

This is extra stuff on the faith of the men that I didn't include in the sermon: The fact that he let these men carry him shows how much faith he had. If you're paralyzed, you definitely wouldn't want people carrying you up to a roof and lowering you down through it. You ever play that game where you let people catch you? One of the schools I attended in the military is called Air Assault. It teaches people to rappel out of helicopters. They begin by first having you rappel off large towers where there's an individual below known as a belay person. Your faith in that person is shown when you step off the edge of that tower. That's a similar situation to the paralyzed man letting himself be carried up to the roof and lowered down through it like this.

There's another word in verse 20 that's interesting, and it's the word "**their**."

- But Jesus also took notice of the faith of the friends. Since Jesus forgave the paralytic's sins, you'd expect the verse to say, "When [Jesus] saw the paralytic's faith." But what's interesting is you have the faith of these men playing a part in the forgiveness of the paralytic. Walter Liefeld said, "*Jesus' attention to the faith of the man's helpers demonstrates the important fact that God responds to the intercession of others regarding a person in need.*"

Let me clear about what I'm NOT saying: I'm not saying our faith can save someone else or get someone else's sins forgiven. The paralytic had faith and if he didn't he couldn't have had his sins forgiven and he couldn't have been healed of his paralysis.

But I am saying this: it was the faith of these men that helped this paralytic, and your faith can help others too. A simple example is this: imagine a group of people are praying for someone: maybe the person's salvation, or maybe the person's physical healing. Is there a better chance of the person being helped if the people strongly believe or skeptically believe? These men strongly believed Jesus could save their friend.

Many times people's prayers are for God to do something miraculous, like physical healing. God can heal – and every week a number of our prayer requests are for that - but what I believe He does more is grant repentance and salvation and I believe that is more. I've noticed God grants salvation and repentance more than He miraculously heals. Possibly share how Mom called and said the news about Dad's cancer was bad.

Hendriksen said, "*It was definitely faith that caused these words to flow from the Savior's lips.*" Throughout the Gospels, including a number of times in Luke's Gospel we see the necessity for faith.

- In Luke 7, it's the faith of the centurion that led to the healing of his servant
- Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue approached Jesus about His dying daughter and in **Luke 8:50** Jesus said, "**Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.**"

So we see the strong relationship between faith and Jesus working in people's lives. What's interesting to me about this situation is usually it was people's faith that led to something physical in their lives, but here it's faith that leads to the forgiveness of sins.

The title of this morning's message is *The Way God Forgives*. We're working our way verse-by-verse through Luke's Gospel, and we're in one of the most well known stories in Scripture where a paralytic is lowered through the roof of a house when Jesus was teaching. We've covered verses 17 to 19 and we find ourselves at verse 20.

A number of times I've already pointed out how teaching was the focus of Jesus' ministry. His ministry started in Luke 4:15, and we're not even through Luke 5 and we've already seen Jesus teach a number of times:

- **Luke 4:15** says **He taught in [the] synagogues.**
- **Luke 4:16 to 30** is about Jesus teaching in Nazareth.
- **Luke 4:31** says **He went down to Capernaum...and was teaching them.**
- **Luke 4:43** Jesus described His ministry by saying, **"I must preach (or teach about) the kingdom of God...because for this purpose I have been sent."**
- The last verse of chapter 4, **Luke 4:44** says **[Jesus] was preaching (or teaching) in the synagogues.**
- At the beginning of this chapter, **Luke 5:3** **He sat down and TAUGHT the multitudes from the boat.**

Now if you look at verse 17, He was teaching again. It says **Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching.** So that's what Jesus was doing when this man was lowered through the roof.

I'm telling you all this for two reasons. First, I want you to see how important Jesus thought teaching was...which is why we put such an emphasis on teaching.

Second, I want you to notice Jesus is in the middle of doing what He considered to be the most important thing He could do. In **Luke 4:43** Jesus said, **"I must preach the Kingdom of God...b/c for this purpose I have been sent."** And that's what He's doing when this man was lowered through the roof. In other words, these men interrupted Jesus doing what He considered to be the most important thing He could be doing.

