

HE ERASES YOUR PAST TO PROTECT YOUR FUTURE!

Week 6 - Day 5

Weekly Bible Study Lesson

Scripture Lesson

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven

and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and ***TEACH*** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:16–20, KJV 1900)

- I. Introduction: Not long ago, I stumbled across an old movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger entitled *Eraser*.....
 - A. Narrative: The movie tells the story of a federal marshal whose assignment is to protect certain people by giving them a new identity. He erases their records, removes the evidence of their past, and relocates them to a new place so that the enemies who seek to destroy them cannot find them. The purpose of the erasure is not punishment; it is protection. The old life is removed so that a new future can be secured.
 1. As I thought about that movie, my mind immediately turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. Unlike the fictional character in the movie, Jesus does not merely change our name on paper. He changes our standing before God. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He removes the guilt of our sin, wipes away the record that stood against us, and grants us a brand-new beginning. The

Bible teaches that when God forgives us, He casts our sins behind His back, removes them as far as the east is from the west, and remembers them no more. What a marvelous truth! The Lord erases our past not because He is trying to hide us from people, but because He is preparing us for His purpose.

2. This reality lies at the heart of the Great Commission. When Jesus gathered His disciples on that mountain in Galilee, He did not simply command them to gather converts. He commanded them to make disciples. He wanted them to teach men and women what He had taught them. He wanted them to help others understand that through His grace, no person has to remain trapped by yesterday's failures. The Gospel is the announcement that God specializes in giving people a future that their past could never have earned.

3. This brings us to the key word of our lesson: **TEACH**. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." The Greek word behind this command is closely related to the word *mathetes*, which means "disciple" or "learner." A disciple is not merely a student who gathers information; a disciple is someone who learns from the life of another person in order to imitate that life. The emphasis is not simply on hearing lessons but on following an example. Jesus wanted His followers to reproduce in others what they had experienced in Him. They were to teach people how to live by showing them the transforming power of a relationship with Christ.

4. In other words, the disciples were not merely to tell others what Jesus said; they were to show others what Jesus does. They were to teach that He forgives sinners, restores failures, transforms lives, and creates new futures. The same Lord who erased Peter's denial, Matthew's corruption, and Paul's persecution is still rewriting stories today. That is why the church teaches. We teach because there are still people who need to know that God can erase their past and protect their future.

B. Inclusion: Are you shouting yet? You should be! As a disciple of Jesus Christ take a brief moment and think about some of the things that He has had to erase in your past to protect your future.

1. Lying | Stretching, hiding, or distorting the truth.
2. Gossip | Sharing information that damages another person's reputation.
3. Pride | Thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought.
4. Bitterness | Refusing to release hurt and offense.
5. Unforgiveness | Holding grudges against those who have wronged us.
6. Lust | Entertaining sinful desires and impure thoughts.
7. Greed | Loving money and possessions more than God.
8. Jealousy | Resenting the blessings and success of others.
9. Anger | Allowing wrath and rage to control our actions.
10. Disobedience | Knowing God's will but choosing our own way.
11. Faithlessness | Doubting God's promises and failing to trust Him.
12. Prayerlessness | Attempting to live life without dependence upon God.

C. Analysis of the Text and the word TEACH

1. The disciples of Jesus were not selected because they were flawless; they were chosen because they were willing to follow. Peter resorted to violence and cut off the ear of Malchus in a moment of misplaced zeal. James and John jockeyed for power and position, openly competing for status in the Kingdom. Thomas doubted Jesus even after hearing eyewitness testimony of the resurrection. Yet none of these failures disqualified them from God's redemptive plan. The life-changing news found in this passage is this, He factored their flaws into His mission, not as obstacles, but as evidence of grace.
2. Jesus demonstrates that redemption does not require a spotless past, but a surrendered present. He does not just erase the disciples' history; He redeems it. Their weaknesses become testimonies of transformation, proving that God's power works best through imperfect people. Jesus teaches that before you can have a prosperous future you have to have a pardoned past. By forgiving their past, Jesus protects their future usefulness in the Kingdom.

D. Parallel

1. If you are not careful it is possible to dwell in the dimly lit darkness of past mistakes and not move on to the brighter days of God's goodness. This truth is liberating for believers who feel haunted by

their history.

