

Series: Ephesians  
Title: For Christ's Sake  
Text: Ephesians 4: 32  
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**Ephesians 4:32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

It is so sad—such an evidence of the depths of ignorance—when sinners use these three words in vain. It is sad ignorance because this is the great purpose for everything: For Christ's Sake.

Everything God has done, is doing and shall do is for Christ's sake.

Colossians 1: 16:...everything was created...for him....18:...that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Romans 14: 7: For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9: For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Ephesians 1: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

With every sinner—believer and unbeliever, saint and rebel—God will accomplish the end purpose of giving Christ all Preeminence.

Proverbs 16:4: The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Philippians 2: 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Furthermore, every person has reason to rejoice in the greatness contained in these three words, even every rebel. Of course, for believers, every blessing we have is for Christ's sake.

Ephesians 2: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Rebel, it is for Christ's sake that you get to enjoy this world a little longer. God would have long ago destroyed this whole world, along with every rebel and all things every rebel holds dear were it not that God has a people whom he shall save for Christ's sake. God is longsuffering toward rebels for Christ's sake.

Romans 9: 22: What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24: Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

So rebel, you ought to think twice, next time those three words roll off your tongue to curse God.

This is the one great motive for believers. What we do is not nearly as important as why we do it. A good deed can be a bad deed if the motive is bad and a deed which does not appear good to this world is a good deed before God if the motive is good. For instance, Rahab lied. God commends that as a good deed because she did it for the sake of Christ.

**Proposition:** The purpose and motive in everything God does and the only true motive in things believers do is “for Christ’s sake.”

Notice, both “we” are exhorted by this one motive, and likewise, God is moved by this one motive--“Forgiving one another, even, as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.” Believer, everything else we do should be for this one reason, “for Christ’s sake.” Likewise, believer, this is the one reason God has done everything else for us, for Christ’s sake.

## **THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS**

First, why do we need forgiveness? The reason we need forgiveness is sin. We would know nothing of God’s forgiveness did we not need forgiveness due to our sins. This exhortation would not be needed did we not still need forgiveness from God and from one another.

In my flesh, sin is what I am and all I am. Everything that comes from my fleshly nature—everything I think, speak and do—is sin. When I only had a fleshly nature, sin was all I was and all I did.

Now, that God has given me a new nature, the sin of that old man is mixed with all I do. Listen to a regenerated believer speak of himself under the power of the Holy Spirit:

Romans 7: 20: Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21: I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Can you say that in honesty about yourself? It is true of every believer. And every unregenerate sinner is only sin. All of us need forgiveness because of our sins.

## **ONE GREAT REASON FOR FORGIVENESS**

Secondly, let’s concentrate on this. The one great reason we have forgiveness of our sins before God our Father is “for Christ’s sake.”

The very God we sinned against provided his own dear Son to suffer and lay down his life, that the very God against whom we transgressed, might be able to forgive us. We do not understand how hideous sin is to God; how opposite of the character of our God! The more we grow to understand this, the more we will grow to be kind to one another, tender-hearted and forgiving. The more we will love one another!

God could not forgive us any other way than for his law to be executed upon us. The justice of God must be carried out. The soul that sinneth, it must die! (Eze 18: 4; 20) So in order for God to save his people and be just, God himself must provide the sacrifice and it must be a sacrifice who is so very one with God that it is God himself doing the justifying.

How amazing! Amazing Love! Our great God and Father, himself, provided his own Son to die in the place of his people.

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation [the satisfaction] for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

What a sacrifice God provided: HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. God's provision served God's two-fold purpose: to give his Son all preeminence and to save his people from our sins. God loved his Son—God would have his Son to have all preeminence. And God loved his people—God would have his people to be made the righteousness of God. God manifest his great love for both his Son and his people by sending his Son to save us from our sins.

John 17:23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS ON THE CROSS**

We only understand this by his grace! But look at Calvary's cross. I'll preach this till I come close to getting it right, then I'll preach it some more! See in that one act on Calvary's cross, perfect righteousness.

Galatians 5:14: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

In Christ we see the only one who loved his neighbor as himself in perfect righteousness. The only one who fulfilled all the law in perfect righteousness by perfect love. Christ is the righteous love which is the fulfillment of the law

Let me say this slowly: Christ filled full the righteousness of the law by love so great, so perfect, so righteous, when he willingly, selflessly, gave himself to be separated from God and from his brethren. He gave himself to be shamefully dishonored that both his God and his brethren might be eternally honored! On the cross, Christ condescended to the furthest depths of shame to exalt God and his brethren to the highest heights of honor! That one act manifests the very righteous and holy heart and character of our Redeemer. He is Righteousness and Holiness! He is the righteousness and holiness of the law: the holiness, justice and goodness of the law is Christ. That is why Christ is the end for which the law was given—the end to that means is Christ our Righteousness. There in Christ on the cross, we behold the positive righteousness of the law and at the same time, justification from the law—our righteousness and justification—all in one person in one act.