One thing I think we can learn from this is people's needs should trump order and structure. I don't like disruptions in service. I like our service to run smoothly. But if there was ever a pressing need we should be sensitive to it. If someone ever came to church with a really serious issue, we should be willing to corporately pray for that person, perhaps even have the elders come forward and lay hands on the individual.

Now not only did the men not bother Jesus, He was actually impressed w/ them. Look at verse 20...

²⁰ When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

There are 5 words in verse 20 that I've been thinking about for the last few weeks. It's the words **when He saw their faith**. We can learn a very important lesson from these words...

LESSON 1: IF YOU HAVE FAITH IT CAN BE SEEN.

This would've been one of those really cool situations in Scripture we wish we could've seen. There's a reason everyone teaches this during Sunday School: it's a powerful, entertaining story picturing these men doing this. Seeing them carry the man to the roof, take the roof apart, lower him through it in front of all these people. That's what everyone saw when they looked on, and that's exactly what we would've loved to see.

BUUUUT that's not what Jesus saw. He wasn't looking at this scene physically: He was looking at it spiritually and what He was the faith of these men.

Now, I don't want to sound too simple, but there are certain things we can see.

- We can see this pulpit.
- We can see the pews you're sitting on.
- We can see the cross behind me.

We can describe these things to people.

Then there are things we can't see:

- We can't see wind. You can't say, "*Wow, look at that wind. It's so shiny and smooth.*"
- We can't see love. You can't say, "*Hey, look at that love, it's so blue and tall.*"
- And we can't see faith. You can't say, "*Look at that faith. It's so pretty and fancy.*"

But even though we can't see these things, we can see the evidence of them and it lets us know these things are present:

- If someone says, "*Wow, it's so windy*" you would expect to see trees blowing around and you would expect to feel the wind blowing against you.
- If people talk about loving someone else, 1 Cor 13 says there are things we should see - and things we shouldn't see - if love is really present:
 - We should see patience, kindness, rejoicing with truth, protecting, trusting, hoping, persevering
 - And we shouldn't see: envy, boasting, pride, anger, delighting in evil.
- If you were at evening service last week, you got to hear what I consider one of the coolest moments I've experienced at evening service when Clara Criss recited John 3:16 and then explained it. She said God loved us so much He would give His Son for us. What God was willing to do w/ His Son shows us - or reveals to us, or is evidence to us - of God's love for us. People say, "*How do I know God loves me?*" The evidence is what He did w/ His Son.

This is exactly how it is with faith. There's evidence that allows us to see it. If someone says, "I have faith in God" there should be evidence of it...and it's evidence that can be seen. For these men, you could really see their faith b/c of all the evidence. They went to all this trouble:

- They were willing to carry this man on a bed
- When they couldn't get him in the house they were willing to find another way
- They were willing to climb to the roof, take the roof apart, lower the man down through it.
- You could see their faith. Their extreme effort was evidence of their faith.

None of this is my opinion. All of this is really the point of **James 2:14-26**. This is exactly the point James is trying to make. I basically stole this from James. **James 2:18 How can you show me your faith if you don't have works?**" He meant:

- How are you going to show me your faith, if there's no evidence of it?
- How am I going to see your faith if you don't have any works?

Then he said, **"I'll show you my faith by my works."** What he meant was:

- I'll show you my faith, by showing you the works that are evidence of it.
- My works are the evidence that I have faith.
- Elisha Coles said, *"Faith justifies the person, and works justify his faith."*

Then James gave two examples of people whose faith we could see:

1. First he mentions Abraham: **Jam 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?** You could see Abraham's faith when he was willing to sacrifice his son. His faith was in God raising Isaac from the dead. The fact that he was willing to sacrifice his son was evidence of his faith. God had promised Abraham countless descendants, and at that time, Isaac hadn't had any children. So Abraham had faith God would raise him from the dead. **Heb 11:19 [Abraham] concluded God was able to raise [Isaac] from the dead.**
2. Then he mentions Rahab: **Jam 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?** When Rahab was willing to hide the spies, it was evidence of her faith in God. She would not have risked her life and hid those spies unless she had serious faith.

Think about Noah. Noah was a man of great faith. When he started building a boat in the middle of dry land, when it had never rained, that was evidence of tremendous faith. You could see his faith.