2. Here's the mistake so many people make, they assume that past mistakes permanently limit future potential. But here's the great news of God's mercy, God operates by a different standard. He does not recruit based on perfection; He redeems based on grace. Never forget this, your past may explain where you've been, but it does not determine where God is taking you. What once looked like disqualification becomes part of your testimony. God has done the same thing for us that He did for the disciples. He pardoned our past not so we could live in regret, but so we could walk in the liberty of redemption. It is here that we truly discover that forgiveness removes shame, and grace restores calling. When God forgives, He also empowers. Your future is protected not because you are flawless, but because God is faithful.

- E. Proposition: So then, what can the disciples of Jesus Christ teach others about His forgiveness that should change the lives of people that hear our testimonies about His goodness?

II. **TEACH THAT NO PAST IS TOO BROKEN FOR GOD TO FIX**

- A. Practical Idea-Some of the people in the movie Eraser had really messed up backgrounds. They were horrible people! Murderers, extortioners, conspirators, law breakers, But, but what Schwarzenegger did for one, he did for them all.
- B. Principle-When you take a look at the disciples of Jesus Christ you will discover at best, they were a mess. Here's a brief look at just a few of them and the sins they committed that Jesus forgave:

The Sins of PETER

1. Peter Rebuked the Lord

- He tried to correct Jesus concerning His mission to the cross.
- Matthew 16:22-23

2. Peter Boasted in His Own Strength

- He said that he would remain faithful when others would fall away.
- Matthew 26:33-35

3. Peter Slept Instead of Praying

- He failed to obey Jesus' command to watch and pray.
- Matthew 26:40-41

4. Peter Cut A Man's Ear Off

- He cut off the ear of the high priest's servant whose name was Malcus.
- John 18:10-11

5. Peter Denied Jesus

- He used profanity and publicly denied knowing Christ three times.
- Matthew 26:69-75

6. Peter as a Hypocrite at times

- Withdrew from Gentile believers out of fear of criticism.
- Galatians 2:11-14

The sins of JUDAS ISCARIOT

7. Judas Stole from the Ministry Treasury

- He took money entrusted to him.
- John 12:6

8. Judas Betrayed Jesus

- He delivered Christ into the hands of His enemies.
- Matthew 26:14-16

9. Judas Loved Money More Than God

- He chose personal gain over loyalty to Christ.
- Matthew 26:14-15; John 12:4-6

The sins of THOMAS

Scripture records Thomas' doubt, but it does not explicitly identify a moral sin unique to him apart from unbelief.

10. Thomas Refused to Believe the Testimony of the Other

Disciples

- John 20:24-29

The Sins of JAMES AND JOHN

11. James and John Sought Personal Promotion

- Requested positions of honor in Christ's kingdom.
- Mark 10:35-37

12. James and John Desired Vengeance

- Wanted fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village.
- Luke 9:54

- C. Application-There are reasons followers of Jesus Christ do not teach others about the forgiveness of sins that we have personally encountered
1. **Personal Embarrassment** | We do not want people to know some of the sins that we have committed so we never mention being forgiven for them. In short, to be forgiven for a sin makes you guilty of the sin you are being forgiven for and this can be embarrassing.
 2. **Personal Selfishness** | We want forgiveness for us and our sins but we do not want forgiveness for other people and their sins. We like judgment for others and forgiveness for us.
 3. **Personal Pride** | Pride is the number reason that many people never hear about the love and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ. We like boasting on our goodness and not His grace.
- D. Philosophy-Here's the truth about the forgiveness of the Lord, it is the easiest lesson for each of us to teach because it's the one lesson of the Lord that is always stuck on repeat. Here's the blessing of forgiveness, all of us need it all of the time because none of us have it altogether at any time! With this in mind, the forgiveness of God that has been extended to us ward suggest that you have been forgiven, you are being forgiven and you shall be forgiven.

The greatest news of the day is this, God specializes in healing and restoring broken lives including yours!

- E. Biblical Illustration-Here's a story to consider: John 8:1-11

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ² And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³ And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴ They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵ Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶ •This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷ So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸ And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹ And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰ When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹ •She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:1–11, KJV 1900)

- F. Practical Illustration - A woman walked into a small antique store carrying a large box wrapped in an old blanket. Her eyes were red from crying, and she looked exhausted.

