

Oh! To Overlook a Transgression!

This series was taught at North Christian Church in August 2023. Lessons can be viewed at nccdighton.org

Pop Quiz :) - what's the distinguishing feature about us believers in Christ?

According to Holy Scripture, the distinguishing feature about us is that we love one another, right??

Hopefully that's true about US, because that's what our Lord said! :) - that we love one another with the same love Jesus loves us with.

Jn 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Notice, Jesus said "just as I have loved you"....

That begs the question... HOW has He loved us??

How does His love manifest itself to us?

What does His love most definitely include??

Is it fair to say that one of the greatest expressions of God's love is **forgiveness???**

Forgiveness, especially when undeserved, is motivated by God's transcendent love.

In this series, we're going to talk about what it means *to overlook a transgression...*

... and also, why that is such a **glorious** thing!

We'll see the twists and turns the Spirit takes us on, because there are a lot of directions He might use for our benefit.

(as Pastor recently said, and I'm paraphrasing; *the great thing about the Word of God is its all the same simple message, just from 101 different angles which we sheep need to help us along*)

So, we're going to see that we can take the title of this series, which comes from an OT verse, LITERALLY...

... to overlook a transgression means to OVER LOOK it...

... to look above it or past it, rather than staring at the guilty party with resentful thoughts.

(picture standing in an open field with your opponent right in front of you about 10 feet away...

... and as you steam in your soul about what they did or said against you, you glance above them at the majestic skies, and then the sun on the horizon and are reminded of God's love in His creation...

... and of God's forgiveness of YOU!)

Oh, to overlook a transgression! - A VERY beautiful thing that comes from God Himself.

When Jesus said "Father, forgive them...they don't know what they do" , He meant it, ALL of it.

Lk 23:33-34 *And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

When someone sins against you, you might think they know what they're doing, right?!

You might even know for a fact that they did it on purpose!
OUCH!

But how about those who nailed our Lord on a Cross?? - **didn't they know** what they were doing in the sense that they did it **intentionally**???

But, in **Lk 23**, Jesus said they DIDN'T know what they were doing.

And He meant it.

In other words, they were **deceived**, even thinking what they did was right and good (kind of like Paul when he persecuted the Church in his zeal).

We might say these men KNEW what they were doing, but they didn't REALIZE what they were doing!! (that's deception, right? we think we're in the right when we're actually wrong.)

Think of Pastor's blog this week on "Ignorant vs Willful Sinning".

But nails are still nails, right?!

But Jesus, in His grace, stepped back and saw their weakness, and their ignorance, and He chose to OVERLOOK their transgressions.

i.e.- God chose to overlook our sins until we finally came to Christ for salvation!

What a glorious thing; that's **the glory of God's grace**.

Look at this explanation of His grace:

Ro 3:23-26 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. **This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.** 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

If God didn't choose to overlook our transgressions, to overlook our many sins against Him, then we would have all gone straight to hell right away...

... and it would have been RIGHT for God to do that.

But instead, God kindly chose to have MERCY on us, right?? (and that's why we're all together today listening to His Word and celebrating His goodness!!)

He chose to be extremely patient and pass over our former sins.

When Stephen said something similar to what the Lord said on the Cross, with the same forgiving attitude, **being filled with the Spirit,**...

... **his thinking was just like Christ's**, even under the greatest moment of pressure in his life.

Ac 7:54-60 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

(think about the great irony here; Stephen asked forgiveness for Saul here, who would soon after be converted and become the apostle Paul!)

My friends, as recipients of God's grace, we are to PASS ON the grace that He's shown us...

... and this doesn't mean it's always going to be easy...

... but it means the same gracious, undeserved kindness you received from God MUST be passed on!!

It's simply the right thing to do...

... and as we'll see, it's even the **glorious** thing to do.

We're talking about **transcending** the situation and rising above the fact that we've been sinned against, as bad as it might be (just as Jesus did after being nailed to the Cross by His enemies).

Now, you might say "but how? how can I overlook someone intentionally hurting me??! How can I transcend the situation??"

Well... there are several answers to that question, but how about this??

When the Bible says our battle is NOT against flesh and blood, do you really believe that in your heart??

That means our battle is not really against the people who are hurting us.

That's the truth about living life in the devil's world as a believer.

Do you believe, as we've discussed in the past, that people who sin against you can be influenced and even possessed by demons when they do so???

What does the Bible say, and do you believe it?!

Eph 6:10-13 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

And how about standing firm in His love and grace??