Now the other side of this is if you can't see any evidence of someone's faith, then it's hard to believe there's any faith there. If people say, "Oh yeah, I have faith in God!" but there's no evidence of it, they look as ridiculous as someone might look saying:

- "Whoa, it's so windy!" But no trees are blowing and you don't even feel a breeze.
- Or people saying they're loving, but their lives are characterized by the things 1 Cor 13 says love ISN'T and absent of the things love IS.

James also discusses this twice in that passage:

- **James 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?** In other words: what's the big deal about saying you have faith if there's no evidence of it?
- **James 2:17 Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** Or you could say: faith that can't be seen, or faith that doesn't have any evidence, is dead, unsaving faith.

Now maybe you say: "James gave two examples of people w/ evidence of their faith...does James give an example of faith without evidence? Yes he does: **James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!** So having faith with no works is like

having the same faith as demons. Spurgeon said, *“Faith and works are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God trusts God; and he that trusts God obeys God. He that is without faith is without works; and he that is without works is without faith.”*

The simple point is this:

- If you have faith, people should be able to see it.
- If you say you have faith, but it can't be seen, then you probably don't have real, genuine, saving faith.
- J.I. Packer said, *“The truth is that, though we were justified by faith alone, the faith that justifies is never alone: it always produces fruit or good works.”*

Now we need to take a brief detour and discuss something from the OT. The only way we can really appreciate what's taking place in verse 20 is by understanding something about the OT, and that brings us to our next lesson...

LESSON 2 (PART I): OT SACRIFICES COULDN'T TAKE AWAY SINS...

OT sacrifices could provide atonement, but that's not the same as taking away sins. Atonement simply means cover, and all the OT sacrifices could do was atone for, or cover sins.

- **Heb 10:4 it is [impossible for] the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**
- **Heb 10:11 every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, WHICH CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY SINS.**

If OT sacrifices could take away sins, then Jesus wouldn't have had to die. And that looks to the purpose of OT sacrifices: they covered, or atoned for sins until Jesus could come. Katie said, *“They're sort of like a Band-Aid: they cover the wound, but it's still there...until Jesus came and healed it.”* **Isa 53:5 says by His stripes we are healed.**

There was one very special day in the OT when the people's sins were atoned for - or covered - and that was Yom Kippur or what we know as The Day of Atonement. It was the most solemn, holy day of all Israel's feasts and festivals.

The High Priest would take two goats:

- One goat was sacrificed and its blood was sprinkled on the ark of the covenant; this is why the lid of the ark was called the atonement cover, b/c it covered the ark and b/c it's where atonement for the people's sins was made.
- Then the priest would lay his hands on the head of the other goat, confess the sins of the people, picturing the transmission of the nation's sins to the animal. Then the goat would be sent away into the wilderness: **Lev 16:20-22 Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness...**²² **The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land.**
- When the goat was sent away it pictured the sins of the people being taken away...but remember, Heb 10:4 and 11 says OT sacrifices couldn't take away sins; it was only symbolic.

If you wanted to read about the Day of Atonement in the New Testament, you'd go to Heb 9. The point of the book of Hebrews is to show the superiority of Jesus to everything in the Old Testament:

- His superiority to the prophets, to angels, to Moses.
- The rest He provides is superior to the rest found in the Promised Land.
- He's a superior High Priest to the priests in the OT, His priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical Priesthood.
- His Covenant - the New Covenant that He introduced at the Last Supper - is superior to the Old Covenant.
- The temple He serves in – heaven – is superior to the earthly temple the earthly priests served in...and the list goes on.

Now if you wanted to read about Jesus' superiority to the Day of Atonement, you would go to Hebrews 9. And there's a really fascinating verse in Heb 9 about WHY the Day of Atonement is inferior to Jesus. **Heb 9:9** says the Day of Atonement **cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience**. Basically it's saying the Day of Atonement couldn't even give the High Priest who performed the Day of Atonement a clear conscience:

- The NIV says it was **not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper**.
- The NLT says it was **not able to cleanse the conscience of the worshiper**.

So picture this:

- You've got the holiest man in the nation: the High Priest
- On the Holiest day of the year, that's what the Day of Atonement was
- Going into the holiest place in the world – I mean, it's called The Holiest of Holies or the Most Holy Place...that's holy!

You've got this trinity of holiness and it can't even give the man in charge of it a clear conscience.

