



## Parkway Fellowship

No Regrets • Getting Past My Past •

2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 8:7 • 10/20/2019

### MAIN POINT

Christ has made me free, but I won't feel free until I believe I am free.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you have any relationships where you feel ruled by guilt or fear?**

**How does guilt or fear impact relationships?**

**When was the first time you remember asking for forgiveness? What happened?**

To live with no regrets, we must get past our pasts. To get past our pasts, we must trust God at His Word—His redemption is for all and covers all our sins. When we don't take God at His Word regarding our pasts, it impacts our relationship with Him and our relationships with other people.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 5:23-24

**Would you say that Jesus was most concerned about the gift He referred to or something else? Explain.**

**Specifically, what condition of the heart was Jesus describing in this passage? Do you suppose the opposite is true? If you know you have hurt or**

**have something against someone, should you go make that right? Explain.**

**Why do you suppose there was such an urgency to leave the gift and go immediately? Why not just give the gift, then go and make things right?**

**Respond to the point made in this week's sermon: Their issue becomes my issue, even if I have no issue.**

This wasn't a matter of sending a quick text or making a call. It would have been highly inconvenient for a person to stop in the middle of offering sacrifices at the temple, in Jerusalem, to go and seek reconciliation with someone (likely in another town), and then return to Jerusalem to complete the sacrifice. In giving this command, Jesus highlighted the priority of the heart in worship. The state of our relationships with God impacts the state of our relationships with other people, and the state of our relationships with people impacts the state of our relationship with God.

| Ask a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 and Romans 8:7.

**How would you explain Jesus' death on the cross to a non-Christian?**

**What are some signs a person is, like Paul expressed, is "convinced" in the redemptive power of the cross, once for all?**

**What might be some signs that a person is not truly convinced that Jesus' death on the cross covers all their sins?**

Jesus died not only as our representative but also as our substitute. Because Jesus died for all, all who believe can be saved by His atoning death. Christ died the death all of us as sinners should have died. He carried the penalty for our sins. He took our places. Thus all who believe are saved by Christ's atoning death.

**How does it make you feel to know you are the "righteousness of God"? What did you have to do to get this title?**

**Why do people often refuse to believe salvation is God's free gift? What makes you feel like you have to work for it?**

Although Jesus was not a sinner, He received punishment for our sins as if He were a sinner. He died in our place. Whatever exactly happened at the cross, Jesus won a victory and triumphantly cried out, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Through faith in Him, we experience the gift of right standing, or right relationship, with God, which Paul describes as "justification" in Romans 3.

# APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What would you say to people who say they have done too many bad things to be forgiven of their sins?**

**What are some ways you can evaluate if you are being ruled by guilt or fear instead of grace?**

**How does extending grace to those who don't deserve it point others to Jesus?**

**In light of the passages we've studied today, what next steps do you need to take?**

# PRAYER

Thank God for His free gift of salvation and for Jesus' sacrifice on your behalf. Ask God to help you rest in His grace and mercy this week.

# COMMENTARY

| Matthew 5:23-24

Disciples must attempt at their earliest opportunity to reconcile with a brother or sister who has something against them, even if doing so interrupts important business. Speaking to the context of His day, Jesus said disciples should seek reconciliation even if it meant halting in the middle of offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple. This interruption was significant since Jesus' original audience (located away from Jerusalem) would have to abandon their gift at the altar, travel for days to reach Galilee and seek reconciliation, and then return to Judea to complete the sacrifice. Such is the priority of reconciliation.

| 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

What truly controlled all of Paul's behavior was Christ's love. Paul's meaning seems to be that Christ's love holds us fast, controls us, and impels us forward in ministry—His love for us is our motivation. Christ expressed His love most fully in that One died for all. Christ died to extend the offer of salvation to all people (Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). His death was the sacrifice sufficient for the salvation of all, and "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Love motivated Jesus to die for others (John 15:13). His death is

now our reference point for understanding love (1 John 4:9-10,16).

Paul put into a few words the profound statement of how God made the way for our reconciliation to Him. He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us. Christ was so identified with us as sinners and with our sin that He fully assumed our guilt and fully bore our punishment in our place. All of this transpired on the cross. He took our sin upon Himself and died our death in our place. Christ's death as the substitute for sinners was necessary to reconciliation between God and sinners. As our sin was assigned to Him, so now His righteousness is assigned to those who receive His offer of reconciliation.

## | Romans 8:7

The mindset of the flesh is hostile toward God. It is not willing to submit to God but insists on its own way. The original sin of Adam set a pattern for all sin. It is a basic mistrust of God and a selfish desire to resist God's way. For this reason this mind-set leads to the death described in the previous verse. Our sin creates a chasm that remains regardless of how many times we may attempt self-renovation. This verse essentially repeats the substance of the previous verse but at the same time gives an important conclusion. To be in the flesh describes a life that is determined by the flesh in the same way the Spirit determines the lives of believers.