

Neville Goddard Lecture



You Can Forgive Sin

Neville Goddard Lecture - You Can Forgive Sin 03-29-1963

“You Can Forgive Sin.” That, to most people, will be blasphemy as you will hear later on, quoting from scripture. It is so common among all of us to ascribe our ills and troubles to outward things . . . like the present conditions of the world, to our environment, or simply to things. And these things may be things that are absent from our world, or things we have in our world, but still things, while all along the real cause of our ills is sin. So we are told he was called Jesus because he came to save men from their sins; his only concern was the saving of men from sin.

Now what is sin? Sin means “missing the mark,” missing the road, “missing the goal” in life. If you haven’t a mark you can’t sin. If you have a goal in this world and do not realize it and miss it, then you have sinned. So his purpose is to show man how not to sin in this world. No condemnation. Tell me you sin . . . tell me your goal, and I will tell you God’s word. That is what he said. He has come only to show man how not to miss his objective in this world.

Now we turn to Mark 2:3 . . . or the same thing with a different twist in Matthew 9:2. It is the story of the paralytic. We are told he was preaching the word, that is, the story of salvation, and they brought in a paralytic carried by four men; and seeing their faith, he said to the paralytic: “My son, your sins are forgiven.” (2:5) And scribes sitting around thought in their heart, “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And discerning in their hearts what they contemplated, he said, “Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk?’ So he said to him,

“Take up your bed and walk and go home” and he rose and went on his way. Then we are told, “. . . they were all amazed and glorified God . . .” who had given such authority to men, for it was a man who did it. We are that man. It is to us that this authority to forgive sin has been given. And the world thought they were simply the exclusive power of some being outside of man. Read it in Mark 2 and Matthew 9.

Now what is this ability to forgive sin? We know that “sin” means missing the mark. The one that forgave it called himself, “The Truth.” He said: “I AM the Truth. If you know my word and abide in my word, then you will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) For the whole story begins he was teaching the truth . . . the word. Now, he calls himself “the truth.” If I said to you tonight, what would you like to be in this world? And you name it . . . I would like to be _____ (no matter what it is) and I turned to you and said: You are that, you are it; right now you are it . . . you would say: I AM it? I can’t believe it! Then you are denying the truth. He said: “I AM the Truth” . . . I AM everything in this world; everything man can ever imagine, I AM. So, you imagine what you would like to be. If you cannot remain faithful and loyal to that vision of yourself, then you are sinning. Not to sin is to have a goal. What would it be like? If I remain faithful to that vision as though it were true, no power in this world could stop me from realizing it . . . but no power. I could realize it. How? Don’t ask me. But if it took the entire world of three billion to play parts to aid me in the fulfillment of my vision, they would play it without knowing they had played it. It would make no difference if they knew or did not know. They would have to contribute to the fulfillment of my vision, if I remain loyal to that vision.

So, what would it be like if I were the man I would like to be? If I said to you tonight: is there a man in this room who is rich? And no one said, I AM rich . . . that is not your goal, and if it is, you are missing the mark. If there is a man in this room . . . general man . . . who is known, who is contributing to the world’s good, and no one replies, I AM He, then either it is not your goal . . . or if it is your goal, you are missing it. So the name is “I AM He”, as told in John 8:24: “I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I AM He.” This is not a man talking to me. This is taking place in the depths of the soul of man. If you don’t believe now that I AM the one that I would be, then you are missing your goal and you are sinning. So it does not come from without; it is not caused by anything on the outside at all. My health problems are not caused by conditions and by environment, or anything else; it is caused only by sin . . . and sin is missing the mark. There is only one being . . . one person in the world . . . who can hit that mark, and it is God. God forgives sin, as told us in Isaiah: “I AM the Lord, I AM thy Savior, and there is no other savior.” “I, I AM the Lord,

and besides me there is no savior. No one has formed before me or no one will be formed after me. I AM the Savior.” (Isaiah 43:3; 43:11)

