

Forgiveness and Redemption

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing? Are you enjoying the fall yet? Not quite yet. It's not cold enough. When we think of fall, we think of sweaters and soup, right? A little too warm for soup, unless you like cold soup.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you, Lord. For this special day, Lord, that we we get to participate every quarter. Lord, as we take time now open our hearts and our minds, Lord. Help us take an inventory, Lord, but also be reminded of your grace and your love and that you died for us in Jesus name. Amen.

I don't know how far back but the great actor slash director Clint Eastwood interviewed with Esquire magazine. What was unique about it, though, was his own son Scott, who's also a budding actor had some success was also in that same interview. And they were both asked, Do you ever look back in your life? And they both agreed that no, they don't really look back. And in fact, when Esquire asked Clint, if you were going to look back at your life as material, how would you describe the narrative? To which Clint said, I don't look at my life too much. I'm always looking forward, not backward. A lot of times people get to a certain age, and then they quit. And then Scott chimes in. I just do what he does. I keep moving forward. You can't look back or think about all of that kind of stuff too much. You just have to keep making movies. Now, later on in the interview, Scott eventually leaves. And Clint continues to talk. And that's when he really opens up. He's being honest. And he's with a lot of utter candor. He actually confesses. You always wonder if you could have done more. You could you always wonder, could you have spent a little more time for instance, with my son a little more intention. I had that regret when my dad died because it was sudden, I didn't know. It wasn't like he had an ailment or something. I used to live close enough to him that I could have dropped in a lot more. And never did. And I was busy, always busy doing all of the films. Quite a strong statement from somebody who's had a lot of success, but yet, to some degree, he wishes he could have spent more time with his family, his children, his dad. Now as hard as we try, we can't avoid living life at times with some regret and without also the need for forgiveness, amen.

Today, I'd like to go to a passage in the book of Titus, the small little book that follows First and Second Timothy, in some ways, it's kind of a companion to tie to First and Second Timothy, Paul is writing to Titus. Titus, was a Gentile believer who sometimes traveled with Paul. And at one point, Paul sends him to the island of Crete. He's there to help instruct the people of how to live but also instruct them on the various things of how to move forward with the gospel. And he's had some trouble with some people who are trying to instigate some rumors and false teachings. So it's probably written about AD 62-63 ish and apparently from Macedonia, about the same time as First Timothy. And the recipients are again, people of Crete. so in Titus 3:3-9 It says, at one time, we, too, were what? foolish, disobedient, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasure. We lived in what? Malice? That's a strong word, isn't it? And ending being hated and hating one another.

This is a bold statement by Paul Right? Because he's really what what is he doing? He's setting up well, he's setting up the next part of his company, his letter of what he's going to come back with. But he's

basically kind of stating who you are without God in many ways that we could fall to being foolish, disobedient, defiance, maybe being deceived, and as it says here being enslaved, and that's a strong word, right? Because when you're enslaved, you don't have much options, right, you're limited. But then in verse 4, it says, but when the kindness and love of God, our Savior, appeared, He, what? He saved us not because of righteous things we had done, it's not because of what we have done. Remember, we are saved by faith, but because of His mercy, and mercy is not something that we can attain. It's a gift, can't do anything. God extends His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us, not just a little, but generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior. So though, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs. I love this word, okay? Heirs of having the eternal the hope of eternal life. What's an heir I was having a Bible study last night, what is an heir? Somebody who's going to receive an inheritance, oftentimes, a child of a parent, okay? And this, what we're going to receive is this hope, this promise of eternal life. And here Paul says, this is a trustworthy saying, this is solid. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is what? Good. These things are excellent and profitable for anyone for everyone. When God does a great work in our lives, we are changed. And God wants us to be able to share that good news with others, but just even for our old selves, Paul sets up kind of who we truly are as people being to see being disobedient at times.

Anybody ever not been disobedient? If your parents are here, don't even bother. Right? Have you ever been foolish at one point? Wherever made mistakes? Yes. Sometimes we make decisions that lead us down paths that can feel like instant enslavement. Maybe not literal, but metaphorical. And yet, in God's good graciousness, and love and mercy, Jesus comes into our world and shakes up for the better. And he saved us through the washing of rebirth renewal. It's like having the opportunity to live with a new and clean slate. It's why I love baptism so much because we experienced baptism, the old person is going down and a new person is coming back up with new life. Now the reality though, is oftentimes we live with regret. Earlier this week, I I was at my parents place, and I realized I had some boxes of stuff that I just from my from my childhood, I found all kinds of awesome things. This little red car that my parents had bought me it's a model car. I found my rock collection I forgot that I'd had I didn't even remember that I'd had it and I just found all kinds of pictures and everything. One particular picture those stood out and I'm not going to show it to you so don't even ask is I was about 17 years old. I was 17 I was slim, I was 50-60 pounds lighter. Ha and I looked into that face myself. It was a face that was filled with the potential of a future that is who knows what the door the world the world. It was As at his feet, he was ready to take on life. And I look back on that picture with some regret because I, I truly, you know, you don't know exactly what life is always going to happen, you may have dreams and desires and goals. And I look back to thinking, ha, I wish I could be that fit again, Net, it's not going to happen. No matter as how hard as I try. But one of the things I've always wanted to do is if those of you who know me know that I love to be active. When I was a teenager, I thought of all of these goals that I wanted to, I'll be very vulnerable with you right now. I wish I regret not being keeping myself more fit. Because before even before I got here, I was heavier. And I wasn't able to do the things that I wanted to do. And I know that sounds petty, but it's important to me. Because as I'm getting older, I'm realizing my opportunities of doing all those things that I want to do. The climbing, the surfing and everything are not always going to be around just last night or yesterday afternoon, I went to the gym. And I woke up this morning. And I would tell somebody, it was like it felt like my body was like a redwood tree standing straight and did not want to bed because of my back. And my stomach. And I'm not I don't consider myself like my life is over blah, blah, blah. I'm still relatively fit. But I was working out with these younger