- If there's ANYTHING that should've made the people feel good about themselves...
- If there's anything that should've given the people peace regarding their sins...
- If there's anything that should've taken away their guilt and shame
- In other words, if there's anything that should've given the people a clear conscience, it was The Day of Atonement...but it didn't.

Now here's the really important question: why is that? I'm glad you asked...

Most obviously, since the Day of Atonement had to be repeated the next year, you knew as soon as it was over, you started sinning again and found yourself looking forward to next year's Day of Atonement when your sins could be dealt with...again. It's the way I felt in the Catholic Church. There was only one time I ever really felt good about myself, and it was the moment I walked out of the confessional. That was the ONLY time I ever had a clear conscience.

But there's another reason the Day of Atonement didn't provide the people w/ a clear conscience...

It was the reality that the goat bearing your sin was sent off, but you knew it was still out there. It was sent away, but you knew the goat didn't literally take away your sins. It was symbolic. Your sin

wasn't actually removed. That's why in the very next chapter of Hebrews, we have the two verses, 10:4 and 10:11 saying it's impossible for OT sacrifices to take away sins.

So you knew this goat was sent away, but you knew your sins weren't really sent away. They weren't really taken from you.

LESSON 2 (PART I): OT SACRIFICES COULDN'T TAKE AWAY SINS (PART II) BUT JESUS CAN.

If you look at verse 20 [**Jesus**] said, “**Man, your sins are forgiven you.**”

To us, the word forgive means *overlook, ignore, disregard, let go*. So we see Jesus say these words and that's what we think He's saying...but that's not actually what He's saying at all.

The word for **forgive** is *aphiēmi* (pr: uh-fee-uh-me) and it means, “*to send away, to bid going away or depart, to send forth.*” You might circle, underline, or highlight the word **forgive** and write “*send away.*”

What does this sound like? It sounds like the scapegoat that was sent away or sent forth to take away the sins of the people.

Jesus isn't saying He's going to overlook the man's sins or disregard them or ignore them. He's saying He's going to remove them and send them away.

The reason God doesn't hold our sins against us isn't b/c He's overlooked them or ignored them or disregarded them. The reason God doesn't hold our sins against us is b/c they're not there anymore.

Let me show you a few other places the same word for **forgive** is used so you can understand it better; this will actually give us an idea what it looks like when God forgives:

- Turn to the left to **Luke 4:39 So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left (*aphiēmi*) her.** That word for **left** is the same word used for **forgive** in verse 20. The idea is just like the fever left Peter's mother-in-law, our sins leave us.
- **Luke 5:11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook (*aphiēmi*) all and followed Him.** Just like they left all their stuff, our sins leave us.
- **Luke 6:42 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove (*aphiēmi*) the speck that is in your eye’...?** The idea is just like the speck is removed, so are our sins are removed.

The point is when Jesus told this man his sins were forgiven, basically He was telling him his sins were taken away from Him. That's why you have the verses in Heb 10 about it being impossible for OT sacrifices to take away sins, but then you've got...

- **John 1:29 The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**
- **1 John 3:5 you know that [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins.**

When Jesus said this He was saying something almost unimaginable: He was saying what the scapegoat couldn't do on the Day of Atonement...would be done. Let me say that one more time: in verse 20, Jesus was telling this man, that what never happened on any Day of Atonement – the day people's sins were dealt with – just happened w/ this man's sins.

And that explains why you get the response you do from the religious leaders in verse 21. They're like, "You did not just tell this man, his sins were taken away from him!" We'll look at that more next week, but basically what Jesus said was so unbelievable, they considered it blasphemy.

So here's the question: how could Jesus say this man's sins were taken away? How could Jesus say that what the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement could never do...would actually be done? The answer is He would become the scapegoat.

The clearest verses on the scapegoat were those verses I read from **Lev 16:20-22** about the High Priest laying the iniquity and sin of the people on the goat, the goat bearing or carrying the sin and iniquity of the people. Let me read a few parts of those verses again: **Aaron shall lay his hands on the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions...putting them on the head of the goat...The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities.**

Now listen to these verses from **Isa 53** about Jesus:

- **4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;**
- **6 The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**
- **12 He bore the sin of many.**

That's the language of the Day of Atonement. But instead of the high priest laying the sins and iniquity of the people on the scapegoat, it's the Father laying the sins and iniquity on His Son:

- **Heb 9:28 Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.**
- **1 Pet 2:24 Jesus bore our sins in His own body**

LESSON 3: (PART I) GOD DOESN'T FORGIVE LIKE US...

