

**Grace-teaching for the week of Oct 7-13, 2019**  
**"Clearing up misconceptions, part 5"**  
**by Gene Mitchell**



**In this lesson, the blue underlined Scriptures used throughout are web links to take you to its content. This is to enhance your study.**

There's a true story about the actor Charlie Chaplin. In 1921, he entered a Charlie Chaplin lookalike contest and he came in 20th place. Evidently, their perception of what Charlie Chaplin really looked like was not accurate. No one ever thought that the real Charlie Chaplin was going to show up, so no one recognized him as the real deal when they saw him. The one who won the contest must have been a lookalike for sure, but he wasn't the real man — they passed him up. This reminds me of what John said about Jesus in John 1:11 — ***"He (**Jesus**) came to His own (**people**), and His own did not receive Him (**as who He was**)."*** We can all agree that when Jesus was on the earth, He was the PERFECT representation of the Father, see [John 14:10](#). Think about it, everything that the Jewish people worshipped and cherished was standing right before them and they did not see Him as the real deal when they saw Him.

It's the same when we read and study the Word of God. Without seeing Jesus in what we read, we will see and believe the wrong things. For instance, if one sees the Bible as being full of rules that must be kept, then he will believe that he'll also be punished when he fails them. Look at what Jesus said in Mark 4:24 — ***"Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given."*** We are to take heed to what we hear, because the way that you see things determines what we believe about them. This is why our perceptions (how we see things) are essential to our spiritual growth. So if you want more, then pay attention to what you are hearing. This is why we're clearing up misconceptions, because we have heard the wrong things about dynamic truths and therefore, we end up believing the wrong things about them. If you would like to obtain any of my archived lessons on misconceptions, click [HERE](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page.

**13) Forgiveness.** It is completely natural to think that we must ask God for forgiveness every time that we know that we have sinned, because after all, that's the way that we are told to treat others. For instance, if I know that I have offended someone, I'm going to go to that person and ask them to forgive me, so that our relationship will stay intact. But God's forgiveness is not like man's forgiveness. His forgiveness today under the New Covenant is completely different than it was then under the Old Covenant. If you're looking into your forgiveness, you can't turn to the Old Testament to see it — all of that is the shadow — you have to see it in the New Testament and discover its reality. Look at what we read in Heb 10:12 and 14 — ***"(12) But this Man (Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, (14) For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."*** Notice those precious words: *"one sacrifice for sins FOREVER"* and *"one offering... perfected FOREVER"*. This was the reason why He SAT DOWN at the right hand of God. Under the Old Covenant, for a priest to sit down was an abomination. Why was this? It was because he was to be continually busy making sacrifices for the people's sins and sitting implied that he was resting from his labors. But Jesus only had to do His sacrifice for sins one time for perfection, so He SAT DOWN and now we too, can rest in Him!

**Here's what I want you to get from this — as long as Jesus sits down is as long as you are forgiven and can rest from your labors from sinning!**

When we struggle with sin, it's because we are not resting in Him and what He has already done to free us from it. Resting in Christ and receiving His forgiveness is your power-position against the grips of sin. No wonder the writer goes on and says, *"by one offering He has perfected forever"*! In this little dissertation on what true forgiveness is in Christ, I want to give you 3 truths to consider about your forgiveness.

First, look at what we read in Lev 4:2 and 4 — ***"(2) If a person sins... (4) He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord..."*** Even under the Old Covenant, forgiveness required one to bring an animal sacrifice to the priest. The priest then would sacrifice the animal before the Lord. It was a blood offering, not a word-offering, as asking God to forgive him. God's economy has always been a blood economy for one's forgiveness. This was the main reason why Jesus came into this world — to be our sin-offering and spill His spotless blood to obtain our forgiveness! So it's by our faith in His blood that we are forgiven. No one is forgiven by faith in his words.

Second, many times when it comes to spiritual things, we live in a grey area. What I mean by that is that we're uncertain of things. But the spiritual things of God are black and white, that's why we have the Word of God. So when it comes to your forgiveness in Christ, it is a black and white issue of the highest kind of truth! We seem to live in the grey area about our forgiveness, because of the way that we feel about them or our behavior — it's our feelings keep us in the grey. Not 1 time in the New Testament are we instructed to ask God for forgiveness when we know that we have sinned. People have even come up with a term about it, *"unconfessed sin"*. Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying here about sin, because sin is damaging, hurtful, destructive and can lead to death. But when it comes to your forgiveness, it's a done deal — Jesus is sitting down at the right hand of God!

The last point that I want to make here is about our true confession and what we are to say. Because of our misconceptions about asking for forgiveness,

we’ve made confession to be about us. Look at what we read in Heb 3:1 — ***“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus”***. Who are we to consider in our confession? Our confession should be about Jesus and what He’s done, not about us and what we did. Our true confession when we have sinned should be about our forgiveness in Christ and the fact that we have become the Righteousness of God. Our true confession in the time of need should be about God’s mercy and grace that is in Christ, available to us 24/7/365, see [Heb 4:16](#)! It is through our faith in Jesus’ blood that causes us to embrace the reality of God’s irrevocable forgiveness.