Which includes, of course, His forgiveness?

As we get situated, the title for this series comes from Pr 19:11.

Pr 19:11 *Good sense makes one slow to anger,*

and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

In this series, we'll defer to this translation:

Pr 19:11 NKJV *The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,*

And his glory is to overlook a transgression.

Do you remember our Lord tells us to let our light shine before men, so they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven?? (**Mt 5:14-16**)

Well, in our main verse here, the Hebrew word for "glory" in Pr 19:11 basically means **a gleaming ornament**.

The Glory of His Grace: When you choose to overlook the sin of another person, that's Christ's light shining like a visible glow from within you. **The example you exhibit** by overlooking someone else's transgression is like a gleaming ornament ("glory" in **Pr 19:11**); a light in the darkness of this world. You are then living in the Light of Christ. **Pr 19:11, Mt 5:14-16**

People will be drawn in and overwhelmed by the light of Christ coming out of you... if not right away, over time.

Forgiveness is one of the main ways we live in the love of Christ which He commanded of us.

This is one major way we let our light shine before others.

In Pr 19:11, we see wonderful advice from one of the 5 wisdom books in the OT.

And we see God encouraging us, teaching us, to live the way He lived.

We're talking about living with an overall, overriding heart of forgiveness.

We're talking about forgiveness being **our way of life**; who we are in Christ Jesus.

Let's remember, as believers in Christ, we are no longer who we once were!

Granted His Power and Perspective! : We believers are new creatures in Christ; and as such, we've been granted His power to live a new life; a **GODLY** life! **2Co 5:17-19**

We can now live like God because we have the Spirit of Christ living inside of us.

2 Co 5:17-19 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, **the new has come**. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

When we take the time to remember how much we've been forgiven, we are prone to spread the love, right?!

After all, we know we've all offended God...

... sinned against Him countless times in our lives.

And we know that by grace, He first chose to **overlook** our sins even while we were His enemies... (**Ro 5**)

... and then at the moment of salvation, He chose to completely **forgive** us our sins, **ONCE FOR ALL!**

Now, doesn't that just want to make you hold a grudge?! :o

I mean, He forgave us our entire debt we owed Him,...

... shouldn't we now just take advantage of that new freedom and live like a greedy tyrant as we deal with others?!

Of course, I'm being facetious.

But who are we to hold a grudge against someone else???

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty grateful when my friends choose to overlook my weaknesses and even my sins.

Let's let the Word of God do the talking for us...

Gal 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

(even though the context speak of being self-righteous and religious, it's also a form of slavery to be unforgiving in your heart; in fact, that's one of the worst kinds of bondage to be under :(

Since we've been forgiven once for all by the Lord, shouldn't we rather be weeping in gratitude, crying tears of joy in our hearts??

I mean, come on!! Unless you don't really believe this???

Col 2:13-14 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

Let's pause here and consider this; **one way a Judge in a court of law will punish a guilty person is through a fine**, correct??

Instead of jail time, he might say you owe restitution or a fine to the court.

Ok, just go with me on this for now....

... so let's say we owe God \$1000 fine for every sin we commit.

If you've lived over 50 years like myself, you know you have committed **thousands** of sins throughout your lifetime.

Let's just say I've sinned only 1000 times in my lifetime, and God graciously only fines me \$1000 each time.... that's \$1,000,000. (yes, $1000 \times 1000 = 1$ million :)

Now, when I consider all the things the Word of God tells us are sins, then I might more accurately guess I've sinned **1000 times each month** of my life. (hopefully that's going down as He sanctifies me, LOL)

That's 12,000 times per year, or 600,000 sins in 50 years...

... multiplied by only \$1000 fine equals **600 million dollars in fines** I owe God.

Now, to show you that's not even close to accurate; stop and consider **God's infinite holiness**.

He can't even look upon sin, **Hab 1:13**.

He HATES sin, see **Pr 6:16-19** for starters.

Our dear Pastor has tried, over the years, to illustrate **the magnitude between God's holiness and man's unrighteousness** the best he can.

Remember the teaching on why Jesus said we must "hate father and mother and even our own life" to be His disciple?? ("hate" being an illustration of how far our love for God must be above love for our family, even)

The fact is **it's immeasurable** how far away we are from God as sinners.

So thinking about that, let's just say a godly fine **for each and every sin is 1 million dollars** (not just \$1000, I'm speaking in human terms to make a point).

Now, how much do I owe God in fines for my crimes against Him???