Gen 1:27 says **God created man in His own image.** That means God made us like Him in different ways...but we have the tendency to switch that and make God into our image. What I mean by that is we tend to think of God like we think of ourselves. But in **Isa 55:8, 9** God said, **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways...as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."**

We tend to project ourselves on God and think He does things the way we do things...but He doesn't. One of the ways we think God is like us is in regards to forgiveness: we tend to think that the way we forgive is the way God forgives. But He doesn't...and I don't want to sound like I'm making an exaggerated statement, but I believe most Christians don't really understand how God forgives, for the simple reason they think He forgives like we forgive.

Edward T. Welch said, *“You may think that God is no better than you. In other words, you couldn’t imagine forgiving someone seventy times seven, so you can’t believe that God would. If this is the way you are thinking, then you are believing a lie. God is not like us. His forgiveness is not like ours. Don’t use your own weakness as the standard by which you understand God’s greatness! Just listen as He reveals Himself in His Word.”*

So first, let’s discuss how we forgive, so we can appreciate how differently God forgives...

Forgiveness is one of the most common topics I deal w/ in counseling. I regularly find myself asking people to seek forgiveness from each other, and it always involves two points:

1. First we discuss how to ask for forgiveness. If you’ve been here very long, you know I think there are right and wrong ways to ask for forgiveness...and in counseling, I try to teach people the right way to ask for forgiveness.
2. Second, I tell people what it means if they say, “I forgive you.” When you say those three words, you’re saying:
 - a. I will not bring up what you’ve done wrong, how you’ve hurt me, etc.
 - b. I will not hold it against you.
 - c. I will not think about what you did to me.
 - d. I won’t dwell on it or let it fester in my mind.
 - e. Basically, I will do my very best to forget what you did.

BUT let’s be honest: there’s a reason I tell people to do their very best to forget what the person did, versus telling people to forget what the person did. We can’t immediately choose to forget what people have done to us. No matter how hard we try, we can still remember it. After enough time passes, we might start to forget, BUT we can’t choose to forget. If we’re having to talk about it in counseling it clearly hasn’t been forgotten and I can’t encourage people to forget it at that moment.

It would be more accurate if instead of saying, *“I forgive you” we said, “I’ll try not to think about what you did. I’ll try to push it out of my mind. I’ll try to send it away.”* In a way, our forgiveness is like the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement: we send it away, but we know it’s still out there.

The human illustration of forgiveness is this: every time we hurt someone it’s like going out to a fence and hammering a nail in to it. When you ask for forgiveness, it’s like you’re taking the nails out of the fence...but the holes still remain.

So when we read verse 20, we assume it’s like Jesus is saying, *“You’ve done these bad things, and I’m not going to think about them. You’ll still have done them, but I won’t hold them against you.”*

We’ve all experienced what it’s like when we really hurt someone, or we say something we regret, or we do something we’d love to undo. What we really wish is we could erase from the person’s mind what happened...but we can’t. With God though it is possible...

LESSON 3: (PART I) GOD DOESN’T FORGIVE LIKE US; (PART II) WITH HIM THE HOLES ARE REMOVED.

With God it's like the holes in the fence are removed; it's like the holes in the fence are taken away. When God forgives us through Christ, it's like the holes were never made. Thomas Adams said, *"Sins are so remitted, as if they had never been committed."*

Because God is omnipotent - which is to say He's all-powerful - we like to try to imagine things He can't do. Like, "Could God make a rock so big He couldn't lift it?" Now that our kids are getting older, I'm really enjoying our morning family Bible studies together, and one of my favorite parts is when we're talking about God, and the kids come up w/ really genuine, but entertaining questions:

- How did God get so good at stuff?
- Sometimes Ricky will describe how big or fast or strong he thinks God is.

