

## The Difference Between Forgiveness and Restoration

Some people think that when sin is forgiven, that everything is instantly make OK. But the Bible, and even simple logic, teaches us that this is not correct. Forgiveness does not automatically fix all the damage that was caused by the sin. A murderer can be forgiven for their crime, but that does not bring the dead person back to life again. A thief can be forgiven, but that does not instantly restore the money back that was stolen. Forgiveness for a sin can be given in a moment, but restoration from the sin and its effects can sometimes take many years.

The Apostle Paul taught us in Galatians 6:7, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.”* When we reap troubles from sins that we sowed, it help us to learn the evil and ugliness of our sin. This can help move us towards a deeper cleansing and restoration from our sin.

When the prophet Nathan rebuked David for his sin, David immediately repented and was forgiven by God. 2 Sam.12:13 tell us, *“So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.’”*

However, the Lord also said that his adultery would result in many judgments. After David is forgiven in verse 13, the next verse says:

*“However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.”*

And in verses 9-12 the Lord declared as further judgments,

*“Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’”*

David was already forgiven, but the results of his sins were not instantly fixed. Instead, David was warned that he would face many troubles for all that his sins had sown. David’s own wives would be publically raped (2 Sam.12:11-12) and David would reap a bitter harvest for bringing the sword upon Uriah, by the having the sword remain in his own house, 2 Sam.12:9-10. David’s one adultery reaped a bitter harvest of ten adulteries (2 Sam.16:22 & 20:3), and his killing one man resulted in

the death of several of David's sons as well as civil war in his kingdom! But these painful results, the multiplied harvest of what was sown by his sin, helped bring David into a deep repentance and cleansing that restored him in his later years.

In Leviticus 26:41-42, God gives us a principle of what happens when sin has occurred. *"...if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant..."* If someone accepts the judgment or punishment of their sins, then God will remember His covenant promises to them. David humbled himself to accept the punishments that he reaped from the sin he had sown (see 2 Sam.12:19-20, 15:25-26, 16:9-12, 18:33, and Psalm 51:4). In turn, the Lord remembered His covenant promises to David, and fulfilled them all.

There are many other examples in the Bible that teach us that Forgiveness and Restoration are different. The Prodigal Son was forgiven when he repented (Lk.15:18), but he was not fully restored- his father said that the older son owned everything (Lk 15:31). The son had lost his inheritance, he had already wasted it, and everything left was owned by his elder brother.

Samson and Solomon are other examples of believers who sinned but were later repentant. However, although God gave Samson one last victory, his restoration was not complete- Samson died young, and blind, as a slave of the enemy. Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes showing his turning back to God as an elderly king- however, he never had the joy of the Lord restored to him, and his sins resulted in his kingdom becoming split just after his death.

Solomon, Samson, and the Prodigal Son were all forgiven, yet they did not enter into full restoration. However, David did! He had the joy of his salvation fully restored, Ps.51:12, and in the millennial kingdom of Christ on the earth, it is King David who will rule the nation of Israel, Rev.20:4.

- *"But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, who I will raise up unto them"* (Jer.30:9).
- *"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd....and my servant David shall be their prince forever"* (Ezek.37:24-25).
- *"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days"* (Hos.3:5).

So let us understand the difference between forgiveness and restoration, and seek for full restoration anytime we have sinned!