guys. And they were smashing me. And I was like, This is not fair. When you're 18 years old, you can recover from anything. Oh, it was frustrating. But I felt when I saw that picture, it was great to see that. I showed it to my wife, you know, wondering what you want to know what her response was? Uh huh. I don't think she watches these videos. If she does, I'll hear about it. But I look back and I have to remember that the past can't be changed. We can't change the past. But how you have a choice of how to move forward.

After remember, I have to let it and I'll be honest with you, when I preach these sermons, I'm not just trying to preach you I literally have to preach to myself to remind myself of like, do get it together. We all have an opportunity or choice of how we can move forward, we can continue to wall, oh, I wish I hadn't done that. Blah, blah, blah, or okay. That was the past. I'm going to make these changes. I'm going to make changes in my life that are positive, that are meaningful, and will help me to change to a more healthier and positive situation moving forward. But also remember that you are valuable, you are valuable in God's eyes. If we weren't valuable, would Jesus have come down here? No, maybe we could have had flood 2.0. Or God could have just, you know, singe the earth, whatever. But no. God chose to do the harder thing because out of love, which is God's essence. God came into this world to redeem us that we might have a new life as it says in Titus to be rebirth and to be reborn to be redeemed and reborn as an opportunity to start with a clean slate.

I want to share just a quick story about Sally Herships wrote in NPR. Lee Horton and his brother Dennis were convicted and sentenced to 25 years in prison for murder that they did not commit. Can you imagine being everything your whole life for 25 years was taken away? That seems unimaginable to me. And he says in the interview says I'm going to tell you honestly, the first thing that I was aware of was when I walked out of doors and sat in the car and realize I wasn't handcuffed. He knew he'd been set free. But it wasn't until he sat in the car and realized he was not handcuffed and for all the time had been in prison every time I was transported anywhere. I always had handcuffs on and that moment there was right there. The most emotional moment that I had, even when they told me that the governor had signed the papers. It didn't said set in until I was in the car and they didn't have those handcuffs on. And then later he goes to the DMV to get his new license back and he says, I don't think people understand that the punishment is being in prison. When you take away everything. Everything becomes beautiful to you. When we got out. We went to the DMV to get our licenses back. My brother and I stood in line for two and a half hours. If you stand in the back am beeline for two and a half hours are you singing the praises of the Lord? And we heard all the bad things about the DMV, we had the most beautiful time. And all the people were looking at us because we were smiling. And we were laughing and they couldn't understand why we were so happy. And it was just that just being in that line was a beautiful thing. Think about his mindset here. I was in awe of everything around me, it's like my mind was heightened every small nuance, just to be able to look out a window to walk down a street and just in hell fresh air. Just to see people interacting a woke something in me something that I don't know if I had died, or if I went to sleep. I've been having epiphanies every single day. But since I had been released, one of my morning rituals every day, is to send a message of good morning, good morning, good morning and have a nice day to every 42 contacts in his phone. And they're like, how long can he keep this up, but they don't understand that I was deprived. And now it's like I have been released. And I've been reborn into a better day into a new day, like the person I was no longer exists. I've stepped through the looking glass onto your side. And everything is beautiful. Amen.

Now, folks, sometimes it's easy to get bogged down, and to live with regret. But God doesn't want us to live in regret that God does not want us to live in the past. God wants us to move towards the future. Now, we can look at our past not with negative eyes. But we can learn from our mistakes. Amen. We can remember those things. Now this is not what we should do moving forward. And it's also a reminder of the goodness of God of how God has come into our lives, how the Holy Spirit shapes and molds and changes us every day. And now walk. You know, we're always continually walking towards the Lord. Sometimes the path can be a little bumpy at times, because somebody wants to ruin our lives. But yet God is still faithful and forgives us. So where in your life, have you made a decision or taken an action that you regret? We all have something that we've done or thought of in our paths, amen. And as you're thinking about this, I want you to take that thought I want you to take that decision in your life that you have that you regret. And I want you to give it to God now, as we take part in communion, and maybe let's go another step forward. Maybe there's somebody that you're not at peace with right now maybe you're having a difficult relationship and there needs to be some mending. I want to encourage you whether now or after communion, to go to that person just like we talked about a few weeks ago and either say I'm sorry.

Or this is what happened. How you hurt me. But I want to make it right now.

I would like to invite our our elders and our deacons who are going to be serving to come on up...