

Introduction for January 29, 2012

We have seen extraordinary things today! What a perfect statement regarding the wonder of forgiveness and the majesty of King Jesus. Is there anything sweeter to the believer's ear than to hear that he or she is forgiven? By the great and awesome work of King Jesus on the cross our sins have been lifted up and carried away. His precious blood has absolved our guilt, and God's wrath has been borne away by the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. How sweet is the gospel!

We are so paralyzed by our sin that the only thing that can free and heal us wholly is the free grace of God in His forgiveness. To be forgiven brings great joy as well as great responsibility to pursue the Lord and to go hard after Him, not in the sense of payback but in the sense of great adoration and love.

Forgiveness is the bedrock of knowing that all of life is worship. It is the opportunity to make things right with God and with each other. It is the emblem of peace that sets us on the path of reconciliation as ambassadors of Christ. It is the song of a heart made new by the atoning work of Christ and the anthem we sing as we embrace the doctrines of grace. It is the delight of every believer to know that our sins, past, present and future, have been forgiven and cast into the bottom of the sea, never to be dredged up. It is the crowning work of redemption to be made right with God through the sacrificial death of Christ, knowing that He bore all our sin, and has pronounced us cleansed, free, absolved of all guilt and forever clothed in His righteousness. It is the glue that holds relationships together and enables the struggles of life to be engaged in without fear of final failure and ruin. But where relationships have failed, it is the sweet aroma of grace that enables a man and a woman to go forward, knowing that their standing before God has not been revoked. It is the hope we all have in the midst of our sin and abysmal failures, that our sin will not be used against us or employed as an instrument of revenge. This is but a glimpse of the depth of forgiveness.

Oh may it be said of us today that we have seen extraordinary things! May the forgiveness of God flood our hearts and minds and free us to live in the brilliant and dazzling atmosphere of worship and praise even in the midst of the grueling process of sanctification.