

Title: *When Forgiveness Came First*

Main Point: Because Jesus is God, He can forgive sins before people even ask.

Introduction — Walking Through the G.A.T.E.

How do we know if something is truly biblical? With so many voices and ideas about God, how do we test if a teaching is really from Him?

One tool I like to use is walking it through the **G.A.T.E. of Scripture**:

- **G — Did Jesus teach it in the GOSPELS?**
- **A — Did the early church practice it in ACTS?**
- **T — Was it foreshadowed in TYPOLOGY in the Old Testament?**
- **E — Was it confirmed in the EPISTLES?**

If a truth can walk through that gate, you know it's rock solid.

So let's walk the truth of *forgiveness* through the G.A.T.E. — and we'll see that all through the Bible, **forgiveness came first.**

(Transition into Gospels)

I. Did Jesus Teach Forgiveness Before People Asked? — The Gospels

If forgiveness truly comes first, then Jesus' ministry will prove it. And it does — in story after story.


A. The Paralytic — Forgiveness Before the Request (Mark 2:1–12)

The house is packed. Four friends rip open the roof to lower a paralyzed man before Jesus. Dust is falling, people gasp. And before the man can speak, Jesus declares:

"Son, your sins are forgiven you."

He never asked. He never confessed. Jesus acted on their faith.

The religious leaders were furious: *"Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* Exactly — that was the point.

 **Application:** Sometimes your faith carries someone else to Jesus. Who are you bringing to Him in prayer?

B. The Sinful Woman — Forgiveness Before the Explanation (Luke 7:36–50)

A Pharisee's dinner party. A woman with a reputation slips in. She weeps, kisses Jesus' feet, and pours perfume — but never says a word.

And Jesus turns to her and says:

"Your sins are forgiven."

Her tears didn't buy forgiveness — they flowed from forgiveness. She loved much because she had been forgiven much.

💡 *Application:* The more you realize you've been forgiven, the more you'll love Jesus.

C. The Thief on the Cross — Forgiveness Before the Final Breath (Luke 23:39–43)

Picture the scene: a dying criminal nailed to a cross. No baptism. No synagogue. No chance to fix his life. He couldn't kneel, couldn't fold his hands, could barely breathe. All he could say was:
"Lord, remember me."

And Jesus promised:

"Today you will be with Me in Paradise."

💡 *Takeaway:* He couldn't do anything — except believe. And that was enough.

D. Jesus Forgiving His Killers — Forgiveness Before Repentance (Luke 23:34)

As nails pierced His hands and soldiers mocked Him, Jesus prayed:
"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Nobody asked. Nobody repented. Yet forgiveness flowed.

💡 *Truth:* Forgiveness isn't triggered by apology. It flows from God's love.

(Transition to Acts)

So if Jesus taught and practiced forgiveness that came first, what about the church He left behind? Did they preach the same message?

II. Did the Early Church Proclaim It? — Acts

The story of Acts shows forgiveness wasn't something to beg for — it was something the apostles announced as already secured in Christ.

- **Acts 10:43–44** – Peter says, *"Whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."* And before Cornelius or his household could even respond, the Holy Spirit fell. Forgiveness was already theirs.
- **Acts 13:38–39** – Paul boldly declares: *"Through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified."* Forgiveness was announced, not earned.

💡 *Takeaway:* The early church didn't preach, *"Earn forgiveness."* They preached, *"Believe in Jesus' forgiveness."*

(Transition to OT)

But was this a new idea, or had God been hinting at it all along? Let's go back to the shadows and promises of the Old Testament.

III. Was It Foreshadowed in Typology? — Old Testament

Even under the law, God's heart was always forgiveness. Through prophets and promises, He pointed to a day when forgiveness would be final and complete.

- **Jeremiah 31:31–34** – *“I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*
→ Under the old covenant, sins were remembered year after year through endless sacrifices. But God promised a New Covenant where sin would be forgotten forever.
- **Isaiah 43:25** – *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”*
→ Forgiveness flows not from human effort, but God's choice to forget.
- **Ezekiel 36:25–27** – *“I will sprinkle clean water on you... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.”*
→ Forgiveness isn't just pardon — it's transformation. God doesn't just erase sin; He makes us new.

💡 Even in shadows, God was whispering: *“One day, I will take away your sins completely — not because of sacrifices, but because of My Son.”*

(Transition to Epistles)

And when Jesus fulfilled it, the apostles wrote to the churches making it clear: forgiveness is not a goal to strive for — it's a gift already given.

IV. Was It Declared as Finished? — Epistles

- **Colossians 2:13** – *“And you, being dead in your trespasses... He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*
→ Forgiveness happened when we were dead — before we could act.
- **Colossians 1:13–14** – *“He has delivered us... in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”*
→ Forgiveness is present reality, not future hope.
- **Hebrews 10:17–18** – *“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*
→ Jeremiah's promise fulfilled in Christ — final, complete, irreversible.

💡 *Takeaway:* The Epistles confirm what the cross accomplished: forgiveness came first.

V. What These Stories Reveal

- A paralyzed man who never spoke.
- A sinful woman who never confessed.
- A dying thief who could do nothing.
- A violent crowd who never repented.
- A church reminded forgiveness was already theirs.

In every case, forgiveness came first.

So let me ask: Are you still trying to earn what Christ has already given?

VI. Practical Application

- **For the Believer:** Stop trying to earn forgiveness. Live in the freedom Jesus already secured for you.
 - **For the Seeker:** You don't have to clean yourself up first. Just come to Jesus.
 - **For the Church:** Model grace before judgment. Be like Jesus, not Simon the Pharisee.
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Gospel Foundation

- *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8)
 - *“That you may know that you have eternal life.”* (1 John 5:11–13)
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Conclusion — The Full Circle of the G.A.T.E.

So what happens when forgiveness walks through the **G.A.T.E. of Scripture**?

- In the **Gospels**, Jesus forgave before people asked.
- In **Acts**, the apostles proclaimed forgiveness as already secured.
- In **Typology**, the Old Testament promised sins would be remembered no more.
- In the **Epistles**, forgiveness is declared as finished and final in Christ.

Forgiveness is not a prize for good performance. It's a gift that comes first — immediate, personal, and assured.

Will you receive it? Will you stop striving and start resting in the forgiveness that came first?

Today — right now — you can walk out of here forgiven, free, and fully loved.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You that forgiveness comes first. Thank You for the New Covenant promise: *‘I will remember their sins no more.’* Thank You that in Christ this is already fulfilled. Help us live in it, rest in it, and extend it to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.