

Matthew 18; Lord's Day 21

BELIEVING IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

1. The need.

1. The gospel is for sinners, those who have violated God's commands and are liable to eternal punishment.

1. Sin is doing what God forbids or not doing what God commands (I John 3:4b).

2. All men are sinners and subject to God's wrath (Rom. 3:10-12,23; 1:18; 2:5,6).

- Sin has three aspects: original, actual, and indwelling sin.
- True knowledge of sin is of the heart.
- God declares forgiveness as a fruit of justification.

1. Forgiveness means: God pardons all the debt caused by the corruption of our natures and all our actual sins.

1. The sinner is set free from his personal responsibility to bear the punishment.

2. Further, God declares me to be righteous and worthy of eternal life.

- God is the author of forgiveness (Ps. 51:4; Mk. 2:7).
- The only basis for forgiveness is Jesus' atoning work.
- The only reason for forgiveness is God's mercy and grace.
- The extent of forgiveness: our acquittal is complete, our salvation is eternally sure (Psalm 103:10).
- The experience of forgiveness is worked by the Holy Spirit.

1. Forgiveness is experienced by faith in the Christ proclaimed by the church in the preaching of the gospel.

1. The preaching proclaims the life and cross of Jesus, the only Savior.

2. Forgiveness is proclaimed to those who acknowledge their sin, repent, confess, and embrace Jesus.

- And forgiveness is experienced by a forgiving spirit (within the sphere of the communion of the saints).
1. The knowledge of forgiveness always evokes a forgiving spirit (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Eph. 4:31,32).
 2. One who receives God's gracious forgiveness will be ready to forgive (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35).