She placed the box on the counter and carefully unwrapped what was inside. It was a beautiful antique vase, but it had been shattered into dozens of pieces. Some pieces were missing. Others were cracked beyond recognition. The shop owner looked at it and said, "Ma'am, what happened?" She began to cry. "This vase belonged to my grandmother. It had been in our family for over a hundred years. I dropped it while doing my spring cleaning and shattered it. I tried fixing it but it made things even worse.

“Now it’s ruined.” The owner studied the pieces for a moment and then asked, “Why did you bring it to me?” She told him, “Because everyone in town says if anybody can restore broken things, it’s you.” The old craftsman smiled and said, “Leave it with me.” A few weeks later she came back and she could not believe her eyes..

It had been completely restored. The cracks were still visible, but every broken place had been filled with a beautiful gold finish. In fact, the vase looked more valuable than it had before it was broken. The woman asked, “How did you do that?” The craftsman said, “I didn’t hide the broken places. I redeemed them. The places where it broke became the places where beauty appeared.” Then he added something she never forgot: “Broken things don’t have to stay broken when they’re placed in the right hands.”

Now here’s the shout for you as we study this lesson together, that’s exactly what Jesus does with forgiven people. Peter was broken by denial, but Jesus restored him. The woman at the well was broken by her past, but Jesus restored her. Paul was broken by his rebellion, but Jesus restored him.

And every believer has pieces of their life they wish they could hide. The miracle of forgiveness is not that Jesus pretends the cracks never existed. The miracle is that He takes the shattered pieces of our lives, puts them back together with grace, and makes us into something more beautiful than we were before.

That’s why disciples must teach forgiveness. Because every forgiven person is a living testimony that broken things don’t have to stay broken when they’re placed in the hands of Jesus Christ. Here’s my sincere belief, the devil breaks people, but Jesus restores people. The enemy shatters lives, but Jesus puts the pieces back together again. And when Jesus finishes His work, even the cracks start giving Him glory.

III. TEACH THAT PROOF OF FORGIVENESS ENCOUNTERED IS FORGIVENESS EXTENDED

A. Practical Idea-If you have never received it you have nothing to give. But, if you know what it is like for God to forgive you as a disciple you are to teach others what that same forgiveness is like!

B. Principle-

1. In the Great Commission, Jesus commands His disciples, *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:20, KJV). The word **“teach”** here comes from the Greek word **mathetes**, which means *to train someone to live according to what has been taught*. It is much deeper than the transfer of information. It involves the transformation of life. This is important because Jesus did not tell the disciples merely to tell others what He said. He commanded them to teach others how to live what He said.

2. The disciples were to become living classrooms where others could observe the teachings of Christ in action. Notice the wording of the text. Jesus did not say, “Teach them what I commanded.” He said, *“Teach them to observe”* what I commanded. The emphasis is not simply on knowing truth but on practicing truth. This means that forgiveness is not merely a doctrine to be understood; it is a lifestyle to be demonstrated. The disciples had personally encountered the forgiveness of Christ.

3. Peter had been forgiven for denying Christ. Thomas had been forgiven for doubting Christ. The other disciples had been forgiven for abandoning Christ. Therefore, when Jesus commissions them to teach others, they are not teaching a lesson they learned in a classroom. They are teaching a lesson they learned at Calvary.

4. The Kingdom principle is clear: people who have genuinely encountered God’s forgiveness will eventually extend God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness received becomes forgiveness revealed. Grace experienced becomes grace expressed. Mercy encountered becomes mercy extended. The disciple teaches forgiveness best not by explaining it but by practicing it. The greatest evidence that I understand forgiveness is not that I can define it. It is that I can give it.

