

- a. **I will not bring this sin up to use it against you!** God says: **“I will...remember their sins no more.”** (NIV Jeremiah 31:34) We may not be able to forget; nevertheless, *we promise to never use it against the person who has sinned. If we do; then we need to seek that person’s forgiveness!*
- b. **I will not bring this sin up to others!** It’s forgiven, over, and done with, *so don’t discuss it with anyone!*
- c. **I will not allow myself to dwell on this sin!** Again, it’s forgiven, it’s in the past – even thinking about it is counter-productive, so forget it and focus in a positive, God-pleasing direction!
- d. **I will never let this sin be a reason for not having a friendship with you!** Think about that statement; if you have really forgiven the sin; then you have promised to ✦ not use it against the person, ✦ not discuss it with others, and ✦ not even think about it. *When we really do such things, past sins will not hinder our present relationships!*

Conclusion: God’s forgiveness to us is a wonderful and complete promise; *it fully restores us to Him in Christ!* Therefore, let us extend that same promise to ALL WHO HAVE EVER SINNED AGAINST US! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

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“Forgiveness is a Promise!”

Based on Various Passages – NIV

Ash Wednesday – 2010

Wednesday † February 17 † 11 a.m. † 7 p.m.

Introduction: *Forgiveness is so important!* It literally MAKES or BREAKS every relationship:

- If God forgives me through Jesus; then I am in a right relationship with Him – *He is my Father and I am His forgiven child!*
- It is *similar* between ✦ husband and wife, ✦ brother and sister, ✦ friend and friend, ✦ neighbor and neighbor. If they BOTH REALLY FORGIVE each other; *then the relationship continues!* But whenever forgiveness is absent, *each relationship will continue to be broken!*

During this Lenten season 2010, we will focus on forgiveness in various ways. May God enable us to:

- Better understand forgiveness!
- Rejoice in God’s forgiveness in Christ! (and)
- Offer sincere forgiveness to all who have ever sinned against us!

1. **God’s Promise of Forgiveness to Us!**

- a. **Jeremiah 33:4-8 – God’s promise of forgiveness!**
 Around 600 B.C., when Jeremiah was a prophet, the southern kingdom of Judah was quickly moving toward destruction – *because of their sins!* Even though

Jeremiah called the people to repent, they continued in their sins; nevertheless, take note of God's promise of forgiveness:

⁴ ...this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah...: "They will be filled with the dead bodies of the men I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness."

⁶ "Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. ⁷ I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. ⁸ **I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.**"

Take note: *The Lord will cleanse – not the people; the cleansing will include all sin – not just some!*

Here is a similar promise from Jeremiah 50:20: "**In those days, at that time,**" declares the LORD, "**search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare.**"

Take note: Forgiveness is so wonderful because it removes all guilt and all sin. Because of God's great mercy in Christ, *HE SEES US as innocent and sinless!*

b. **1 John 1:8-9 – God's faithful promise of forgiveness encourages confession!**

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ **If we confess our sins, he is**

faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Take note: In light of our HOLY God, *it is essential to be without sin*; therefore, people try to be without sin in two ways:

- They *CLAIM to be without sin*, but such people are self-deceived – because all have sinned!
- They *CONFESS their sins* – admitting them, being sorry for them, and believing in Jesus for their forgiveness!

For all who confess, God will *fully forgive* and *perfectly purify* in every needful way!

c. **Luke 23:41-43 – God's promise of forgiveness opens paradise to sinners!**

He confessed his sins: ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

He verbalized his faith: ⁴² "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

He heard Jesus' wonderful promise: ⁴³ "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Take Note: God's forgiveness is essential, wonderful, and certain – *only in Jesus Christ!*

2. **Our Promise of Forgiveness to Others!** Having received God's forgiveness in Christ, *we are now able and willing to sincerely forgive all others!* When we extend forgiveness to others, we are also promising these things: