

4. Even though we know our sins have been forgiven, do you think that we always *feel*/forgiven? Put some thought into this. Why do you think that is? Hint: there are lots of reasons.

5. Do you think that we can feel guilty even when there is no real fault? Why do you think that is?

6. Reread carefully and prayerfully Colossians 1:13-23 paying special attention to verses 21-22. Let's assume you know Christ, you've repented of current sins in your life, yet you're still struggling with feelings of guilt and inadequacy like we just described in the two preceding questions. Why are these verses so important? Do a group exercise. How can we use scripture and other Christians close to us to overcome the forgiveness gap - the difference between the forgiveness that God has already given us and the trust in God's forgiveness we feel?

JESUS COMES TO FORGIVE US

Colossians 1:12-23

"To be a Christian means you forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."

C. S. Lewis

He forgives to rescue us (Colossians 1:12-14)

Opening our eyes helps us see the reality of what is instead of the cloud of what we perceive.

- We break through the power of darkness.
- We break through the obscurity of darkness.
- We break through the danger of darkness.
- We enter the light of God's direction and clarity.

He forgives to redeem us (Colossians 1:14; Romans 3:25)

Forgiveness sees how free grace is to us; redemption sees how costly it is to God.

He forgives to release us (Colossians 1:19-20)

Reconciliation is the restoration of peace and friendly relationships.

- Restoration of a groaning creation.
- Restoration of a groaning people.

He forgives to reestablish us (Colossians 1:21-23)

He presents us holy in *his* sight, even if we aren't in our own sight.

- If we remain shackled by guilt, self-doubt, self-condemnation and anxiety after God has pronounced us forgiven ...
we have allowed sin to claim another victim.

He presents us free from accusation.

Getting to know you

Sunday we said that Jesus came to forgive us. Can you think of a time when you saw repentance and forgiveness in action? Describe that situation. It might seem small to you now but if it was a big deal when it happened, it applies!

Digging deeper

1. The need for forgiveness arises out of guilt. It is that awful feeling that hits us in the pit of the stomach when we know we have done wrong, and we'll do almost anything to get rid of it. Describe one way the conscience works even in the hearts of those who don't follow God. Read Romans 2:14-15 for insight.
2. What does God do with our forgiven sins? Read the following verses. Don't just write down the same words, make a personal comment on each if you can. Isaiah 38:17; Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 43:25
3. What is a biblical pattern for life when we realize our sins are forgiven? Luke 19:8-9