

Posthumous Pardon



While performing a concert on March 1, 1969, in Miami, Florida, the legendary Jim Morrison—lead singer of the Doors—allegedly indecently exposed himself and shouted obscenities at the audience. He was charged and convicted of indecent exposure and open profanity. He was fined and sentenced to six months hard labor and a \$500 fine for indecent exposure along with 60 days for profanity, a sentence he never served because he died in 1971 while awaiting his appeal.

Though more than 40 years had passed since Morrison was convicted and sentenced, many of his fans had not forgotten his case and petitioned the governor of Florida to pardon the deceased rock star. Since the singer was dead, it would be a posthumous pardon, meaning “forgiveness or clemency after death.”

On December 8, 2010, one day after Morrison would have turned 67, then Governor Charlie Crist met with the other three members of the Florida Clemency Board to reevaluate Morrison’s case. At the meeting, a unanimous vote granted the deceased rocker a pardon. What good is a pardon after death? He had already been convicted;

it wouldn't change what he had done. Nor was he still alive to enjoy the pardon.

Perhaps you agree with the senselessness of granting forgiveness to a dead person and perhaps you wonder what the point of posthumous forgiveness is. However, there are those who live their lives treating their sin in the same manner. Thus they live carelessly and unconcerned about their sin because they believe that after death they can receive forgiveness. But what does the Bible say? Is there forgiveness of sins after death, or can it only be obtained in life?

Undoubtedly, the Bible teaches us that God is forgiving and that the Lord Jesus Christ did everything necessary to forgive the sinner. The Bible explains, *"without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"* (Hebrews 9.22 ESV). And Christ, referring to His own blood, said that it, *"is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"* (Matthew 26.28 ESV). There is forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, but how and when can you receive forgiveness?

How? Simply by faith in Christ, without doing good works, being baptized, or confessing your sins to another person.

“Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2.7 ESV). Peter said that “everyone who believes in him (Jesus Christ) receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10.43 ESV).

When? The Bible says, *“let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55.7 ESV).* God wants to forgive, but there is a condition, *“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55.6 ESV).* Today, God offers you forgiveness of all your sins through faith in Christ. After death there will be no forgiveness.

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