

"Fixed "

Have you ever met someone whom you considered gifted in fixing things? Maybe it's a person who fits the description of a "handyman"—the guy who apparently can do any project you place before him. My brother-in-law was a "Mr. Fix-it." No matter what you placed before him he seemed to have the ability to fix it or even rebuild it. If it was broken, take it to Johnny. He was so gifted in fixing things that seeing a new modern appliance in their house was a rarity . . . that is, until he died at the age of forty-two. You see, he could not fix cancer.

Interesting how the news of having cancer puts a whole different perspective on being "broken." Just hearing the word spoken to you in reference to your own health sounds different in the ear, almost as if it's spelled with a "d" (i.e. death) rather than a "c." Thoughts of your mortality may flood your mind along with feelings you never could have imagined experiencing. This is not just feeling broken as you have so many other times in your life and found help to be "fixed." This is feeling **really broken** to the point of feeling completely helpless at the hands of those who try but cannot guarantee it will be fixed. Even my description here pales to the feelings one goes through when told he has cancer.

It is also interesting how thoughts in such “brokenness” can gravitate to your life which is broken by sin. Your mind can conjure up all those ways in which you’ve disobeyed God’s commands, thereby adding more struggles within your relationships, already strained by the brokenness of sin. You may even think of Judgment Day when you stand before God as a broken sinner, maybe even able to name those sins from the past which now confront your mortality. If not, God could reveal those sinful deeds. Revelation 20:12 pictures this judgment based upon “books” which God has in His possession. It says: *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.* At the thought of such judgment, the desire for a fix is immense.

We’ve considered a couple of facets on our diamond (i.e. cube) of forgiveness: Clean and Covered. In these two facets we primarily saw forgiveness in *the blood of Jesus* which *cleanses us from all sin* (cf. 1 John 1:7) and our sins being covered with the darkness of Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the cold, dark tomb. These two facets, Clean and Covered, describe forgiveness in terms of what we see, and perhaps that’s the most natural understanding of forgiveness.

The facet of forgiveness we consider this evening is that of Fixed. It is primarily described in terms of what you feel in the guilt of your sin called “contrition” as well as where you can fix your hope in the midst of your guilt. Thus, forgiveness is a tactile experience that reassures you with the permanence of God’s work which fixes brokenness in sin. Forgiveness is what you reassuringly find every day as you go to the same place for both the reminders you need of the work God has already done and the proclamation of it’s benefits to you. Absolution is certain because of the place where your forgiveness for sins is fixed.

Someone once told me: “Being a Christian is so boring! I mean, it’s the same ol’, same ol’. You sin, you repent and you’re forgiven. You sin again, repent again and you’re forgiven again. You go to church and it’s all about sin and forgiveness, sin and forgiveness.” Exactly! However, at the same time, it is exciting and renewing. Coming to the Lord in contrition (i.e. sorrow in the midst of the guilt and burden of your sin) and leaving forgiven (i.e. cleansed, renewed and relationship “fixed”) is indeed wonderful! Just think how freeing and refreshing it is whenever you reconcile relationships in Christ’s forgiveness with others. Even more freeing and refreshing is relationship restored with Yahweh in His fixed forgiveness! No wonder Peter told the crowd: *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins*

may be blotted out, **that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord** (cf. Acts 3:19-20).

And why can such renewal in forgiveness happen? Because your sins have been fixed once and for all upon Jesus at the cross. 1 Peter 3:18 says: *Christ also suffered **once for sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.* It is important to consider your brokenness in sin **along with** trusting in Christ's sacrifice for your sins. Hebrews 9:27-28 says: *Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, **not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.***

Because the brokenness in sin was fixed on the sacrificial body of Jesus on the cross, once for all time, for all sins, for all people, you need not fear death or Judgment Day. The Holy Spirit given you at your baptism moves you from avoidance of admitting your sin to embracing the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross in repentance and faith. There God has fixed your forgiveness with eternal certainty. Forgiveness will always be held in one place, always inviting you to find it just where God has put it. Forgiveness is fixed.

This also puts Judgment Day for the believer in Christ in a whole new perspective. Psalm 130:3 asks a rhetorical question: *If You, O*

LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? No one. It leaves you standing helpless on the Day of Judgment when the books are opened and you are judged by what is written in the books, according to what you've done (cf. Revelation 20:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). How will you survive? Remember, one of those books is *the book of life* where the name of every person who stand under God's forgiveness is written.

The LORD promises in Isaiah 43:25 → *I, I am He Who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.* You stand under Yahweh's forgiveness when it is forgiveness **for His own sake**. In other words, it is forgiveness which is fixed by Him on His terms, in His way. Thus, the record of your sins which stands against you are blotted out of His remembrance in the nails which fixed Jesus to the cross for your sins. Colossians 2:13-14 says: *You, who were dead in your trespasses . . . God made alive together with Christ, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us . . . This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.* In Christ's Person & Work your name is written in the book of life.

The record of your sins, which on the Day of Judgment should reveal works which stand against you and condemn you to hell, have been fixed to the cross of Jesus. Because those nails brought about

the death of God's Son, your sins and every demand that could be made against you from God's law have also died. When the nails were driven into Christ, the bills against you were lying between His hands and the wood of the cross. God's justice was fulfilled as your deeds were pierced, paid for once, for all your sin, for all your life.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if every form of sickness could be pinpointed to one spot, fixed in one area and surgically removed with no residual affects on the rest of your body? Even after a cancerous lump, concentrated in one spot, has been removed, the thought of residual cancer cells in the body still lingers. Praise God that sin, much like a cancerous cell which has spread to all people through sinful Adam & Eve (cf. Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12), **is fixed to one spot**, being removed in suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The permanence of God's work in Christ for you on that cross brings you the certainty of the forgiveness of all your sins for all eternity.

Amen.

Based upon the book, "Flowing from the Cross: Six Facets of God's Forgiveness" by Daniel Paavola. © 2020 Published by Concordia Publishing, St. Louis, MO.

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