

No Matter What...God Forgives!

Psalm 32:1-11

February 4, 2018

As I began to write this message I went outside and saw a site I had not seen in the 11 years I have been at this church. Marc and Gary pointed this site out to me. I looked across Wild Olive Ave. towards the police station parking lot and there was not one police car on the lot!

I sent a text to the Chief and asked him if he and his crew had run out on us on the beachside! What if the city ran out of funding for the beachside police precinct? He called me back to assure me the police presence was not leaving us on the beachside!

We have been hearing in the news how Washington DC keeps arguing over how to keep the federal government from running out of money as it has done in the past.

You and I have little control over that but we do have some other personal areas in our lives where we can, from time to time, run out, come up short.

The battery life on your phone runs out and the screen goes blank.

You run out of minutes on your phone for the month.

You have a zero balance in your banking account.

You pull up to your neighborhood gas station and there are the plastic bags on the pump handle indicating the station has run out of fuel.

In all of these scenarios you have an option...charge your phone... wait till the first of the month and more minutes are added to your phone...wait till payday or when your check is issued...go to another gas station.

No matter what...there will be areas of life where we might run out of something...

What if God ran out of forgiveness?

Can't plug him in and charge the forgiveness % back up!

Can't wait till next month to get more minutes of forgiveness.

Can't wait till our next pay day to put more forgiveness into our personal account.

Certainly we can't go to another god and expect to get the same forgiving love.

What if God ran out of forgiveness?

On the communion chalice today there is the plastic bag covering it that reads, "Out of forgiveness!"

If God ran out of forgiveness imagine how the communion litany would read:

After the "confession and pardon" section I usually respond with:

"Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love towards us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!"

If God ran out of forgiveness I would instead have to say something like:

"Hear the shocking news...God has run out of forgiveness. You are not forgiven! Deal with it!"

If God ran out of forgiveness, if He had run out of His forgiveness for us, what a tremendous burden of guilt we would carry. Each sin would have more and more weight till our lives would dry up with hopelessness.

Hear the GREAT NEWS!

No matter what...God forgives!

God's forgiveness will never run out.

In our bible reading we find the psalmist, David, proclaiming the great news:

"I will confess my transgressions to the Lord---and you forgave the guilt of my sin." vs. 7

No matter what...God forgives!

Over the centuries, right up to today, believers have been overcome by an awareness of their own sins. How tragic it would be if God ran out of forgiveness. How guilt-ridden we would become...we would find our strength zapped out of our spirit. How frightening it would be if we could no longer find a presence of God's forgiveness in our lives.

The psalmist shared how out of the depths of his guilt and shame and sorrow he repented and God forgave! We who live on this side of the cross realize that God is willing to forgive...no matter what.

God has been and is always ready to forgive. (Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:5, Isaiah 55:7)

Jesus affirmed this truth that "no matter what...God forgives" in his interaction with folks while on earth.

He healed the invalid, whose sin had caused his ailment for most of his life, and after healing him Jesus told him to **"go and sin no more."** (John 5:1-15)

Jesus told the woman caught in the sinful life of adultery that he forgave her and to

"go and sin no more." (John 8:3-11)

This **"go and sin no more"** command Jesus gave was not one expecting sinless perfection. It was the expectation to repent of the **sinful lifestyle** and strive to live your life for Jesus.

Jesus healed and forgave Mary Magdalene of her battle with demons. She left her life of sin and became a faithful follower of Jesus and was among the first to witness his resurrection from the dead. (Luke 8:2 & John 19:25)

When the prostitute interrupted a dinner where Jesus was a guest, he commented that those who are forgiven much are loved much. (Luke 7:47)

Overflowing love is the result of one who has experienced the forgiving love of Jesus.

No matter what...Jesus forgave and no matter what Jesus forgives.

No matter what...Jesus forgives **if**.....

We do have a part in the forgiveness of Jesus in our lives.

When you mess up in life, when you sin, do you run **from** God or do you run **for** God?

To run from God is denial. Denial is digging a hole with the shovel of rationalization, excuses or pride. The more you dig the deeper the hole gets. It may seem like a good idea at the time so you can keep living that sinful lifestyle. But eventually you will find your life buried in guilt and shame and the consequences of that lifestyle will bury you.