**14) Drawing closer to God.** This has been another misconception that has led many believers into thinking that their relationship with God was on shaky ground. Believing that we draw closer to God by our efforts of prayer, or Bible reading, or any other forms of self-discipline, causes confusion in the hearts of people. I remember when I believed this. At that time, I would be very careful about making sure that I got my prayer-time in for the day and studied plenty of Scriptures. And if I happen to miss any time because something came up in my life, I felt distant from God’s presence. But look at what Paul said in Eph 2:4 and 6 and read it like you never have before — ***“(4) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... (6) raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”***. God made us sit together in Christ Jesus! We just read in Hebrews how Jesus sat down at the right hand of God and now we’re seeing that we sat together with Him. We cannot get any closer to God than that! This closeness to God is a reality for us to enjoy now in this lifetime, on this side of heaven!

Think about this for a moment. When we get to heaven, we will not be any closer to God than we are now. What will change is our bodies — we’ll have a glorified body — and of course, our geographical location will change. But on the inside, in your reborn and recreated spirit, you are already as close to God as you’ll ever going to get (as a matter of fact, all creation is groaning that we get a hold of this reality, see [Rom 8:19](#)). Sure, your emotions and feelings may be telling you that you are distant from Him, but that isn’t the case. Allowing our emotions to dictate our experiences will lead us down a slippery slope (See [Prov](#)

[14:12](#) and [Heb 4:1](#) and pay attention to the word, “*SEEMS*” in both verses, because this feeling comes from our emotions. Our feelings always paints the image of SEEMS in our minds).

**15) Hunger and thirst.** Here’s another phrase that has kept many believers from growing up into Christ. I remember clearly when I believed this and how it kept me on spiritual “*eggshells*” before the Lord. This kind of emotional position causes one to think, “*God, I need more of You!*” This may sound holy and humble, but it’s filled with ignorance and can be very destructive to one’s life (I know this first hand, because I used to live this way). Look at one of the main verses people use for teaching this misconception from Matt 5:6 — “***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.***” Beloved, because of Jesus and the dramatic change that has taken place inside of you, you are not on the “*hunger and thirst*” side of this verse, but you are on the 2nd part of this verse — you are filled with God’s Righteousness. Actually according to [2 Cor 5:21](#), you have become God’s Righteousness. People have taken the 9 Beatitudes of Jesus in the Gospels as New Testament teaching. But when Jesus taught these principles, He was preaching them to an Old Covenant people, and when it comes to this 4th Beatitude, Jesus obtained its goal for us — being FILLED with Righteousness! So there’s no need then, to hunger and thirst for it.

Nowhere in the New Testament letters are we instructed to hunger and thirst after God and His Righteousness — we are, however, instructed to pursue it, [1 Tim 6:11](#), but not desire to be filled with it. To pursue Righteousness is to investigate and discover its reality, like one pursues a certain kind of career. When one pursues a career, he gets educated about it and this is what we do with Righteousness. Because our reborn spirit has become the Righteousness of God, we are to discover its power (See what Paul said about this in [Phil 3:8-10](#)).

Consider, also, the terminology, “*hunger and thirst*”. These words describe our feelings and emotions. Emotions are wonderful and God-given, but they are lousy guides. Desires are greatly needed in providing us with diligence, but are a crummy substitute for true passion. When we allow to be led by them, we’ll

really end up confused and bewildered. Let me quickly show you this. Look at this famous Scripture which many believers like to cling to for help and comfort from Psa 42:1-4 — ***"As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. (2) My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (3) My tears have been my food day and night, While they (my feelings and desires) continually say to me, 'Where is your God?' (4) When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude..."*** This whole Psalm is loaded with information about the peril of letting our feelings and desires (our soul) dictate our spiritual journey, but I'll only site these 4 verses to give you a snippet of how dangerous it is. We read of its result, *"Where did God go?"*, v.2... *"my tears"*, v.3... *"they continually say"*(condemnation), v.3... *"I used to go"*, v.4 (spiritual decline). Falling into the deceptive trap of hungering and thirsting after Righteousness is dangerous. We must learn to live by faith in His grace if we're going to be successful in our lives.

The theme of this week's lesson has been our soul. Trusting more in our feelings instead of the truth that is in Christ, has been one of our biggest obstacles in growing and maturing in Christ. Our feelings change depending on the present state of our minds and the way that we look at things. If our minds are spiritually governed from the inside out, then our feelings will reflect this. If our minds are fleshly governed from what goes on around us, then our feelings will reflect this.

Next time we come together, I'll show you some more misconceptions that have hindered us. Please stay tuned!