

Sent Away By Grace

Ponder: Being forgiven

Scripture: "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Lk. 7:50, NKJV).

Two of the three New Testament words for "forgive" are sometimes used in reference to divorce. Does that sound odd? It makes sense when we realize that both words refer to some type of sending away. When a husband divorces his wife, he sends her away in an obviously negative way (Matt. 19:7). Forgiveness, however, involves sending away in a very positive sense.

First, the sins themselves are sent away. In healing the paralyzed man, Jesus proved "that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (that is, to send away sins, Matt. 9:6). What could be better than our sins being sent away! Jesus has the authority to do exactly what Psa. 103:12 says: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." And here's another angle on sins being sent away. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest of Israel laid his hands on the head of a goat and confessed the sins of Israel, symbolically transferring those sins onto the goat which was then sent away into the wilderness. Jesus does in a real way what the scapegoat did symbolically.

Second, forgiven sinners are "sent away" in a positive sense. Jesus drew a parallel between this and a creditor forgiving a debtor (Matt. 18:23-27). The creditor wouldn't angrily order the debtor to leave his presence but would generously tell him he was free to go (as opposed to sending him to debtor's prison). Jesus demonstrated this principle by telling the sinful woman He had forgiven, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Lk. 7:50).

The third New Testament word for "forgive" comes from the same family of words as "grace." Eph. 4:32 urges us to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God in Christ forgave you." We could say, "Grace one another, even as God in Christ graced you."

We deserve to pay the price for our own sins. The Lord, by grace, sends us away, not from His presence, but into His peace. Praise His name!

Hymn: "He Paid A Debt He Did Not Owe"

Prayer: Gracious Father, we cannot thank You enough for forgiving us. Help us to share the good news. In Jesus' name, Amen.