You will be saved from what you are. There is only one being in the world that can save you, and that Being is “I AM.” So, you save yourself. What would it be like were it true . . . if I were now the man or woman I would like to be? Assume it and dare to believe it and walk as though it were true, and no power in this world can stop it . . . but no power! There is no one greater than God. Say, “I AM” . . . that is God. You stand in the presence of a being and because he has a little tag . . . or because he is the Premier of a certain country, or Queen, or President of a certain land, you think he is greater than you are? You are missing the mark. You can’t stand in the presence of anyone who is greater than you, if you know who you are. You are not going to lord it over them, knowing, but no one will be smaller, either . . . all are God. Then you are told to go and tell them. (Ezekiel 3:18, 33:8) . . . “go and tell them. If you do not tell them, and they sin and you do not tell them . . . they will die in their sin, but their blood will be upon your head. If you tell them and they do not repent, they will die in their sin, but the blood will not be upon your head. So tell them.” So Jesus is made to confess that he told them, that the blood might not be upon his head.

I Acts 20:26, 27 Paul makes the confession: “. . . for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” He told them that, that he may not carry that secret to the grave and not share it with the world. So I have told them all, that this is a principle that cannot fail.

Now let us come back to the paralytic. You came here tonight on your own steam, as it were. If I tell you we are the paralytic of scripture, you will be surprised. They were brought into the place by four men. Do you know who the four men are? The ancients always called us by the four senses . . . the four rivers that ran out of Eden. They did not speak of five, they spoke always of four. They joined taste and touch together because they depended upon contact. To taste something or touch something, it must be contacted. But they separated sight, sound, and scent. These three were separate in the great symbolism of scripture. But taste and touch were joined. They called them the four senses, and we came here tonight borne by these four men. I know my bank balance, and in two weeks Uncle Sam wants part of what I earned. I do not even know Uncle Sam. They tell me he exists somewhere, but I do not know where; so I am supposed to pay on the 15th of next month “x” number of dollars. Regardless of how I live, I must save something to pay him. It is the land of Caesar, I am fully aware of that. I

can see my bank balance. I know what it is in my world. I can take my senses and bring it to play on what is taking place.

I was brought here tonight on the shoulders of these men. He tells me: your sins are forgiven, and, walk. How can I do it, knowing what I must pay on the 15th, knowing what I must do between now and the 15th? How will I do it? Your sins are forgiven, but who can forgive but God? Only God can forgive, and God is I AM. All right, I will now see the world as I would see it were it now May 1st and all things behind me, completely paid, paid in full.

Suppose I was unemployed. I was brought here tonight on the backs of these men. I know I have rent to pay and food to buy . . . all of these things . . . and he tells me my sins were forgiven, to rise and take up my bed and walk! How? I was brought in here on the backs of four men and called upon to rise . . . ignore these four and walk on my own steam now. Don't walk based on what the four allow me to see, to hear, and smell, and to be. Walk out of here unaided by these four. Walk on my own. How? I ignore the evidence of the senses. They brought me in here. I completely ignore what they tell me I really have in this world, and I see what I would like to see and assume things are what I would like them to be, and influence every being in the world to play their part to fulfill what I am assuming that I AM in this world. I came in a paralytic, and walk out on my own steam. That is the story.

Every being in the world is called upon to rise and walk out, for he forgives your sin. He comes into the world only to free man of sin, no matter what you have ever done in this world. Don't look back on things as they are; look on things as they ought to be, the man or woman you would like to be, and assume that you are and see that only. And then you will know what it is to forgive sin. Who forgives? God forgives. He forgave you. I assumed. Who assumed? I assumed, that is . . . God. "I AM" is His name. I AM assuming I AM the man I would like to be. That is God. I begin to name it and walk in that state, and that is God. There is nothing but God. Forget what you have done. or what you are seemingly doing, and dream of the man or woman you would like to be and dare to assume you are it.

Now we are told by the great Blake: "The spirit of Jesus is continual forgiveness of sin" . . . forgiveness of sin every moment of time. Tonight when we go into the silence we can sit here for a minute and forgive each other. Suppose I could hear everyone here rise and tell the most fantastic story in the world about themselves or a friend, or a relative . . . or someone. Suppose I, really wanting it to be told from this platform, sit in the silence

and listen to that and that only . . . the most fantastic story in the world that you could tell me individually. If I walk out of here tonight convinced that I heard it and remain loyal to what I have imagined I heard, I must hear it . . . no power can stop it, if I remain loyal. If anyone says it has not worked, I am not asking any questions, but as far as I am concerned, it has worked. I am sure when I know the vision I am holding for you “has its own appointed hour, it will ripen and it will flower. If it seems long in coming, wait. It is sure, it will not be late.” If I actually assume things are as I would like them to be of every being here, and I remain loyal, I either know the story is true or it is false. I know it is true. It can’t fail. There is no power in the world to make it fail.

Another word for sin in the Bible is “trespass.” In our wonderful Lord’s Prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” It is a minor infraction of this principle. “Trespassing” means an individual lapse, a temporary relapse. You and I begin to discuss a personality. What am I doing? He is only in a state. So, I must think he is unemployed when you and I get into the discussion! I discuss a man who is unemployed and we see him as unemployed and begin to say: Well, conditions are bad, or maybe he was not good enough for the job, and you and I are discussing a man that is unemployed and we see only the state. I am trespassing. He is in the state. But I may fall into this little trap. We all do it, every day, all day long.

We read the paper, and a man is called a great man because he happens to be President, or maybe some other person in this world. We read some columnist about him and you are carried away with what the columnist tells us, and suddenly we begin to think as he would have you think, and you are trespassing. “Lord, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” It is a slight departure from our goal. We are moved aside by what we read, or heard, or saw in this world. So, that is trespassing. So, I discuss someone who cannot find the job . . . well, will he qualify? I am asking all these things, and they are irrelevant to this principle. Not with this principle do they have any value whatsoever. What does he want? He wants a job. And how much does he want? He names a figure. Suppose that he had what he wanted . . . then let me assume it is true and I begin to see the world as I would see it for him were it true and feel the joy that would be mine were he now gainfully employed, earning that sort of money. This is either true, or it is false. I tell you: it is true.

If today you and I can say The Lord’s Prayer . . . but really say it . . . and ask forgiveness for our trespasses and let him show mercy for having gotten off the mark as it were. Read the story. He is brought in on the backs of four men. He himself had no faith. But in spite of what they knew, there was still a certain faith, and they brought him into the

presence of God, knowing God could forgive sin. And he said: "Because of your faith" . . . he speaks now to those who brought him; he did not speak to the man at first, then he addresses the paralytic: "My son, your sins are forgiven you." Here, a vicarious faith. So, I can have the faith for you if you do not have it for yourself. You can have it for me if I don't have it for myself. Quite often vicarious faith is easier than the direct faith. If I can turn to you, if you really believe an imaginal act is a fact, and you could actually believe I am now what I would like to be, and although at the moment I doubt and am not faithful, you can say . . . in spite of myself you can pull me out . . . for a minute I would know faith. Those who brought him on their backs showed faith in bringing him into the presence of God. God commended them for their faith. And he turned to the paralytic and said: "My son, your sins are forgiven." Those who heard thought it blasphemy. Who could forgive sin but God alone?

He did forgive sin, for he was the "I AM." "Unless you believe I AM he, you die in your sins." So, I ask you tonight, turn to your neighbor, and maybe you can hear what the other wants and rejoice in their good fortune, and they can rejoice in your good fortune. Actually feel it is true, and see the world as it would be were they what they wanted to be . . . and they will become it.

So, this is the story of our ability to forgive sin. They were afraid when they saw what happened and then they crucified God because he had given such authority to men. We are told: "If you retain it, it is retained. If you release it, it is released." I see a man and judge him by my senses. I retain it. But I could release him by seeing him standing on his own feet and moving in this world in a glorious manner. So the material I formerly would discard as no good, I don't discard anymore. I take it and use it. I take the same man that formerly I would discard and see him as gainfully employed, loved, and loving, and believe that the thing I am seeing for him is true; and to the degree I am faithful to the concept for him, it becomes true in this world.

