

The Extent of God's Forgiveness

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14

This passage says that God has forgiven believers *all* their trespasses, or sins. Does all include every kind of sin no matter when it was committed? Some believers think that Jesus forgives them certain kinds of sins or only sins they committed before they were saved. The implication is that certain sins or future sins could cause them to lose their salvation. Does salvation by grace promise more?

Grace covers all sin

If God does not forgive all kinds of sin no matter when they are committed, then His grace would be limited. But this passage teaches us that forgiveness comes with a new life and that condemnation for sin was wiped away on the cross. The word used for forgiveness in verse 13 comes from the same word used for grace, which means a free gift. God's forgiveness is freely given. It is not only free, but it is abundant. Romans 5:20 teaches that "where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." God's grace so exceeds all of our sin that no matter what we do or when we do it, our eternal standing with God is secure. We can not out-sin God's grace and forgiveness.

All means all

Therefore, in Colossians 2:13, the word "all" means exactly that. It means that Jesus has forgiven every sin, no matter how terrible. It also means he has forgiven all sins whether past, present, or future. Some may have trouble accepting the fact that God has forgiven even future sins, but we must realize that all of our sins were future to Jesus Christ when He paid for them on the cross. Jesus knew the sins we had committed in our past and forgave us anyway when He died on the cross. Likewise he knew the sins we are yet to commit and he forgave us anyway on the cross.

Jesus paid it all

When Jesus said from the cross "It is finished," He meant "paid in full." God's just penalty for our sins was completely satisfied in the death of His own Son. Nothing else could have been an acceptable payment or an eternally sufficient payment. Christ's death was sufficient for all sin and for all sinners everywhere and anytime. That is why there is no longer the need to offer sacrifices for sin (Heb. 10:1-18).

We must maintain fellowship forgiveness

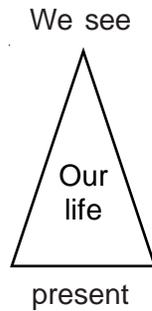
We should realize that there are two kinds of forgiveness in the Scriptures. Colossians 2:13-14 addresses judicial forgiveness of sins which would keep us from God's presence. There is also fellowship forgiveness of sins that would hinder our experiential walk with God. We are forgiven judicially the moment we believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life (at justification). We are forgiven experientially when we confess subsequent sins to God on a moment by moment basis (1 John 1:9). If we do not confess

our sins on an ongoing basis, we may hinder our experiential fellowship with God. Though we can never lose our salvation, we can lose the *joy* of our salvation, much like a disobedient son would not cease to be in the family, but could have a fractured relationship with his father.

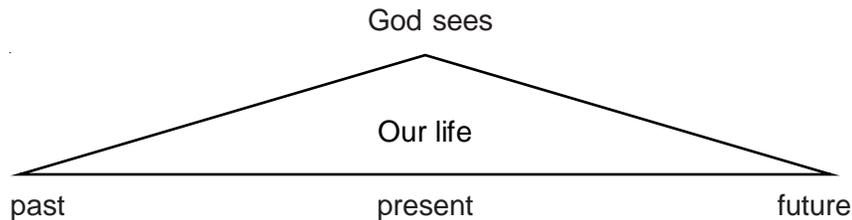
We need God's eternal perspective

It helps to see the sins in our life as God has seen them. Our view is limited to the present moment; the past is a memory and the future is only a possibility. But since God is not confined to time (He is infinite), He views our life in its totality.

Our view is this:



God's view is this:



When God forgave our sins, he saw what we did in our past, what we are doing in our present, and what we will do in our future—and He forgave us anyway!

Conclusion

God did not save us only to regret it, because He was not surprised by anything we have done or will do. When Jesus died for our sins, God had our entire life in view. He did not give us eternal life only to take it back when we do something bad. He already knew what sins we would commit as believers, but forgave us anyway. This should cause us to live worshipfully with gratitude, not in licentiousness. Grace teaches that our guiltless position before God depends on His promise of forgiveness, not on our performance. However, the quality of our subsequent fellowship with God depends on constant confession of our sins as we become aware of them.