Now 600,000 sins x a \$1,000,000 just penalty per sin = **a debt of 600 billion dollars.**

Now that's more like the truth of the matter.

But this analogy, as in the upcoming parable in this series, really points to **an infinite, unpayable debt.**

The point is, even using these human terms that fall short...

... we owe God a debt we could never pay Him.

And in His holiness, this is why we all deserve the lake of fire...
we have infinitely offended Him!

BUT!! ...

BUT!! ...

Eph 2:4-7 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the **immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.***

We might rightly say **God overlooked our transgressions**; what a glorious thing!

We can rightly say He wiped out a debt we could never, ever pay!

Again;

Col 2:13-14 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having **forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.***

It took our Lord's perfect blood to be shed to wash away our sins in the sight of our Holy, Righteous Father.

It was a **priceless payment**; something a monetary number could not be placed upon.

His Precious Person: In short, it took PERFECTION to satisfy the holiness of God; something we could never, ever offer to God.

And now, by God's grace, here we are!! - FORGIVEN!!

Now, doesn't that just make you want to hold a grudge against someone who's hurt you??

Or rather, does it make you want to go out of your way to forgive everyone and anyone who's sinned against you??

With this reminder of ALL our sins being paid for and removed from our account, you tell me how you now feel.

I know you "know" this, but do you really "know" this?!

It's one thing to have knowledge about something, but it's another to truly understand something and believe it with all your heart. (that's why He's sanctifying us in time)

How about this to dwell upon??

Eph 3:19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Here's a verse that I just read in my daily Bible reading, which goes along nicely:

Jn 14:21 *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

Remember what we received from the book of James a couple weeks ago??

Jas 4:8a *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*

My friends, let the Spirit bring all these things together for you.

He wants a CLOSE relationship with you, starting with you appreciating all He's overlooked in your life to bring you to salvation and an eternal relationship with Him.

He wants our heart, as you know,...

... and He wants us to PASS ON His heart, especially towards those who have offended you! (that's what it's really all about)

Hopefully, God has broken you down a little bit this morning.

And while you might not think that a good thing, remember His desire for you; what He wants to see in our hearts...

Ps 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;*

a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

That leads us perfectly into the next angle the Spirit wants to take with us, to get His point across to us...

Have we taken God's forgiveness to heart??

When I say that, I'm NOT being emotional.

Emotions are designed to be responses to proper, true thoughts from God.

You're Emotions Aren't Your Life – blog 7/28/23

When your emotions define your life, you have no lasting peace.

With that in mind, let's ask ourselves again;

Have we taken God's forgiveness to heart??

I'm talking about our inner motivation.

I'm talking about God looking at our hearts, which is where we find our **thoughts and intentions** in **Heb 4:12**.

What's going on in your soul?

Do you really appreciate His forgiveness of your many, many, many sins; many of which you'll never even comprehend in this life??

If so, if you DO appreciate His great love and forgiveness towards you...

... then why do you hold grudges towards those who have hurt you?

Why are you resentful and bitter against your neighbor who offended you??

Pr 19:11 NKJV *The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,
And his glory is to overlook a transgression.*

Are you like the ungrateful servant in the parable???

Do you remember our dear Pastor brought this up a few months ago, and starkly stated we are ALL the ungrateful servant to some degree?!

:o

Let's break the ice in our hearts a little further, shall we?

If you have a cold heart to some degree, of which we're all guilty, do you think we should try to warm it up a bit, for your own benefit??

So that your God and Father is not **angry** with you?!

Mt 18:21-35 *Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but **seventy times seven.***

23 *"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (a talent = 60 million denarii, and a denarii is one day's wage, so we're talking about 60 million days of work/wages!). 25 And since he*

could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (**about 100 days of work/wages**), and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'

29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And **in anger** his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

35 **So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."**

I pray this type of cold heart is not present in anyone listening to my voice right now...

... and if it is, I'm here to tell you God's love can conquer that for you, if you turn to Him.

Oh! To Overlook a Transgression!

God is love, and love is able to transcend it all... including strife, worry, resentment, personality differences, disagreements, wrongs, misunderstandings, insults, persecutions, thefts, mocking, etc..... **His love** is able to transcend it all, even in us and through us!!!

Through His love, we are even able (dunamai) to overlook the transgressions of others!

Pr 19:11 NKJV *The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,
And his glory is to overlook a transgression.*

As we take in Communion this morning, think about our topic today, and how **it was the Lord's heart of love and forgiveness that drove Him to the Cross for us!**

1 Co 11:23-26 *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."*

25 *In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*