

**Read: Isaiah 55:6-9**

## God Freely Forgives

### **Isaiah 55:7b**

Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Have you ever gotten anything for free? Maybe you got a free t-shirt for signing up for a team. You might have gotten a coupon for a free scoop of ice cream. Or a free hamburger from McDonald's for every A on your report card. Sometimes when things are free, it can be very exciting. Most often, they aren't really free. You got a free t-shirt because you paid a fee to be on the team. You got a free cup of ice cream because you bought lunch. A hamburger may have been free, but first you had to work hard to get those grades.

Today our reading is talking about something that is free—absolutely free. See if you can hear what it is: “Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” Pardon means that whatever bad thing you did, the punishment is taken away. You don't have to pay a fine or endure a consequence. That's pretty amazing, right?! Usually, when a car is caught speeding, the speeding ticket involves a fine that you have to pay. When someone commits a serious crime, they often have to serve time in jail.

But God doesn't think like we do. When we sin, God will freely pardon. That doesn't make sense to us. In this world, that's not how it works. The Lord declares, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...” God promises that when we turn to him in faith, he forgives our sins for free. Free! You and I don't have to do anything to get this pardon except to believe it. Believe in him. To help us believe all this is true, he gives us the Holy Spirit. That's amazing!

Is this easy to understand? No, but that's okay. God's thoughts are way beyond our thoughts. His thoughts are always perfect and always full of love for us. God's way of doing things is so much better than anything we could imagine. While we may not understand how he can forgive and pardon us for free, it's still true. It's true because of what Jesus has done for us by going to the cross. Paid in full! Thank you, Lord!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for Younger Children**

- What does it mean when someone says, “I forgive you”?
- Why does Jesus forgive you when you sin, when you disobey, or when you hurt someone else?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Think of a time where you did something wrong and you were expecting a parent to give you a significant consequence. Instead they simply said, “I forgive you.” How did that make you feel?
- You and I sin many times every day. Why would God forgive us each time?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Sometimes when we get something for free, we may not see much value in it or we might take it for granted. How is God’s free forgiveness for us different?
- Knowing you are forgiven because Jesus paid for your sins in full, discuss two new ways you might respond when a sibling or a friend does something hurtful to you because you are grateful for God’s forgiveness.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, it can be hard to understand how you could take all the punishment for every sin I have ever made or will ever make. But I believe it! Help me to never forget how much you love and freely forgive me. Help me to share that love and forgiveness with others. In your name I pray. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 391:1,4 – God Loved the World So that He Gave**

God loved the world so that he gave  
His only Son the lost to save  
That all who would in him believe  
Should ever lasting life receive.

Be of good cheer, for God’s own Son  
Forgives the sins that you have done.  
You’re justified by Jesus’ blood;  
Baptized you are a child of God.