

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

BIBLE BASIS: Lesson Scripture: Christ on the cross asks, "Father, forgive them." Luke 23:33-34; Colossians 1:13-22

BIBLE TRUTH: Christ's death on the cross makes it possible for God to forgive the sins of all who believe in Christ as Savior.

MEMORY VERSES: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-14

LESSON AIM: That you will believe in Jesus as your Savior and accept God's forgiveness for your sins.

LESSON SCRIPTURE

LUKE 23:33-34;
COLOSSIANS 1:13-22

LUKE 23:33-34

33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

COLOSSIANS 1:13-22

13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath trans-

lated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18. And he is the head of the body,

the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

DAILY DEVOTIONS

MONDAY: Read Colossians 1:13-14. Draw or write a description of "the dominion of darkness" and "the kingdom of the Son!" Hint: The word "Kingdom" doesn't refer to a territory on a globe. Have you been rescued from the dominion of darkness?

TUESDAY: Read Colossians 1:14 and Romans 6:23. When Jesus died, it's as if God stamped "PAID IN FULL" over your sins. There's nothing you need to do except receive the payment. Thank God for paying for your sins through Christ's death on the cross.

WEDNESDAY: Read Ephesians 1:7 along with Colossians 1:13-14. Write some of the things God has done for you through Jesus' death. Complete the following sentence: *I feel _____ about my relationship with God.*

THURSDAY: God does a thorough job of forgiving sin - not holding it over your head or partial forgiveness. Read Psalm 103:8-12. Using verses 11 and 12 as a sample, create a comparison for God's forgiveness. For example, as far as A is from Z, so far has God forgiven me.

FRIDAY: Read Colossians 1:13-14 again. Turn these two verses into a prayer of thanksgiving for God's forgiveness. Start your prayer off with something like this: "Thank You, God, for rescuing me from the dominion of darkness ... "

SATURDAY: If you're not sure you've been rescued from the dominion of darkness, you can ask God to rescue you right now. Tell Him you believe Christ's death on the cross makes it possible for your sins to be forgiven, and that you accept God's forgiveness.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

FOCUS

AIM: That you will answer questions about forgiveness.

It's An Outrage

What's it like to take the punishment

for something you didn't do? Think of it this way: you go to the store for a loaf of bread. You walk in the store and see a man taking a loaf and slipping it under his coat. The police are called. When they arrive, would you step forward and say, "Arrest me instead; I'll take the man's punishment"? Sounds crazy. Who would want to be punished for something he or she didn't do?

Well, God would; God did. It's that crazy, that simple, and just that personal. Jesus stepped forward and took the punishment for our sins.

Crucifixion was one of the cruelest forms of death ever devised by man. Its victims - usually thieves and murderers - were tied or nailed to a wooden cross and left to die from the sheer exhaustion of trying to breathe, countless whippings and beatings.

And after every gross indignity was heaped upon Him, this loving Jesus, God in the flesh, looked upon His executioners and tormentors and said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:24)

What didn't they know? What don't we know?

That we sentenced to death the very God who gave us life, who loved us before the beginning of time.

What could compel someone in utter agony, a cruel spike driven through His wrist, dehydrated, bleeding, slowly dying, to say, "Father, forgive them"?

There's only one answer: Love. "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God's people waited for the Messiah, but were destined to be disappointed in God's choice. God sent a carpenter, but the people wanted a king - not someone who went about healing people, preaching deliverance, and telling us to repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. No one wanted to hear that! They wanted to hear, "Hey, let's overthrow the Romans! Death to Caesar! Yea! Victory is ours!" So people rejected God's choice and yelled out, "Crucify Him!"

And still from the cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know ... what..."

...What they are doing. What is it that they do? That we do?

We sin. We do whatever we want and wander away from God, like sheep dumbly wandering about looking for a shepherd. "We're all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

Sin breaks God's heart and separates us from the presence of God. It was sin that separated Jesus from the very person of God the Father. Although Jesus was completely innocent, totally sinless, He took our sins on Himself. It was sin that crucified Jesus, the one who was with God when God spoke the world into existence and said "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis

1:26).

As Jesus hung on the cross, He interceded for the very ones who deserved the punishment (that is, all of us) and prayed, "Forgive them." In other words, "Don't hold this against them."

What is forgiveness?

It's being totally set free from the penalties of our actions; it's being totally accepted by God, because from a nail-scarred cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them."

The crucifixion of the Creator, the one called Jesus, is the outrage of the universe. This outrageous act, however, was required for our salvation. In order for our redemption to take place, a blood sacrifice was necessary, and Jesus was that sacrifice. Never mind the fact that He is Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end. Never mind that He is the Lord. Our drastic sins called for drastic measures - the sacrifice of the Son of God.

Imagine: the God of the universe, choosing to put on human flesh (skin and bones) so He could buy us back from sin. Imagine the same God who created the universe, hanging on a cross, arms stretched out, stripped, beaten, humiliated, worn, bleeding - all because of the sin of a 16 year old youth, or a man named Adam.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: That you will examine God's plan to reconcile sinners to Himself.

BIBLE STUDY

Real Forgiveness For Real Sins

Contrary to how some artists depict the Crucifixion, Jesus' death was gory and bloody. He felt real pain as He suffered a slow, torturous death. Something else was happening as Jesus died. Something about sin and forgiveness. Read about the realities of Jesus' death in Luke 23:33-34 and Colossians 1:13-22.

- 1.** In ten words or less, write your first impression of what these passages are about.
- 2.** Go back and look at Colossians 1:13-22 more closely. Draw a wavy line under each statement that says something about who Jesus Christ is.
- 3.** Put a double line under each statement that tells something about what God has done.
- 4.** Take a look at the statements you just put a double line under. How many of these things did God do through Jesus Christ? Give an example.
- 5.** Make a list of all the things Christ has done for you through His death on the cross.
- 6.** Create a simple drawing that expresses the main idea of this Bible Study. Your drawing can be funny or serious, symbolic or realistic. Be prepared to explain it.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: That you will realize how a person can be forgiven and receive God's salvation.

Use the index cards to develop a three-step outline for forgiveness. These are the steps we experience when we receive Christ as our Savior

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

**STUDENTS' RESPONSE
(ACTION)**

AIM: That you will have an opportunity to respond to Christ's salvation message.

Every Christian has a testimony about how Jesus saved them.

Ben's Story

The first in a three-part series of people's experiences with God's forgiveness.

My story is pretty dull reading. I've never abused drugs or alcohol. The worst crime I've ever committed was being late for school. Sometimes, I wish I could tell people how God turned my awful life around, but that's not my experience.

I grew up in a Christian home where we prayed and read the Bible every

day. I figured that eventually I would accept Jesus as Savior. One day, when I was seven years old, I read a tract shaped like a baseball glove. Each finger of the mitt was a different color and each color stood for a word or concept. The dark color - sin; the red - the blood Christ shed for our sins; the white - the cleansing power of Christ's sacrificial death; the green - growing as a Christian; and the gold - eternal life in Heaven. Even though I was really young, I understood that Jesus paid for my sins, but I didn't know how to become a Christian.

I asked my parents, and they explained that I needed to accept Jesus' payment and they helped me to pray. It all seemed so easy. After I prayed, I knew God had forgiven me, and I would go to Heaven one day.

That's all there is to my conversion story. It's not very dramatic, but when I think about the help God has given me to face problems, temptations, and life in general, I'm glad I've got a lifetime to walk with Him.

Close with a prayer for those who want to receive Jesus Christ in their lives.