## **BLESSING OF REPRESENTATION**

Brethren, have you ever considered what great mercy it was for God our Father to allow his people to fall in a representative man? If we had fallen in sin by our personal rebellion, as did the angels, there would be no recovery. We ought to thank God every day for representation. Oh, how I love this good news! Before we sinned in Adam, God entrusted his people to his Son to save us from our sins.

Romans 5:19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

I love the fact that Eve took the fruit but nothing happened. She disobeyed God. I expect God would have chastened her. But her eyes were not opened—she did not fall into sin—until Adam disobeyed. Believer, do you know what that means for us? When we disobey God, we sin. And our Father will chasten us. But we stand in the Righteousness of our Righteous Representative, Christ Jesus. We cannot undo what Christ is and has done. We cannot become unrighteous unless Christ could become unrighteous and that is an utter impossibility—therefore it is an impossibility to become unrighteous for you who believe. We fell into sin in our representative head; now we stand eternally righteous in our Representative Head. How I love the gospel of representation! This is something of what is meant when it says, “For Christ’s sake!”

### **FORGIVEN FOR CHRIST’S SAKE**

Lastly, what has God done for us for Christ’s sake? He has forgiven us, “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph 4: 32)

For one reason only—for Christ’s sake—he gave you life in his Son; for one reason only—for Christ’s sake—God taught you what Christ did for you; for one reason only—for Christ’s sake—God gave you faith to believe on him and repentance to renounce you and your works; then for one reason only—for the sake of Christ—God made you to know that God has forgiven you all your sins! Now, we have everlasting forgiveness, eternal righteousness. God says, “There sins and iniquities I remember no more!”

### **CONSTRAINED BY LOVE**

Last week, in my message at Danville, I had something very important that I accidentally missed in my notes. When speaking of how Nehemiah as Governor did not exact of the people what was lawfully his due, I said that after all that Christ has done for us, Christ, as our Governor, does not exact of us what is lawfully his due.

“Look to that cross—how could we ever repay him for his good government over us?” What price can you put on his precious blood?; on his suffering the second death while he hung their alive on that cross in our place?; on his ruling his kingdom and his house with such a faithful hand?

Here is what I accidentally left out. He simply says to us, if you love me, feed my sheep; if you love me, love my brethren; if you love me, glorify my name.

Likewise, in our text, God says, “even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you”, now you just be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.”

It is not law that constrains us or rules us; it is his love for us, for Christ’s sake, that constrains us. As Nehemiah said, “It is because of the fear of God.”

Believer, when you see what God has done for you for Christ’s sake does it not give you a reverence for God above all others! Does it not take utter control of your inner man! This motive moved the apostle John so much, that he said, “He that loveth not knoweth not God.” (1 Jn 4: 8)

I realize we sin. I realize we make grave mistakes. But God brings us to ourselves, to repentance, to love. So I say this with John, without reservation, any sinner that claims to believe God, who can go on being unkind to his brother, being hardhearted, being unforgiving of his brother, plain and simple, he does not know God.

God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us, because satisfaction has been made to the injured honor of his divine government, and now his justice is satisfied. His honor is restored! His law magnified! That is the love of God for his people! That is the love that constrains his people. It is righteous, holy, just love!

### **ARE THERE ANY LEFT?**

In the days of David, Jonathan helped King David—a beautiful picture of how Christ worked the works of God. When David ascended to his throne, “David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness [the kindness of God] for Jonathan's sake?” (2 Sam 9: 1) Saul was David's enemy. But for Jonathan's sake, David was willing to show them kindness, to bring them into his own house. Now, “is there any left here, of the house of God's enemy, that God might show them kindness, for Christ's sake?”

It was reported to David, “Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.” (2 Sam 9: 3) Does Christ have a son here, which is lame on his feet? Christ said, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Lu 5: 32) Are you lame on your feet in sin? It is the joy of the Father to express his love for his Son by calling Christ's lame sons just as it was David's delight to express his love for Jonathan by calling his lame son.

David said, “Go fetch him!” David sent and fetched him. His name was Mephibosheth. When he came to David, “David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.” (2 Sam 9: 7) Sinner, if God has shown you your sins, if he has fetched you to him, God says, “Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Christ thy father's sake, and will restore thee above and beyond what you lost in Adam. And you shall eat bread at God's table continually.”

For us who God has called—for Christ's sake—our answer to God is Mephibosheth's answer to David, “And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?” (2 Sam 9: 8)

### **THREE DOORS**

For the exhortation let me give you “THREE DOORS.” This is from one of Brother Henry Mahan's TV sermons from 1982, speaking on this passage in Ephesians. He said, someone said, “Let every word that we speak pass through three doors.”

The first door is this: “Is it true?” We certainly ought not to tell things that are not true. That's the first question to ask; “is it true?”

Secondly: “Is it necessary that I tell it?” Is it absolutely necessary? Will it accomplish any good by me repeating this story? You are not supposed to tell it just because it is true.

Thirdly: “Is it kind?”

If we pass our words through those three doors, it is very, very, possible, that we will not offend, hurt, wound, and be unkind in our conversation.

God gives us a light and easy yoke. He only says, “be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.” Grace and love is a light and easy yoke because grace and love is a light and easy constraint!

**Amen!**