

(1 John 1:8-2:2, NIV84)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Today, once again, we celebrate the crucifixion of our Lord. Really? We "celebrate" Jesus' suffering and death? Doesn't that seem rather cold and heartless? We certainly don't celebrate the sin that made it necessary for Jesus to go to the cross. What we celebrate is that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be the sacrifice of atonement -- the payment that would restore the perfect relationship between God and mankind, which was destroyed by the sin of Adam and Eve.

So let's take stock: our debt paid in full, our sins forgiven, perfect righteousness restored, hell is closed and heaven is opened, Satan is defeated. Yeah, that sounds like more than enough reason for us to celebrate.

God bless you as today you approach Golgotha in humble reverence to meditate on our Savior's passion and give thanks to God for this indescribable gift of His grace.

Reconciled to God with you in Christ,  
Pastor Golm

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Father, Forgive Them!

Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."  
Luke 23:34

Think for a moment! What do we see and hear? The Son of God, nailed to a cross, blood streaming down his cheeks and hands and feet, raising his voice above the tumult of his tormentors and praying to heaven: "Father, forgive them!" Here is a picture of compassion the likes of which the world has never seen.

But we have here far more than a picture. We have here an eternal fact of indescribably great significance. He who on Calvary's cross, while dying for the sins of all mankind, exclaimed: "Father, forgive them", still looks down

in love upon his believing children and still pleads: "Father, forgive them!"

We are assured of this by the disciple whom Jesus loved. Many years later, the beloved John tells the early Christians that as long as the earth stands Christ will always be their advocate before his Father's throne, pleading "Father, forgive them." He will be their constant "Go-Between" until the day of his glorious return. We are told this in the Scripture reading indicated above.

Why should the Father forgive those who put their trust in him who died on Calvary's cross? Because he died as their Redeemer, their Savior, the eternal Substitute, "who bore their own sins in his body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24). The great Sin-Bearer is now the sinner's Spokesman before the majestic God of heaven!

What a marvelous comfort in days of darkness, in hours of doubt and despair, in moments when a heavy sense of guilt oppresses us, to know that we have a Mediator at the Father's throne who still is pleading: "Father, forgive them!"

He lives to bless me with His love,  
He lives to plead for me above,  
He lives to calm my troubled heart,  
He lives all blessings to impart.