**SKETCHY VIEWS OF GOD**

**God Can’t Forgive Me**

Sunday, September 10, 2023

**WE** **Slide 1 A person goes out and gets heavily involved in drugs, using and selling.** Or a persongets so angry at someone that they end up killing them. **Does God’s offer of forgiveness/restored relationship extend to that person, or is their sin so bad that they can’t be forgiven?** Or, let me put it another way, is there anything that we can do that’s so bad God will not forgive if a person sincerely wants God to forgive them and restore their relationship with Him? **Slide 2 T/F We can sin so much that God can’t/won’t forgive us.** Thank the Lord, we’ll find out today that this is FALSE- **Slide 3** God can and will forgive us if we’ll ask for His forgiveness and trust Him with our lives.

**This question is important to answer because a person’s view of God impacts how they respond to Him.** For unbelievers if they have a SKETCHY VIEW OF GOD, a wrong view, that He CAN’T/WON’T FORGIVE them it will keep them from accepting God’s offer of forgiveness, restored relationship, and eternity with Him rather than in hell. **Believers, if we believe God’s forgiven our sin, but then think we’re too bad for Him/sinned too much, we’re going to crash/burn in our lives.** Unbeliever God’s offering to forgive you! Believer God HAS FORGIVEN YOU so we need to stop thinking He hasn’t. Also, believer God’s placed people in our lives who are asking this question and you have the privilege/responsibility to bring this ACCURATE VIEW of God to them. **Let’s see what God says about His ability to forgive our sin no matter how bad we think it is.** I want to start by telling you a true story that happened many years ago that is a REAL-LIFE PROOF of this. **Slide 4 It starts with a guy named Stephen a leader in the Jerusalem church.**

**GOD**

1. **JESUS CAN/WILL FORGIVE YOU**
2. **A Real-Life Proof- Saul**
3. It starts with the killing of Stephen by the religious leaders.
4. Arrested for telling people God will save them through faith in Jesus, they interrogated him, he gave them the gospel, they were so mad they took him out and stoned him/dead.
5. Before pummeling him with stones they had a young guy named Saul hold their coats.

**Saul, a young/up-and-coming religious leader, thought the killing of Stephen was great and was put in charge of their plan to wipe out the Jesus followers.** Here’s how Luke describes what Saul did. **READ Slide 5-8**

1. Saul took the lead in persecuting believers.
2. Saul was laser-focused on arresting/killing all who claimed allegiance to Jesus Christ.
3. He arrested/imprisoned/killed men/women- just for worshiping Jesus Christ.

**If you were God/Jesus what would you do to Saul for killing those who were your children/followers? You touch one of my kids and you’re going to regret it- my kids have seen this first-hand.** No doubt that’s what Jesus was thinking, too, right?! **Let’s see what Jesus did to Saul.** **READ Slide 9-15** This is the complete opposite of what anyone would think- Jesus reaches out not to slap/judge Saul, but to initiate a relationship!

1. Jesus forgives Saul of his sin- including killing Jesus’ followers.
2. Jesus initiates a relationship despite killing His followers.
3. Jesus offers forgiveness and partnership in gospel mission.
4. Saul accepts- seen by regaining his sight/ receiving Holy Spirit.
5. Saul life goes in a completely opposite direction- helps grow the church.

**Why do I tell the story of Saul, who we know better as the Apostle Paul, receiving God’s forgiveness? Because it’s PROOF that Jesus CAN/WILL forgive your sin if you ask.** If Jesus can forgive someone who is killing His followers, He CAN/WILL forgive you of whatever you’ve done.You haven’t killed anyone have you? **The Apostle John says it very simply in 1 John 1:9** **READ Slide 16-17** John doesn’t specify a sin or an amount of sin.

1. **God Can/Will Forgive Your Sin- Confess your sin and He promises to forgive you.**
2. Jesus doesn’t specify which sins He forgives- just says if we confess our sins. **What does “confess” mean?**
3. “confess”- omologeo; agree with, context: agree with God that what we’ve done is wrong, carries with it the need for forgiveness
4. Not be forgiven/continue living as we want/sinning.
5. It’s, be forgiven/cleansed, to live God’s way/join God’s gospel sharing mission.
6. Like Saul/Paul is forgiven to live for God/represent Him to others/join the mission.

