

## **Remission of Sins**

**Nov. 13, 2022**

Scripture: Romans 7:14 – 26 & Acts 2:22 – 42

Let us start out today's message by talking about fall – what a beautiful season! Red, gold, and purple leaves cover the mountains. They are beautiful and God's glory is visible in the season of fall. But most people know that if you leave the leaves on the ground, they could harm the grass. So out comes the rakes, and the annual task of raking up leaves begins!

People will have to work for several hours to rake up all the leaves. They do this to uncover the healthy lawn beneath. Satisfied with their work, they stop and go inside to rest. The next morning, they will wake up and look out the window and discover that their lawn is covered again with leaves! So they will repeat their raking of leaves and soon his beautiful season of fall is replaced with – 'I hate FALL!'

What I hated most when I lived in Millville PA, was that my yard did not have a single tree with leaves on them. But yet my yard was full of leaves! My neighbors on both sides of my house had some beautiful trees. I would often go out and rake up the leaves and see my neighbors and I would shot them a mean look!

Sin is much like fall leaves. At first, it appears enticing and lovely seeing the fall foliage. But soon however, the damage begins to our soul. We work to rid ourselves of the gossip or envy that is pulling us down. And for a time, we convince ourselves that we are clean. We convince ourselves that we have raked up all of our transgressions. Then a judgmental attitude or a critical thought slips in where the

gossip or envy used to reside. And, just like the lawn, leaves of sin cover us again.

We often asked ourselves – Why can't we do what God intends? Who will rescue us? The answer comes to us, as it did Paul in our reading from Romans 7:14 – 25!

We all have inner conflicts going on in our lives. We often do things that we know are wrong and we forget to do things that are right to do. We commit sins of 'commission' – sins we actually do, and we commit sins of omission – not doing things we should do. We are sinful creatures!

So we find ourselves stuck in cruel sand with sin pulling us down. Where does our answer come from? Wretched men and women that we are, our answer comes from Jesus Christ! Our answer to sin is Jesus Christ!

Have you encountered people who thought that they could not be forgiven? Have you ever known a person who did something that they could not get past? He or she could not forgive themselves for something? Are you such a person? (pause)

You might explain to them that Jesus has made the way for them to enter into a relationship with God, but what can you do if they remain convinced that they are not worthy?

In Acts 2:22 – 42 we have a wonderful story that you could share. Here we find Peter preaching to a crowd of people shortly after Jesus' death. Some of the people gathered there might have been present in the crowd that shouted – 'Crucify Him!' Think of that – the people Peter is preaching too could have included people who yelled at our Lord – 'Crucify Him!'

The contents of Peter's message must have been troubling to them. They heard the word 'YOU' and immediately sensed that Peter was talking to them. They probably thought – 'That means me!' If anyone should have been required to do additional steps to achieve salvation, it would be this group! But Peter simply says – 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.'

In essence, Peter said - REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE. The three R's of forgiveness and remission of sins are REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE.

There is no big hoop to jump through. There no scriptures to memorize. There is no special prayer to utter. There is just repent and be baptized in Jesus Christ and your sins will be forgiven.

It is the same for all! Repent, return, and receive! The three R's – REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE.

The fourth concept of Walter Scott's Five Finger Exercise is REMISSION OF SINS. (Put sign up 'Remission of Sins')

The remission of sins is something only God can do. It is a gift from God. Walter Scott believed that once people confessed their faith in Jesus Christ, repented, and were baptized, then they were assured of God's forgiveness.

Remission of sins begins by our act of baptism. It is in this physical act that we receive remission of sins which basically means that God forgives.

Walter Scott taught that remission of sins means that people can trust God to forgive them every time they ask God for forgiveness. Every time that we come to God with a repentive and contrite heart, God forgives us!

So, if this message has touched you and you think – I was preaching to you - REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE.

Today there are no big hoops to jump through, no scripture to memorize, and no special prayer to utter; there is just - REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE.

The first four fingers of Walter Scott's Five Finger Exercise are – FAITH, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM, and REMISSION OF SINS.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, we seek your strength, not our own, to overcome sin. Like the falling leaves, sin falls upon us in our lives. Let us always come to you to REPENT, RETURN, and RECEIVE your forgiveness.

Forgiving God, we ask for the strength and the spirit to communicate your heart is open to all who will call upon your name.  
AMEN.

Let us conclude this message again by singing 'The Ballad of Walter Scott'.