There is something truly amazing that God can do, and I don't understand how He does it, and I don't think there's anyone who can explain how God does it:

- He can forget things.
- Or He can choose not to remember things....however you want to look at it.
- That's how omnipotent or all-powerful God is: He can decide what He wants to remember.
- We wish we could forget certain things, but God can actually forget certain things.

One of the things God chooses to forget – or He chooses not to remember – is our sins. It's a theme throughout Scripture...since I don't have a favorite verse this morning, I'll say this is one of my favorite themes:

- **Isa 43:25 I...am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.**
- **Jer 31:34 I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more**
- **Heb 8:12 I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.**
- **Heb 10:17 Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.**

Just think about this for a second: if God removed our sin, but He still remembered it, He'd be like us: He wouldn't have really forgiven. But we can have verses about God not remembering our sins, b/c He's sent them away. What good would it be if He sent them away, but He remembered them?

When the scapegoat was sent away I've heard the Jews took real precautions to make sure it made it far enough away. They had people along the way to continue to direct it and to make sure it wasn't hunted or rounded up to be kept by someone.

So the Jews always had this nagging concern about whether their sins made it far enough away. But God really wants us to recognize that He sends our sins very, very far away:

- **Micah 7:19 You will cast all our sins (or send them away) Into the depths of the sea.**
- **Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed (or taken away) our transgressions from us.** East is really far from west!

One of the best examples of everything we're talking about can be seen in the life of one of my heroes, King David. If you're going to think of terrible sin, you can't get much worse than adultery, betrayal and murder.

But when Nathan confronted David, in **2 Sam 12:13** David confessed his sin and said, **"I have sinned against the LORD."** Nathan replied, **"The LORD also has put away your sin."**

- The NIV and NAS say **The LORD has taken away your sin.**
- The NLT says **The LORD has forgiven you.**

It's a very interesting situation:

- You've got this little foreshadowing of New Testament forgiveness in the Old Testament.
- You've got a glimpse of the New Covenant contained in the Old Covenant.
- You know what's super interesting about the whole situation is there was no sacrifice! David confessed his sin in faith, and it was put away, taken away, forgiven.

After this something really interesting happens. David is mentioned a LOT more times after his sin. He's mentioned 300 more times in the rest of 2 Samuel and then through Kings and Chronicles. If you're familiar w/ Kings and Chronicles, you know he's the standard all other kings are measured against. When God talks about each king, if he's good, God says he's like David, and if he's bad, God says he's not like David. David is repeatedly spoken of very, very highly by God. David is spoken of so highly after his sins w/ Bathsheba and Uriah, it's almost like, *"God did you forget what David did?"*

Well, in a way He did. It had been taken away.

The NT is really beautiful the way it uses the OT. You have people who are pulled out as examples for us of different NT truths. We've already talked about two this morning:

- When James wanted examples of faith and works, he used Abraham and Rahab.
- When Peter wanted an example of a great wife, he used Sarah.
- Now when Paul wanted an example of the greatness of God's forgiveness, he used David and I think the reason is obvious: when we look at what God would forgive in David's life, it encourages us.

But it's not just that God forgave David, it's HOW God forgave David: **Rom 4:6-8 David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:** (Then quoting David's words in Psa 32 after his sins w/ Bathsheba and Uriah were forgiven and taken away...)

⁷ **"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,**

And whose sins are covered;

⁸ **Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."**

When I talked about our vision for the church I said we want people to see themselves as sinners; we want people to recognize their iniquity. That might not sound loving, but the love is when people recognize the Lord wants to reach into their lives and take away that sin and iniquity.

If you've put your faith in Christ for forgiveness, like David your sins won't be brought up by God again. It's like Jesus literally reaches into our lives, grabs hold of our sins, removes them from us, and takes them away. Earlier in Luke 5 Jesus cleansed the leper of leprosy. He reached into his life and removed all of that leprosy. The Lord reaches into our sin-filled lives and does the same w/ our spiritual leprosy.

LET'S REVIEW THESE LESSONS:

LESSON 1: IF YOU HAVE FAITH IT CAN BE SEEN

LESSON 2: (PART I) OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES COULDN'T TAKE AWAY SINS (PART II) BUT JESUS CAN

LESSON 3: (PART I) GOD DOESN'T FORGIVE LIKE US; (PART II) WITH HIM THE HOLES ARE REMOVED