C. Application - This is why all true disciples must teach others Kingdom lessons on forgiveness.

1. Because God forgave me when I did not deserve it.

2. Because my sins against God exceed the sins committed against me.
3. Because forgiven believers should not live as those who do not believe.
4. Because grace that stops with me is not real grace at all.
5. Because bitterness hurts the holder more than the offender.
6. Because forgiveness frees me from carrying unnecessary weight.
7. Because I cannot celebrate my pardon while refusing the same to others.
8. Because God never intended forgiveness to be a one-way street.
9. Because the Cross is proof that mercy triumphs over judgment.
10. Because resentment keeps old wounds alive in my soul.
11. Because forgiveness allows healing to begin.
12. Because unforgiveness gives yesterday control over today.
13. Because I need the same patience from others that God gives me.
14. Because someone is watching how I respond to hurt.
15. Because forgiveness is one of the clearest pictures of Jesus in a believer's life.
16. Because revenge belongs to God and not to me.
17. Because reconciliation becomes possible when forgiveness is present.
18. Because my witness is weakened when my heart is hardened.
19. Because Christ forgave His enemies while hanging on the Cross.
20. Because the greatest proof that I have encountered forgiveness is that I extend forgiveness.

Here's the bottom line, the disciple who has truly met Jesus does not merely talk about forgiveness, we become a conduit through which forgiveness flows to everyone around us.

D. Philosophy | Doctrine-Thomas Aquinas once made the contention and argument that forgiven people forgive people. With this in mind, forgiveness is not just something we celebrate at baptism, but it is something that we demonstrate throughout our lives as believers in Jesus Christ.

E. Biblical Illustration-Jesus taught this doctrine repeatedly.

1. In the Lord's Prayer He instructed His followers to pray, "*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*" (Matthew 6:12).
2. Immediately afterward, He emphasized the seriousness of the matter by teaching that an unforgiving spirit is inconsistent with a heart that has truly experienced God's forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15).
3. The clearest illustration of this doctrine is found in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35). A servant owed his king an impossible debt, one he could never repay. The king freely forgave the debt. Yet that same servant refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him a comparatively small amount. Jesus' point was unmistakable: those who have been forgiven much should forgive much. The disciples themselves became living examples of this truth. Peter, who denied Christ

three times, was forgiven and restored. Later, Peter would preach grace to others. The Apostle Paul, once a persecutor of Christians, received mercy and spent the remainder of his life extending that same message of mercy to the world. They taught forgiveness because they had personally experienced forgiveness.

F. Practical Illustration - The story of Deacon Ronnie Leday's forgiveness

G. Mediatorial Moment: Have you ever truly forgiven someone who meant to hurt you? If so, in what ways did it liberate you?

IV. TEACH THAT FORGIVENESS OF ONE'S PAST CREATES THE BLESSING OF A BRAND NEW FUTURE

- A. Practical Idea-Arnold Schwarzenegger painted a beautiful picture of how erasing a persons past could create the blessing of a brand new future. In fact, in the movie, those who had their past erased were blessed with the benefit of a future that was favored because none of the mistakes of the past followed them.
- B. Principle-As disciples of Jesus Christ we have access into the newness of life that only God could graciously give each of us. Keep this in mind, that the word **teach (mathetes)** means more than sharing information. It means shaping lives according to Kingdom truth. The disciples were not

merely to teach people what Jesus had done; they were to teach people how to live because of what Jesus had done for us that we could not have Never done for ourselves.

One of the greatest lessons the disciples themselves learned was that Christ refused to allow their failures to become their futures.

D. Philosophy-The purpose of forgiveness is not merely to remove the guilt of yesterday but to release the possibilities of tomorrow.

1. Had Jesus held their past against them, there would have been no Great Commission.
2. Had Jesus defined them by their worst moments, there would have been no Church.
3. God forgives our past not simply to make us feel better about yesterday but to make us available for tomorrow.

C. Application-Here's what the blessing of a brand new future says to the world.....

1. I was guilty, but now I've been set free.
2. I was rejected, but now I'm accepted.
3. I was lost, but now I'm found.
4. I was broken, but now I'm being restored.
5. I was bound, but now I'm free.
6. I was ashamed, but now I'm confident in His grace.
7. I was empty, but now I'm filled with purpose.
8. I was running from God, but now I'm walking with God every day.
9. I was living for myself, but now I'm living for Christ.
10. I was carrying my burdens, but now I'm casting them on Him.
11. I was controlled by my past, but now I'm focused on my future.
12. I was driven by fear, but now I'm led by faith.
13. I was known by my failures, but now I'm identified by His forgiveness.
14. I was seeking revenge, but now I'm extending mercy.
15. I was speaking death, but now I'm speaking life.

