

# THRESHOLDS

## 2- Can I be forgiven?

### Salvation

8/15/24

#### Threshold:

1. the sill of a doorway
2. any place or point of entering or beginning
3. the point at which a stimulus is of sufficient intensity to begin to produce an effect

#### Opposition:

- The world wants to control you...
- The enemy wants to corrupt you...
- You want to be the center of the universe...

#### Introduction:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!*

*I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;*

*how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!*

You've stepped over the threshold of believing in God. This starts a **cascade of revelations**:

- 1) If there is a Creator God, then He gets to define and determine what is right and good
- 2) If this God is involved in this world and in my life, then what I do makes a difference.
- 3) If there is this awesome and loving God, then I want to be right with Him.
- 4) Why do I struggle to be faithful and obedient? *Why do I do the things I don't want to do?*

#### What is the problem? What is sin?

The Bible and our doctrines use words like transgression, iniquity, and sin to describe a human condition that has disconnected us from God and brought hurt and brokenness into our lives.

**khata** (Hebrew)-**hamartia** (Greek): “missed the mark”

- The failure to love God and to love others by not treating them with the honor and respect they deserve.
- The inability to judge whether we are succeeding or failing in doing what is right and good.
- That deep, selfish impulse that drives much of our behavior.

**The intention of God when He created humanity would be that we would love Him and love each other, that we would act in ways that were aligned with the will of God and represent our Creator well.** That’s it! That was the expectation for us.

When you read the Old Testament, you might think that worship and faithfulness was more about acceptable sacrifices. It might seem that’s all God was concerned about, but that was never the case. The prophet Micah reminds us of this:

*What can we bring to the LORD? Should we bring him burnt offerings? Should we bow before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves? Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for our sins? No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:6-8 NLT)*

**So, why do we struggle so much with this?** Paul refers to this frustration when he transparently cries out, *“I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate.”* (Romans 7:15 NLT)

## **Post Christian World**

We live in the United States of America in what’s known as the post-Christian era. We have recognized this as a true mission field now. We are no longer, in essence, a Christian nation. But we are also recognized as one of the most difficult mission fields in the world. Not that we are persecuted and threatened with imprisonment or death like other areas. No, the difficulty in a post-Christian world is that **people THINK they know about God, Jesus, and church and have rejected it.** This has left a moral vacuum and what we see filling the vacuum is a self-absorbed, self-serving philosophy.

So, our culture struggles with definitions of right and wrong, good and bad. And yet, when something evil (wrong, bad) happens TO us, we are quick to cry foul. **It seems we DO have a concept of right...it's just inconvenient.**

But the issue is actually much deeper. Let's continue in Romans chapter 7: *But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.*

(Romans 7:16-17 NLT)

*...it is sin living in me...*

- Now, we see that sin is more than just “missing the mark”, it is something more pervasive. Something that is alive and striving against God's will within me.

**Sin is a huge problem**, and our culture has simply decided to *delete* the word. Why? Because we don't want the accountability and authority over us. Our culture has decided to go for the fleeting rewards of living for ourselves and simply ignore the future...both the rest of our lives AND our eternal future. But then it all crashes...that sin has corrupted everything in your life and it's all falling down. Because **sin never stays neutral. It is a malignant spiritual tumor that grows and destroys.**

**We struggle at the Threshold of Salvation as we come to terms with our own sinfulness and the fallout from it. It takes humility and transparency...and that's hard.**

This is where the church has to be wise. We can't just tell people they are sinners and then expect repentance to happen. My experience is that an unbeliever will dig in their heels and become even more resistant when I start slinging judgment at them. And I know we can see it all so clearly on THIS side of the threshold...that their sin is slowly destroying them.

There is a hard truth about these thresholds: I can't push, drag, or carry you over these thresholds. Only you can make the decision to step over...and only you can do it. So what finally gets you there? *God loves you. And He has been pursuing you all of your life. And God keeps pointing at that sin in your life because He knows if you will just trust Him and let go of it, He has something so much better to give you...life. This is the persistent conviction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*

## **First a revelation based on Ephesians 2:1-7**

*I was dead. I had no spiritual life due to my sinful condition. I was living in sin because I followed the crowd, which is to say that I followed the devil. I was just like everyone else. I could not obey God even if I wanted to. I always gave in to my fleshly thoughts. Like all those who disobeyed God, I was destined to be the target of God's wrath. But since God loved me personally and showed me the richness of His mercy, He made me come alive to faith in Jesus, despite my spiritual separation from Him. It was His grace that saved me.*

**Then you say it:** *God, I know I'm a sinner. I know I've hurt You and others and myself in my selfishness. Please forgive me.*

## **And you step over the threshold of Salvation and Forgiveness...**

I can quote all of the fancy doctrinal words we use to define what happens in that moment on God's side: forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, redemption, restoration, etc

But this morning I simply want to describe what you will experience when you cross this threshold: ***relief, peace, love***

Let's continue in Ephesians 2...

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*  
(Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT)

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found. I was blind, but now I see.  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!*