That is our power. We have power to forgive sin. If you don't have a mark in this world, you can't sin. If hasn't a thing to do with moral issues. No. Do you have a goal? Do you have some objective in this world? Then this is how you realize it. Suppose it were true. In Romans 8:4: ". . . walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Flesh would be my senses. My senses deny that I AM what I would like to be. Let us not walk by flesh . . . let us walk by the Spirit. Spirit is to see it in my imagination as though it were true. Tonight I may go home to find an empty cupboard or a notice at my door: "Tomorrow, or else." It is all right. If I believe what I AM imagining, it would make no difference what threat was given me . . . if I really believed. "Now believe it," we are told.

If you believe it, it will crystallize into fact. It does not really matter what threat at the moment my senses tell me . . . I have to ignore it. I have to ignore the four who brought me in this place. I will not now be borne anymore by these four. I will simply walk by spirit and not by flesh.

So, I ask you to try it. If you try it you can't fail and . . . realizing your objective, may I also ask you to share it with me so that I may tell it to you. [the audience].

About three months ago a man sat in this audience, and he wrote me a sweet, wonderful letter which I received this morning. He expected a big bonus. He had worked hard with all the promise, and one who was never on the job, but by his estimate "one of the girl friends of the boss" . . . she got the big bonus. He, who had done all the work, got practically nothing. So, he and I agreed mentally that he would have the most wonderful job, with more money and everything. This is now going on April. It seemed a long while, but today he is on the job, with more money than he had . . . more than he expected . . . more responsibility and opportunity, and everything. I remained faithful to that letter I knew would come when he would write it. And all I did, I heard him tell me (mentally) what he would tell me were it true, and I never wavered.

So, I only ask you to be as faithful to any imaginal state in this world, no matter what it is. In everyone God resides. Everyone has to say, "I AM." That is God. I AM Einstein, I AM Neville. I AM is God. Neville is a tiny thing resting on the foundation that is God. I AM rich . . . that is a tiny thing on the foundation of God, and God is Infinity, God is Everything. Therefore, whatever you say, before you say it, you say, "I AM" . . . and you listen and you notice the four men who brought him in, brought him in paralyzed. He isn't that at all. But they deny it . . . the four senses are bringing him in and the four senses deny it, the four senses ignore it.

When you call on the name of God, you don't say in the name of God, so-and-so; you ask with the name of God, and to ask with the name of God you say: "I AM wealthy, healthy, secure" . . . then you believe it. If you ask with the name of God and believe it mentally, you will see the world as you have never seen it before you made the claim, and remain faithful to that claim and it must crystallize in your world.

This is this principle and it goes with every being in the world, regardless of nationality or pigment of skin. It is all God. Everyone has to say, "I AM" before he says, "I AM . . . this . . ." "I am a man" . . . you say, "I AM" before you said, "man." "I am American," "I am Indian," "I am Japanese," "I am Chinese." What kind of a being would you like to be? You name it. "I AM" is doing it. Take this fabulous world of ours and take all your dreams

and put them on the only foundation . . . no other foundation than God . . . and God is I AM.

So, the paralytic came here tonight in all of us, and we were borne on the backs of four men, and the four are our four senses: sight, scent, [sound], taste, and touch. Taste and touch are joined into one because they depend on contact. These are the four streams . . . the four rivers of life that come from the Garden of Eden. Any moment of time we are in the presence of I AM! Let him forgive me my sin. I forgive myself by daring to assume I am what I would like to be and assuming that I walk in that assumption and it crystallizes into fact. No power in the world can stop it . . . but none!