**He shows His love for us through Jesus’ death/forgiveness/salvation and once we’re in that relationship we show our love for Him by dying to ourselves, not living our way but like Saul living life His way for His purposes. How is God able to forgive everything we’ve done or will do?** 1st, it might be obvious, but it’s against Him that we’ve sinned, we’ve broken His laws so we need His forgiveness. **Look what Saul/Paul says in Galatians 3:10.** **READ Slide 18-19** We’ve broken God’s laws, sinned against Him so only He can forgive us.

1. **Only God Can Forgive You.**
2. We’ve sinned against Him.
3. Whatever bad things we’ve done we’ve done ultimately against God because He’s the One who said it’s wrong.
4. We must go to Him for forgiveness, we don’t go to someone else to get God’s forgiveness.
5. Only God can forgive/declare us not guilty.

**There’s nothing we can do, no amount of good things/religious things, can make us right with God so God chose to step in and do the only thing that could be done to make us right with Him.** The One we’ve sinned against/disobeyed is the only one who can forgive us and did what needed to be done to make us right with Him. **I get it, that kind of love is hard to believe but that is what God did.** Look at what God had Saul/Paul tell us Romans 5:6-10. **READ Slide 20-24**

1. He chose to do what needed to be done.
2. We are sinners, enemies of God, deserving His wrath.
3. God sent God the Son, Jesus, to represent us.
4. Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn’t live.
5. Jesus died the eternal death we would have to die.
6. **CRUCIAL POINT for believers who are struggling Slide 25-26-** you’re struggling because you’re doing life your way, thinking you’re perspective is right rather than being “saved by Jesus’ life”- thinking/living how Jesus lived- totally committed to God and His purpose.

**How can Jesus die for all the sin you and I have committed? Because He’s God, He’s INFINITELY powerful, loving, gracious, merciful, He is able to forgive us, Romans 5:20. READ Slide 27-29**

1. Only He is infinitely powerful, loving, able to forgive, Romans 5:20-21
2. God’s law tells us where we’ve done wrong/where we’ve sinned.
3. We were born sinners and we’ve all made the choice to sin…a lot! In thought and actions.
4. God’s grace/ability to forgive is infinitely greater than our amount of sin.
5. There’s nothing you’ve done that He can’t/won’t forgive because Jesus took God’s wrath for you.

**I don’t want to confuse the issue, but the only sin that God can’t forgive is the sin of REJECTING what Jesus did for you on the cross, rejecting God’s offer of forgiveness, restored relationship, and eternity with Him.** That brings us to our TAKEAWAYS this morning. **Nothing you’ve done is so bad that God CAN’T/WON’T forgive you so receive His offer of forgiveness this morning. Slide 30**

**YOU TAKEAWAY**

1. **UNBELIEVER- Receive God’s offer of forgiveness, relationship, salvation.**
2. **ADMIT** you’ve sinned, are separated from God, and need His forgiveness.
3. **BELIEVE** Jesus took your eternal judgment when He died on the cross.
4. **CONFESS** that by telling God you are putting your full weight of trust on Him.

**DOING THIS, LIKE SAUL, WILL PUT YOUR LIFE IN A COMPLETELY OPPOSITE DIRECTION THAN FROM WHAT YOU’RE LIVING NOW. PRAY If you prayed that prayer would you let me know? Slide 31** Put it on a Connect Card, text me. **I know I’ve focused on those who need Jesus but let me close by encouraging you believers who are struggling.**

1. **Slide 32 BELIEVER- Experience freedom through living Jesus’ life.**

* We’re derailed when we think we know better than God.
* We’re saved “by His life”- living life as He lived.
* Jesus lived life fully committed to God’s commands.
* We must commit to live life as Jesus lived, for the purpose He lived- drawing people to Him for salvation.

**PODCAST: Are you too bad for God to forgive? I know you’ll love the answer God gives.** Acts 8:3, 9:1-6, 13-19; 1 John 1:9; Galatians 3:10; Romans 5:6-10, 20-21