

“I believe in the forgiveness of sins”

LIVING THE CREED: CONNECTING LIFE AND FAITH IN THE APOSTLES CREED · AUGUST 14, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

The Reality of Our Need

The human history of sin (Genesis 3)
The human experience of sin (Romans 3:23)

The Reality of God’s Intervention

The history of God’s intervention (John 3:16-17)
The human experience of God’s intervention (Romans 6:23)

A Picture of God’s Intervening Forgiveness (John 8:1-11)

Apparent sin in this story
Less apparent sin in this story
The equalizing human experience of sin
The liberating divine gift of forgiveness

Living Out Our Belief in the Forgiveness of Sins

Finding forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ
Taking the step of baptism as a response of faith
Receiving forgiveness again in our lives
Experiencing the release of forgiving others

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When did you really need to forgive someone else in your life? When did you really need to be forgiven? What happened in either case?
2. This week we continue our series, “Living the Creed” by exploring this statement from the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, and then read John 8:1-11.
3. In this story from Scripture, we encounter in vivid form what Paul wrote in Romans 3:23,

- “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). What do you think this verse means and how does the story in John 8 shed light on it?
4. How hard or easy is it for you to believe that other people sin? How hard or easy is it for you to believe that you sin?
 5. Why do you think it’s important in John 8 that Jesus confronts both the crowd and the woman about their sin?
 6. Jesus speaks a powerful word to this woman at the end of the story: “Neither do I condemn you. . . Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). Let’s look at both parts of this. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Why was it significant that this woman did not find condemnation in Jesus?
 7. When have you experienced forgiveness from God and/or others? What happened and how did it change you?
 8. The second part of Jesus’ statement called the woman to now leave her life of sin. Why do you think this is important companion statement to the one about forgiveness and freedom from condemnation?
 9. What is one thing you learned through this study or sense God is speaking to you about your life and faith? If you’re in a small group, share that with one another. If you are on your own, write it down and share it with someone this week. Conclude your study in prayer.

DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize John 3:16-17, 1 John 1:9, or Romans 6:23
- Take time this week to go deeper with the verses mentioned above. Read one or all three verses twice. Take five minutes of silence to let God speak to you. Then journal on what you sense God is speaking to you.
- Consider reading:
 - o *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a World Stripped of Grace* by Miroslav Volf
 - o *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-Up, and Burnt Out* by Brennan Manning
- With others, watch a movie that touches on aspects of forgiveness, like *Tender Mercies*, *Invictus*, *The Mission*, *Les Misérables*, or *War Room*. Have a discussion afterwards about how the movie spoke to you about forgiveness.