When we speak of sin, don't let anyone scare you about sin. He comes to forgive the sinner. His only interest is in the sinner. The so-called moral violations . . . forget it! I do not ask you to violate them, but forget them. Everything will be ironed out. It is my duty. Through the consciousness of Paul, Ezekiel, Jesus . . . "If I don't tell you what I know of God's law, then your sin is upon my head; but if I tell you and you still will not believe me, you will die in your sin, but your blood will not be upon my head." So Paul said: "I will tell them. I have declared the entire counsel of God to them, so I am innocent of their blood." Infinite states. A man falls into a state and so he is in the state, but he is not the state. Take him out of the state by saying while he is in the state: "What would you like?" and he names the state that he would like to enter. And you put him into that state by asking what it would be like if he were now the thing he would like to be; and you remain faithful . . . leaving him where he is . . . but you remain faithful to this concept and he comes out of it. On reflection, he might say: "It would have happened anyway." It is all right . . . you know. Tell everyone the story, and tell them it is entirely up to them. If they believe it . . . as we are told: "If you do not believe I AM He you die in your sins." (John 8) When you read it, you might think a man is telling you: I am God, and you are not. The whole story is taking place in the soul of man. That is the story.

Now he tells us the truth: "You shall know the Truth and the Truth will set you free." And they complained: "we are free." Here they are enslaved, and we thought we were free. We are Americans, we are free. To what extent are we free? You can't pay the rent or buy the food, and we think we are free. I can only be free if I know the art of forgiving sin, and the only one that can forgive sin is God . . . and God's name is "I AM."

In this world today, in our wonderful land, there are hundreds of thousands in prisons physically . . . but they are Americans. There are hundreds of thousands who are unemployed, who can't pay the rent. Free? They are Americans. I say go and tell every

being in the world the story of God . . . as told us in both the Old and New Testament . . . and set them free. They can be free if they know who they are. I must tell them the story. There is not one being in jail tonight, if you ask him who he is and how old he is, he will say: "I am John Smith, and I am . . ." and he will tell you his age. But before all these things, he tells you "I AM." I have seen this, you see. It frightens people, as you are told in Matthew 9:8: "When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men."

In San Francisco, when I told this story, a lady who sat in my audience had just received notice from the army that her brother had been tried, court marshaled, and sentenced to six months of hard labor. She went home and said: "If this man is telling the truth, I can set him free." She sat in her hotel apartment where she would see if anyone came in. She lost herself in the imaginal state that the bell was ringing and she ran down the stairs, threw the door open, and embraced a brother who was waiting there. She did it for one solid week. The next Sunday morning, before she came to my meeting, it happened. When she came to my meeting, she could not restrain the impulse to rise and she jumped up in the audience of 1,000 and said she must tell the story, and she told it. He was honorably discharged, though he had been court marshaled and sentenced to six months at hard labor.

Everyone can be forgiven. He is not the same being he was . . . whatever he did to warrant the court martial . . . why should he pay the last ounce, if she could redeem him by pulling him out of the state that caused him to do whatever he did. If I am pulled out of the state into another state . . . if I had someone tonight who was the most horrible beast in the world and I am determined to make him a loving, nice person, then he comes into my world and demonstrates his kindness by his act, by everything . . . he is not the same being he was when I disliked him . . . the same immortal soul, but he is in a different state. Always I was judging the state, but should I keep him in that state and make him pay a price that belongs only to that state? You see, there is such a thing in this world as God's mercy. No sins can be expiated unless God intervenes and is merciful . . . for you are God and you can intervene. He gave it to you. Only God can forgive sin, and you can forgive sin: therefore, are you not he? God is merciful. Can't you be merciful and completely transform any being in the world? And oh! What a thrill it is to transform a being and see them different in a little while!

So I ask you to try it, it cannot fail. But believe the statement in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses." We have actually trespassed. We have heard a rumor and we got off the beam. We see the signs all over the place: "No Trespassing," but we step

upon it. Don't. No matter what you hear of anyone, have no ears to hear it unless it is something lovely, for they are only discussing a state, and they are keeping that being in a state. Don't listen. Pull everyone out, but don't forget to pull yourself out. Put yourself into the most glorious state of being successful, being wanted, being happy. You try it. I promise you it will not fail you.

Now let us go in to the silence.