

"One"

"Someone's gotta pay!" This phrase reflects the feelings of one who has experienced the pain of victimization or the results of incompetence or the affects of injustice or the hurt which accompanies sin. "Someone's gotta pay!" even becomes the mantra of a person seeking to relieve the pain of a cross which he bears everyday. Courtrooms are booked solid with cases to determine who will pay; activist groups stand on a "platform" crying out for just payment of one sort or another; streets may be filled with protesters seeking payment for injustices performed; vigilantes looking to "even-up the score" with a payback; an individual looking for a finality to the pain by causing others to suffer in some way.

"Someone's gotta pay!" is actually motivated by another ideal—"Paybacks are sweet!" This is the theme of so many action movies where you find your desire for those bad guys to "get theirs" in the end during the last 5-10 minutes of the show. In fact, the whole movie is based upon creating in you this desire for someone to pay in the end.

However, in your own life of reality the most you will experience of paybacks being "sweet" is if they accompany fun pranks or practical

jokes where no one gets seriously injured. Otherwise, no amount of money, no amount of suffering, no amount of works will be sufficient payment to remove the pain or redeem that which was lost. What one act of justice can satisfy your desire for someone having to pay for the sins committed against you?

The Lord's Prayer speaks of forgiving "those who trespass against us." The concept of trespass usually refers to those who step into our space uninvited and against our will. When it comes to the Lord's Prayer, it refers to those who treat us in a manner which goes against God's commandments since *sin is lawlessness* (cf. 1 John 3:4). The struggle with such trespassing is that most times those who do so walk away leaving their trespassing footprints behind for you to deal with somehow. You're left with their footprints and the lasting memories of what was done to you, maybe even feeling like they flattened you out completely. Pointing your finger at the person connected to those footprints you may cry out, "Lord, it's not right! **Someone's** gotta pay! And I know just who it is, Lord!"

Of course, as you share the continuing pain of being left in the wake of someone's sin, there are those who will tell you: "Just let it go. You need to walk away and forget it. It's over, done and past. You need to get over it! After all, Jesus did tell us to "turn the other cheek." Doesn't He want us to forgive and forget?" What do you hear by such

“advice” in the midst of sinful memories and pain? A lecture? Do you actually hear the person saying, “Don’t bother me with your problems?” Is forgiveness really that easy? Besides, the advice is impossible. It’s impossible for you to “get over” anything. It becomes a permanent part of your earthly existence. You’re simply striving to find a way to deal with it. Someone else has to pay because you can’t find your way out of it all!

The sixth facet of our diamond (i.e. cube) of forgiveness answers this plea to the LORD. One. One single act has made payment, not only for the sins of trespasses against you, **but for your trespasses against Yahweh and others as well**. Remember, you also walk in the footprints of that person who sinned against you as a fellow sinner, no matter how many times you may say you’d never do to him what he did to you. Have you ever heard the cliché, “Never say never?” Why should you never say never? Because never is an absolute which demands you to be perfect in order to fulfill it. And you’re not that perfect. Along with everyone else, you are also the recipient of the one who trespassed God’s law—Adam.

However, there is **One** Who is perfect—Jesus. Listen to the contrast between “many” and “one” in relation to your sin and the work of Jesus in Romans 5:15-16 → *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.*

We are all the victims of the one trespass of Adam and it was necessary that someone pay for that damage done to our souls. However, Psalm 49:7-9 says: *Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit.* Since it is impossible for man to exact such a payment God exacts it in a one time, single event, with the death of His Son on the cross of crucifixion.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son (cf. John 3:16). You've heard it again and again: *God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son . . .* It was etched in my memory since I was knee-high to a grasshopper. Some translations read: *For God so loved the world, that He gave His **One** and only Son* (NIV). With those words Jesus reminds you of God's love for you . . . and you . . . and you . . . and me . . . many sinners feeling the weight of many sins, your own and those of others. God knows your pain. Forgiveness isn't just a command from a God sitting aloof in heaven, untouched by your pain.

It grieves Him as well. Forgiveness comes from the One Who knows pain and loss on a level we can't even imagine. **Someone** has to pay, and some**One** already has—Jesus.

The power and possibility of forgiveness is found in this love. Jesus is the single, beloved Son, and so through Him God has taken on your sins, your pain, and the **one** payment you need and even demand. The value of that payment is found in the love of God for you. 1 John 4:16 says: *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Propitiation*—He made the necessary payment and He was the payment itself.

By this combination of judgment and grace, God hears your pain with its cry for justice while also bringing you forward to forgiveness. **Someone** had to pay and that some**One** was His innocent Son. The perfect Son paid for the many sinful collisions caused by all His wayward children in this world. In His forgiveness of your many sins comes a whole new life. As John 3:16 concludes: . . . *that whoever believes in Jesus should not perish but have eternal life.* This one truth more than balances out every perfection that's ruined and every problem we are unable to fix.

So, what do you do with the many sinful footprints left in your life, feeling like they've been embedded in the cement of your life? You

humbly kneel before the only One Who can deal with them and has dealt with them. There you encounter *God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved you, even when you were dead in your trespasses, having made you alive together with Christ* and confess that *by grace you have been saved* (cf. Ephesians 2:4-5). There you actually embrace the sins which have affected your life, both those of others against you and especially your own, as you are embraced by the **One** Who made payment for them all. From that cross you can walk back into the struggles of your life hearing the words of Jesus resound in your ears: “My child, I love you. You do not have to carry your sins another moment for I carried them all for you on the cross.” Then you *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Amen.

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