

FORGIVENESS

Our assurance that our sins have been forgiven and we have been accepted by God is the first of covenant blessings and the most important in our experience. Without this, we cannot imagine any of the other blessings. This is the kindergarten of the new covenant, yet for multitudes of church members such a joy has not been even sighted.

Knowing this truth is the beginning of the victory in spiritual warfare, for while we are under the condemnation of our sin we are paralyzed before the powers of darkness by our own sense of unworthiness. Until we know the oath of God that He removes sin from us through the covenant blood of Jesus, when we are confronted by our sin, we cannot believe that we are welcome in the presence of God; we may even believe that He has cast us aside. Believing we are unworthy, we are unable to pray, we have no expectancy of being heard, we cannot believe that the promises of God are for us. We cringe under the sense of guilt, and our hands are paralyzed to take the blessings that are ours under covenant. If we begin to feel any sense of acceptance, we are hurled to the ground by Satan, "the accuser of the brethren"; and instead of resisting Him with the truth, we agree with him!

I was raised in a poor family in England. I was born at the end of the Depression, and my introduction to life on the planet was the Second World War. In those days, we knew real poverty.

The English were very aware of class and where everyone belonged in society. The right family, the right school, and wearing the right school tie after graduation, joining the right club, made way for a person not only in the position one held in a job but also the restaurants one could eat in and the pursuits one could follow. There was no sign outside the door of a restaurant to say we couldn't enter; it was simply understood that every Englishman had his place according to his wealth and position, and only gentlemen of the higher class could enter.

All of my aunts were servants in the mansions of the rich and were congratulated for having found such good employment. There was no thought of advancement; being servants was their place in society.

When I said that I wanted to drive a car when I was older, my mother looked horrified: "No, mate. That's not for the likes of us, you'll 'ave a bicycle just like your father." It seemed to me growing up that the places I wanted to go, the things I wanted to do, and the restaurants I wanted to eat in were "not for the likes of us." I was reared in an atmosphere of shame, of the belief that our status in life made us unworthy of anything but the leftovers.

I wrestled with the voice of my mother inside my head for a number of years after I left home and was in ministry. I found that in my mind the English class system spilled over into my walk with God. The favor of God, the rich gifts of the Spirit, and answers to

prayer fell in my mind into the category of “not for the likes of us.” The “likes of me” was not worthy to be so blessed. The basic problem was that I did not truly see with the eyes of my spirit that my sin had been taken away and I was no longer doomed to dwell in the slums of heaven! It took a major revelation of the Spirit that swept my mind clean , followed by much renewing and renovation of my thought patterns, that brought me to see myself as totally forgiven, accepted, and, in Christ, a member of the aristocracy of heaven. All covenant blessings were for the likes of me, for I was in Christ.

I see multitudes of believers who live believing that they are unworthy of the covenant blessings, that they are not really separated from sin -- such blessings are not for the likes of them. If we are unsure of our forgiveness and acceptance, we have a barrier in our minds forbidding us to consider taking all He has purchased for us. We have a self image of unworthiness that holds us in chains and forbids us to take of all the blessings of the covenant.

Faith dares to accept such an unlimited and unconditional acceptance even though to the natural mind it seems illegal and ungodly! When Satan accuses us of past sin, we must hurl the promises of the new covenant, validated by the blood and the oath of God, in his face and deliberately rejoice in the unlimited forgiveness of God.

Taken from The Lost Secret of the New Covenant, Malcolm Smith, Harrison House, Tulsa, OK, 2002.