



Expunging Your Record

By Debbie Childers, contributing writer

Sometimes God just surprises me with an illustration from real life that teaches me a great spiritual truth. It's almost like I understand fully what He is saying all at once. But then, He unwraps this gift of revelation slowly, to show me what He is saying in detail. Several years ago, I saw something on television that God used to take me on a detailed journey in thought, reminding me of His full forgiveness. I'm inviting you to take that journey again with me now, as I retrace my steps of understanding this incredible truth.

The important thing to note, first, is that when Jesus was on the cross dying for my sins, He saw me. He saw my entire life and all the sins I would ever commit. In fact, all the sins of the entire world were in His view that day, and He died to forgive every one of them.

So we can emphatically state that the forgiveness for all sin was purchased by the death of Jesus on the cross. There had never before been a sacrifice effective enough to forgive sin fully and forever. After the death of Christ, there would never be a need for another sacrifice to add anything to His, because His was enough. In fact, Jesus said, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30), indicating His completion of all that God required to provide forever and full forgiveness, for those who receive Christ and have His forgiveness applied to them.

Now, let's take this journey one step further. When I came to an understanding that I was a sinner in need of a Savior, I responded to His invitation, and received Christ as my salvation. At that moment, the forgiveness Christ purchased on the cross was applied to me. It was a package deal. I didn't just receive forgiveness for all the sins I had committed until the day I received Christ as Savior. I was fully and forever forgiven for all my sins - for all of my life!

Remember that when He was on the cross, Jesus looked ahead through the corridors of time. He looked ahead to see me and to see you. But did He just see the sins we had committed up until the day we were saved? Was His view limited to only a portion of our lives? Of course, not. From the cross, Jesus saw every sin we would ever commit for our entire lifetime, and paid for them all.

We are limited by time and space. We can only see a limited view of things. But God's view is not limited by time, space, or anything else. He sees our tomorrows as clearly as we see our yesterdays. So when Jesus was on the cross, everything in our lives was future tense at that point. He saw the final day of our lives as clearly as He saw the day we were born.

The death of Jesus was enough to take care of all our sin...all of the world's sin...past, present, and future...because that's what God saw that day. God's forgiveness is applied completely, withholding nothing for a future day when we might need it again. God's wrath over our sin is fully satisfied forever, no matter how badly we may mess up in the future. Nothing we do will ever surprise Him. He saw our sin before He saved us, and saved us anyway.

When I think about this fully, I have to realize that in God's view, even the sins we will commit 10 years from now were already on our records and in His archives, on the day we were saved;

even though, in our limited view, we haven't seen them yet.

Now, back to what I saw on TV that morning. A national news reporter was in Miami, Florida covering the job shortage there. Because the jobs were so limited, only the top candidates were being hired. At the time of the report (in 2012), there was a huge population of criminals in Florida. In some cases, many years had passed since their last conviction, but that old record was keeping them from getting jobs. Convicted criminals were seeking to have their criminal records "expunged." This reporter went into great detail describing the process of expunging.

When a judge approves the expunging of a criminal's record, a court clerk literally goes to the basement, the attic, or wherever the archives are located. The clerk looks for the record until it is found, physically removes it, and obliterates it. There is absolutely no record left of the crime; it can never again be used against the former criminal. In fact, this lawbreaker will no longer even be identified by the law as a convicted criminal. It is "just as if he/she had never committed the crime." In the eyes of the law, it is gone forever.

Here's what God showed me. Because God's vision transcends time and space, all of the sin record of my life (past, present, and future) was recorded and archived on the day of my birth, as if they had already happened. When I received Christ as my Savior, the debt caused by the penalty for my sins was marked "paid in full." Jesus suffered and paid the penalty for my sin.

But God didn't stop there. He sent Jesus to the archives to pull my entire sin record and then He obliterated it. God forgives fully and forever, but He doesn't stop there. He JUSTIFIES....it is "just as if I never sinned." In fact, just as a former criminal with an expunged record is no longer considered a criminal, God justifies me and no longer calls me a sinner. He calls me a saint.

At this point, you may be shouting glory or might be wondering why I'm making such a big deal of this. Here's why...We often accept, believe, and even praise God for such truths, but we don't carry the truth to the furthest extent. If we are truly already forgiven, fully and forever, why do we keep asking God for what He's already given us? Isn't asking Him for forgiveness basically saying that we don't believe Him when He says we are fully forgiven? Isn't continuing to ask Him for forgiveness just like asking God to send Jesus back to the archives to look for and destroy a record that no longer exists?

If God says that we are justified forever (and He does), that means the guilt of our sins (what is charged against us) will forever be "just as if we have never sinned." This will not change, even on those occasions when we do sin (because even our future sins were already archived and subsequently obliterated). So when we ask God to forgive us, we're asking Him to do something He's already done...and our request reveals that we don't believe Him.

Does that mean God doesn't see us when we sin? Or worse yet, does it mean He doesn't care if we sin? Of course, it doesn't mean that. Sin will still destroy what is beautiful in our lives and prohibit us from living in the abundance of Christ's life in and through us. When we sin, it is still crucial for us to confess that sin to God, as the Holy Spirit convicts. But confession is not the same as asking for forgiveness. Confession is simply agreeing with God about our sin. The Holy Spirit's conviction is not condemnation, because our guilt records have been eternally expunged. His conviction is simply convincing us that something is a sin and that it will bring destruction to our lives. It is His way of convincing us, without condemning us. He only does this for those who have experienced the expunging of their archive of sin through their relationship with Jesus.

Do we still sin? Yes.

Does God see our sin? Yes, in fact He saw it even before we did it. But He's not surprised by it, disappointed by it, or unprepared for it; because He saw it before He even saved us and fully forgave us.

Does He still charge our sin to our accounts? Absolutely not! When He looked over our lives at the point of our salvation, He scooped up every sin we would ever commit and placed them in our records. Then, He expunged our records..He obliterated them.

Does He still point out our sins to us? Yes, because He loves us, and wants us out of the danger of all that sin can do to us. He convicts us, without condemning us, because there is no longer any condemnation for those who have had the record of their crimes against God expunged.

Praise God for His expunging, obliterating, justifying grace, by which we are fully and forever forgiven!

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