thyself. I Jehovah.

The Law forbids bearing anger against others or taking vengeance. Doing so is a SIN. Forgiving others determines how we are judged but it also determines whether or not God will hear our prayers⁵:

PROVERBS 28:9 **One who turns away his ear from hearing the law [including the statute to forgive others], even his prayer is an abomination.**

MARK 11:25-26 “And **whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.** 26 **“But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”**

Pause and reflect upon this. God does not hear the prayers of anyone who refuses to forgive others when they sin against him or her. They can fast and pray all day long but God is NOT listening! They are literally CUTOFF from God if they do not forgive others! How long will the Holy Spirit remain in them?

All sin is justified by God through the sacrifice of His Son, which means forgiveness from God is predicated on a sinner having a heart of that is humble and contrite⁶ for what His Son endured. When a sinner refuses to forgive others it is despising the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and brings the wrath of God upon them:

In Matthew 18:23-35 is a story about mankind. All have sinned and come under the judgment of God as portrayed by the servant who owed 10,000 talents to the king. However, the servant humbled himself and begged for mercy and promised to repay the debt. The king, having compassion for him and knowing he could never repay it, forgave the debt in its entirety. Later, this same servant demanded a fellow servant repay a debt that was 600,000⁷ times less than the debt he was forgiven. Even though the fellow servant begged for mercy, the servant refused. When the king found out, he sent that servant to be tortured until he repaid the debt that was forgiven.

When God justifies and forgives, He is cancelling a debt of sin that no one can repay. Refusing to forgive others who sin against us is comparing a few small offenses against us to the offenses of the whole world that Christ endured. Every sin and every offense committed by the world was borne by Him, making Him the victim of billions of offenses! It is small-minded to think that God's forgiveness is the result of Jesus Christ suffering for our personal sins alone! God's forgiveness comes at a cost of Jesus Christ suffering for ALL the sins of the world. God forgives

⁵ Also Isa. 59:2.

⁶ Isa. 57:15.

⁷ A denarius was a small Roman silver coin and the standard daily wage for a common laborer. A talent was the largest ancient unit of weight and currency, equal to 6,000 denarii (20 years worth of wages).

us individually but each one is forgiven only because Jesus Christ suffered for ALL mankind. Refusing to forgive others shows contempt for the Son of God:

HEBREWS 10:29-33 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy **who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common [defiled] thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace [of justification]**? 30 For we know Him who said, “**Vengeance is Mine, I will repay**,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.” 31 **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** 32 But recall the former days in which, **after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings**: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;

Refusing to forgive others defiles the blood of Jesus Christ by which we received the grace of God to justify us from our sins. Our “sufferings” of offenses against us cannot be compared to what Jesus Christ endured. Besides, God has promised to take vengeance on our behalf. There is no excuse for refusing to forgive others. Doing so is choosing death in the Lake of Fire. Who is willing to die a horrible eternal death even if they were mistreated, offended, persecuted, or even tortured to death? God REQUIRES all to forgive others just as He is continually forgiving us through the sacrifice of His Son:

EPHESIANS 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

COLOSSIANS 3:13 bearing with one another, and **forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.**

In the Matthew 18 parable, the king required the servant who refused to forgive his fellow servant to REPAY his original debt of 10,000 talents. Does this suggest that God will reinstate our sins He forgave if we refuse to forgive others? While that may seem contrary to Scripture, is it? Regardless, who is willing to risk God NOT forgiving us by withholding forgiveness from others? Forgiveness of sin is the most precious gift of God. Our hope always lies in the continual justification of God's grace, which is solely dependent upon forgiving others:

PSALM 32:1 **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**⁸

Forgiveness is a blessing but it is only given to those who are humble and meek and forgive others!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁸ Quoted in Rom. 4:7.