

Only God's grace, quickening the dead heart of a person, can draw that person to God's grace through faith.

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The publican of old pleaded,

*"... God be merciful to me a sinner."*  
(Luke 18:13)

Have you, in this manner, turned from sin and asked for God's mercy, through Christ?

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(editing by Kathy Boynton)

**WE CAN'T  
EARN  
FORGIVENESS**

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When interacting with people about their eternal welfare, I'm alarmed at the grave misunderstanding embraced by many. The essence of this misunderstanding is that we can earn God's forgiveness.

Folks reveal this misunderstanding in various ways. One lady told me her good church standing, and the kind life she'd lived, would guarantee her place in heaven. Others emphasize that they seek to be honest in dealing with others. Still others mention their many efforts in serving God's kingdom. They contrast themselves to the evil world which has become dishonest, undependable, and perverted.

All of this betrays a failure to understand the following fact. We have all inherited a sin nature from our forefather, Adam. Though, in specific instances, we may resist the most extreme sins, we don't avoid them all. Thus, on judgment day, even one unavenged sin shall render us guilty and condemned before God.

*"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* (James 2:10)

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God brings even our secret thoughts before His scrutiny. Have you ever contemplated a wicked action which you chose to avoid? That wicked thought, itself, renders one guilty. Jesus made this clear when He said,

*"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."*  
(Matthew 5:27-28)

How, then, can anyone be saved? Scripture shows that only Christ was capable of paying the entire penalty to avenge the sins of His people. He did this as He sacrificed Himself on the cross of Calvary, was buried, and rose again.

*"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*  
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Jesus, Himself, said,

*"... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*  
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