No matter what...God forgives if we run to him when we sin.

We are given the promise that if we draw near to God that He will draw near to us. He will come and pull us out of the sinkhole of sin. (James 4:8-10)

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, in the section on sin and its consequences, quoted from Psalm 32 how blessed are those whose sins are forgiven. (Romans 4:7-8)

Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, in the second beatitude stated:

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

No matter what God forgives...if we mourn over sin.

Do you mourn and grieve over your sins or do you laugh it off or make excuses for it like society often does.

When you hear of another life ruined or worse yet death due to a sinful lifestyle do you grieve or simply say they had it coming to them? (Wm Sachs homeless friend died K2 and alcohol this week)

How do we mourn over our sin?

David the psalmist grieved over his sins of adultery, lying and murder.

No matter what...God forgave David and referred to him as a man after his own heart!

How? Because in his grief David first of all **quit denying** his guilt and recognized he had sin.

David **admitted his sins** to God. He mourned his sins in his life. He quit running from God and ran to God.

He then believed that no matter what God forgave him. He **repented** from the lifestyle of sin and gave his heart totally to God.

This can be difficult if the sinful lifestyle we have been living has taken root in our lives.

After Hurricane Matthew we had a huge oak tree taken down in our back yard. The stump remained. I was too cheap to pay for them to grind it. Guess what started to sprout up in the yard? Little sprigs of the oak tree. The visible tree was gone but the roots were still alive. Reminders of the big tree became evident.

A few months ago I cut down a small grapefruit tree in our backyard that had contracted the "greening disease." Because it was no more than a foot in diameter I felt I could get the stump out! I dug around the stump and axed away some roots.

However, there was the main tap root underneath that I could not get to.

I let go of my pride and the checkbook and called a stump grinder. I showed him the big oak tree stump and then the area of the grapefruit tree. I told him I tried to get the grapefruit tree stump on my own. He made an interesting comment, *"Yup! I see this a lot. People think they can do it on their own!"*

I wonder if God says that a lot when he looks at us trying to take care of our own stumps of sin. We may take the visible evidence down but the root still springs up new growth. Or we try and try to chop away but still can't get the tap root of our sin. It takes the sin stump-grinder...Jesus.

How arrogant are we to think that there are certain sins that Jesus' death on the cross cannot forgive. The only sin he will not forgive is the sin of not following him as the Lord and Savior of your life.

How arrogant and what a liar we are when we say we have no sin. (I John 1:8,10)

In fact, such arrogance makes a liar out of God.

We have all sinned and fall short of his glory. (Romans 3:23)

We are given the promise that if we confess our sins he will forgive us. (I John 1:9)

We are also given the assurance that if we don't confess our sins then the wages of our sins is death. (Romans 6:23)

We never have to worry about God running out of forgiveness. What we need to worry about is our running out on God for forgiveness.

Will God forgive me for _____?

Whatever you fill in that blank with God promises to forgive you when you quit denying it, bring it to him, turn from that lifestyle and live from your heart for Jesus.

No matter what God forgives!

Unless, we act like a donkey!

The message bible reads this way;

"Don't be ornery like a horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to stay on track.

God defiers are always in trouble; God affirmers find themselves loved every time they turn around." (Psalm 32:9,10)

How do we act like a stubborn mule?

We don't call Jesus, the stump-grinder, to come and grind away the root of sin in our lives.

And then another shocking way that Jesus mentioned right after he taught the disciples the Lord prayer he said:

"In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part." (Matthew 6:14,15 Message bible)

No matter what God forgives if we do our part and forgive others. Don't be a stubborn sinner who won't forgive others as God has forgiven you.

God's forgiving love will never run out.

His love is everlasting.

As we come to the table where we are reminded of his forgiving love, we can take the plastic cover off of the chalice and know that no matter what God forgives.

Prepare your hearts to receive His forgiving love as you confess your sins.

Invite Jesus to come and take away the root of your sins and live that life fully committed to Him.

When we do we can sing with the psalmist that final line:

"Celebrate God, Sing together---everyone!

All you honest hearts, raise the roof!" (Psalm 32:11)

Celebrate! No matter what...God forgives!!!