

## "Forgiveness: More than a Cube"

During our Lenten journey this year we've considered the six facets of the diamond of forgiveness, pictured by this cube. Throughout the unfolding of the history of His salvation for mankind, one of the relationship pictures Yahweh uses is that of marriage. The prophet Isaiah reminded God's people: *Your Maker is your husband, Yahweh of hosts is His name* (cf. Isaiah 54:5). By His great act of redemption in the Passover and Exodus in 1445 BC, the LORD bound Israel to Himself, His covenant diamond of engagement and marriage to them (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-32). Thus, their sin is also described as a "spiritual adultery," being unfaithful to Him. The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: *Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to Me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD.* (cf. Jeremiah 3:20)

The prophet Hosea's whole life was an action prophecy, depicting the sinful struggles in our relationship with our Husband, Yahweh. He instructed Hosea to marry *a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom*, depicting His people's committing *great whoredom by forsaking the LORD* (cf. Hosea 1:2). While the prostitute should have been stoned to death according to Old Testament Law, His action

depicts the steadfast love and mercy of God for sinners. Displaying such love would also bring humiliation just as Hosea would have to bear humiliation for taking such a woman as his wife. That humiliation found its ultimate expression in the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus, in His crucifixion. Jesus is the Bridegroom Who marries unfaithful sinners to Yahweh by His atoning work of the cross and in His resurrection. Your marriage relationship with Yahweh was sealed in the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, for the forgiveness of your sins.

Reviewing the facets of His forgiveness of your sins as we have pictured them from our diamond or cube of forgiveness, you will discover that forgiveness is more than a cube.

- Clean ([Remove and hold up the Clean panel](#)) → Forgiveness is cleansing, not just of the surface dirt but of the stain that is set in, which no amount of effort on your part and no amount of cleaner you produce, can get it out. It deals with the stain on every human heart. The stain of sin. And no one is exempt from its presence. However, 1 John 1:7 & 9 state the promise of God: *If we walk in the light, as God is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- Covered ([Remove and hold up the Covered panel](#)) → Psalm 32:1-

2 says: *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is **covered**. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.* Your relationship with the Lord Jesus comes “under cover,” if you will . . . that is, under the cover of God’s grace and love for you and for me, upon whom the blemish of sin rests. It is only when Yahweh *counts no iniquity . . . against you with your sin . . . covered in **His*** forgiveness that you are truly *blessed*.

- Fixed (Remove and hold up the Fixed panel) → When you feel the guilt of your sin (i.e. contrition) this facet reminds you where you can fix your hope for forgiveness. It 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—on Jesus Christ on the cross. 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.*
- Far (Remove and hold up the Far panel) → Your current sins are a

presence with you and, even more deplorable is when your past sins, which the LORD says He *will not remember* (cf. Isaiah 43:25), are constantly replayed in your mind like a broken record that never seems to quit. You may feel like King David who said in Psalm 51:3 → *I know my transgressions, and my sin **is ever before me.***

Despite your best intentions, you also have to face the fact that many of your same failings will be repeated in your life. Trusting in the atoning work of Jesus on the cross for you, God's promise of a blessed distance from your sins is a certainty. He says in Psalm 103:11-12 → *As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.*

- Many (Remove and hold up the Many panel) → Jesus' work is meant for many—the many sins of many people. We are acutely attuned to the words of condemnation that remind us of our many sins and can hear the whispered accusations driving us away from, rather than to, the LORD. The many sins with their many voices seem to overpower the one voice which can silence them all. Over and over again you need to hear repeated the words of God, Who tirelessly announces your forgiveness of your sins. You have His words, actually conveying the wealth of His sacrifice,

which calms the furious guilt you so often hear in your heart. It's called the Absolution. Through Christians God speaks the words, "I forgive you." It is so important that you speak these words in the name of Christ Jesus to others **many times** and also that you seek them out in repentance and hear them **many times**. *Take heart, My son, your sins **are** forgiven.* (cf. Matthew 9:2)

- One (Remove and hold up the One panel) → One single act has made payment, not only for the sins of trespasses against you, **but for your trespasses against Yahweh as well.** Romans 5:15-16 says: *The free gift is not like the trespass. For if **many** died through **one** man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that **one** man Jesus Christ abounded for **many**. And the free gift is not like the result of that **one** man's sin. For the judgment following **one** trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following **many** trespasses brought justification.* Jesus is the single, beloved Son, the One in Whom God has taken on your sins, your pain, and the **one** payment you need.

We see in our cube (i.e. diamond) the cross of Jesus. Forgiveness is more than simply a cube with various facets reflecting its characteristics. Forgiveness is possible only as it flows from the cross

of Jesus Christ. It is **only** possible if it flows as a fruit of faith in the Person & Work of Jesus in His atoning sacrifice for your sins and resurrection from the dead. When asked the question by His disciples, *Who then can be saved?*, Jesus looked at them and said in Matthew 19:26 → *With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*. Forgiveness is difficult to receive, believe, accept and give in the daily struggle with the presence of sin and devil in your life. But the Holy Spirit makes it possible in and through you as He always leads you to Jesus (cf. John 15:26). God has made the impossible, possible.

Open up your cubes. You will notice that your cube has taken the shape of a cross. The cross is the greatest intersection the world has ever known. On the cross, the One Who is both God and man died, bridging heaven and earth, the holy God with sinners, reminding you that you are cleansed of your many sins, that they've been covered in God's "divine amnesia" (i.e. remembered no longer by Him), fixed to the cross once and for all time, removed far from you because of the one single sacrifice of Jesus. This is where you meet your loving heavenly Father in repentance and forgiveness so you get to meet Him in heavenly glory in "the life of the world to come." 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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