

7. Learning Crotchets

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The image shows a musical score for the song 'Jesus has forgiven all my sin cleansed by the blood'. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The lyrics are: 'Je- sus has for- giv- en all my sin cleansed by the blood'. The melody is simple, using only crotchets (quarter notes) and minims (half notes). The bass line is a simple accompaniment of crotchets and minims.

Things to learn:

Notes—crotchet, minim, semibreve

Notes— B C D E F G A B C treble and C, B A, G, F, E, D C bass

School of Grace:

This idea continually challenges us.

We find ourselves saying that even God couldn't forgive that sin. Watch him. He goes and forgives it. We have no problem when it is us, or someone we like. But what about those we don't like.

Our world is continually defining and re-defining who is good and who is bad. Like the movie scripts one needs a strong villain who is defeated by a strong hero. And the movie always has the hero winning in the end. And so we absorb this idea into our society and we look for our villains and heroes.

But grace challenges this notion. I once did a presentation on Mary Queen of Scots and read a book that said that she made a death-bed confession. Now while there is no supporting evidence of the claim it raises a question about grace and forgiveness. Is anyone beyond forgiveness?

What if Mary Queen of Scots had asked forgiveness and God forgave her? What about Hitler? What about Stalin? Napoleon? Name any individual that you think is 'evil' or has done serious crimes and ask what if God forgave that person? What if he forgave the hijackers of 9/11? What if he forgave the mass murderer? What if he forgave the military general who ordered the deaths of thousands?

This notion of unconditional grace and forgiveness challenges us because it takes away our concept of heroes and villains. It actually replaces it with the concept that we are always the villain against God but God sees us, not necessarily as heroes, for we do nothing for him. But that we are still his children and a parent's child is always a hero, even if it is simply the cute little smile they make when they drool.

But there is even another side to this unconditional grace and forgiveness. There is often the expectation that when we join a church we will leave these 'sins' behind and not commit whatever we define as the 'unpardonable sin'. This misconception makes us feel that we have sinned, that we shouldn't have made those mistakes. But even then God still forgives. He will continually forgive. He will continually cleanse. He will continually show mercy towards us.

The point when he cannot do this is when we think we are so perfect that he cannot offer us anything. Unconditional grace and forgiveness comes, not from our doing, our striving, our cleaning up our act. It is being honest that nothing we do can save us and that we depend entirely on God's mercy for salvation.

Thank God he gives it so freely.