- 16. I was a prisoner of sin, but now I'm a servant of righteousness.
- 17. I was wandering without direction, but now I'm following the Master.
- 18. I was headed for destruction, but now I'm destined for glory.
- 19. I was merely surviving, but now I'm thriving in His promises.
- 20. I was the person I used to be, but now I am a new creation in Christ Jesus.

D. Philosophy-Always remember this, the power of forgiveness is not found in its ability to erase yesterday, but in its ability to create a brand new tomorrow!

E. Biblical Illustration-Here's what the Bible has to say about it.....

New Creature

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Freedom Through Christ

John 8:36 (KJV)

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

New Heart

Ezekiel 36:26 (KJV)

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

A Walk in the Newness of Life

Romans 6:4 (KJV)

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Freedom in the Holy Ghost

2 Corinthians 3:17 (KJV)

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Delivered from the Darkness

Colossians 1:13 (KJV)

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

Liberty from Judgement

Romans 8:1 (KJV)

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

A Brand New Man

Colossians 3:10 (KJV)

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

The Liberty of Grace

Romans 6:14 (KJV)

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Made Free

Galatians 5:1 (KJV)

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

A New Future

Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV)

“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.”

- F. Practical Illustration-A few years ago, I was blessed to help young man here at the church whose name was Issac. He had gotten into legal trouble and was going to spend some time in jail for the bad decisions he had made. However, something crazy happened. We prayed and ask the Lord to help us and a computer glitch took place and his file could not be located. They had a few written documents but noting to really send him to prison. So the judge let him go free!

When Issac got a taste of freedom he pressed forward with a new life. He became an entrepreneur and did well for himself. However, along the way he forgave his father who had been absent, he forgave his mother who was often partial and judgmental, he forgave some of his so-called friends that betrayed him and he forgave himself for the mess he had made of his life up until that point!

When Issac was asked what happened he told everyone that God forgave him and gave him a brand new start by erasing his past to protect his future!

- G. Mediatorial Moment-Have you ever seen God give you a new beginning? If your answer was yes then you have an obligation to extend that same grace and forgiveness to others.

V. Conclusion and Celebration

- A. As this lesson concludes, the question before us is not whether God forgives. The Cross settled that question over two thousand years ago. The empty tomb settled it on the third day. The testimony of every believer in this room settles it again today.

1. The real question is this: What will we do with the forgiveness we have received? Jesus did not forgive His disciples simply so they could feel better about their past. He forgave them so they could become teachers of His grace. He forgave them so they could show a hurting world what mercy looks like. He forgave them so they could become living examples of what happens when God takes broken people and makes them whole again.

2. Every believer in this room has a story. Every believer has a chapter they are not proud of. Every believer has a moment they wish they could

erase. Yet somehow, through His grace, Jesus found us, forgave us, restored us, and gave us another chance.

3. Now He asks us to do for others what He has done for us.
Somebody needs your forgiveness.
Somebody needs your mercy.
Somebody needs your patience.
Somebody needs to see the Gospel lived out through your life.
Somebody needs to discover that forgiveness is more than a sermon; it is a lifestyle.

4. The world is already filled with critics, judges, and condemners. What it desperately needs are disciples who have been so transformed by God's forgiveness that they willingly extend that same forgiveness to others.

5. So I challenge everybody here right now: Stop carrying old grudges. Stop rehearsing old wounds. Stop keeping score. Stop demanding repayment for debts that God has already given you the grace to release. Instead, become the disciple Jesus called you to be. Forgive because you have been forgiven. Love because you have been loved. Show mercy because you have received mercy.

6. Extend grace because grace has been extended to you. And then go teach somebody else what forgiveness looks like.
Teach them through your words.
Teach them through your actions.
Teach them through your relationships.
Teach them through your testimony.
Teach them through your life.

Because the strongest disciples are not those who know the most Scripture, quote the most theology, or attend the most services. The strongest disciples are those whose lives have been so changed by the forgiveness of Jesus Christ that everyone around them can see His grace at work.