

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

GOD'S FORGIVENESS IS A BLESSING

Romans 4:7-8 "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them."

"Blessed!" Blessed and related words are found as many as 600 times in the Bible. You have heard this word many times, haven't you? How would you define it? One of the meanings in the dictionary I consulted defines it as "a beneficial thing for which one is grateful; something that brings well-being. You are blessed when you receive God's gracious favor and approval. Being blessed goes beyond material wealth. His greatest blessings are spiritual.

One blessing you receive from God is forgiveness. Paul quotes Psalm 32, "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." David, the author of this Psalm, personally received this blessing. In eight different Psalms David gives praise and thanks to God for blessing Him with forgiveness. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance and shows how passionately he cried out to God for forgiveness.

Have you counted the number of times you have prayed to God for forgiveness? How meaningful is it for you when you sing the offertory, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. . .?" How do you feel when your pastor announces God's forgiveness after you have confessed your sins? Sins weigh you down! God's forgiveness removes their burden. With forgiveness comes God's gifts of joy and peace.

"Blessed are (you) whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." (Romans 4:7-8) In and through the faith the Holy Spirit has given you in Jesus Christ, you give Jesus your sins and He gives you His sinlessness. YOU ARE BLESSED!

Prayer: Praise and thanks to You dear Jesus for Your sacrifice on the cross in payment for my sins. Thank You for the blessing of forgiveness that is now mine through You. Amen

Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,
To find in Thee my life, my rest, Christ crucified, I come.

Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears, Christ crucified I come.

Wash me and take away each stain;
Let nothing of my sin remain
For cleansing, though it be through pain, Christ crucified, I come.

And then for work to do for Thee,
Which shall so sweet a service be
That angels well might envy me, Christ crucified, I come.
(LSB 560)