

Forgiven and Forgiving

Teach Us To Pray #5

August 30, 2015

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

— Matthew 6:9–13

****Opening Prayer**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Carrying unforgiveness is like having on a backpack full of rocks

II. SIN AS DEBT

1. Tim Keller — Most of the wrongs done to us cannot be assessed in purely economic terms. Someone may have robbed you of some happiness, reputation, opportunity, or certain aspects of your freedom. No price tag can be put on such things, yet we still have a sense of violated justice that does not go away when the other person says, “I’m really sorry.” When we are seriously wronged we have an indelible sense that the perpetrators have incurred a debt that must be dealt with.
2. Matthew 18:23-35

Q1. IS MY SIN AGAINST GOD REALLY THAT BAD?

1. Compared against others or a perfectly holy God?
2. Romans 14:23 — For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.
3. Anselm — What is the debt which we owe to God? Every wish of a rational creature should be subject to the will of God.

Q2. WHAT DOES REPENTANCE LOOK LIKE?

1. True repentance includes a broken heart (Psalm 51:3-5)
2. True repentance includes a passion for change (2 Cor. 7:10-11)
3. True repentance includes hope and joy (2 Cor. 7:10)

True repentance also takes into account the great cost of our forgiveness

Q3. WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE?

Wrong forgiveness:

1. Tolerate (Redefine Sin)
2. Pretend (Forgive & Forget)
3. Deny (Toughen Up)
4. Privatize (My Feelings Only)

Real Forgiveness:

1. Acknowledges the reality of the wrong
2. Releases the debt that is owed
 - a. Tim Keller — To refrain from lashing out at someone when you want to do so with all your being is agony. It is a form of suffering. You not only suffer the original loss of happiness, reputation, and opportunity, but now you forgo the consolation of inflicting the same on them. You are absorbing the debt...instead of taking it out of the other person. It hurts terribly. Many people would say it feels like a kind of death. Yes, but it is a death that leads to resurrection instead of the lifelong living death of bitterness and cynicism.
3. Keeps forgiving (Matthew 18:21-22)
 - a. C.S. Lewis — There is no use in talking as if forgiveness were easy...For we find that the work of forgiveness has to be done over and over again. We forgive, we mortify our resentment; a week later some chain of thought carries us back to the original offence and we discover the old resentment blazing away as if nothing had been done about it at all. We need to forgive our brother seventy times seven not only for 490 offences but for one offence.
4. Forgives, even if unasked for (Romans 5:8)
5. Allows for consequences

The Forgiveness of God

On the cross:

1. The gravity of sin is felt, is displayed. No minimization, no exaggeration.
2. The debt is absorbed by God himself.
3. Forgiveness is applied, but also keeps on going

4. God loved us *before* we ever repented
5. Allows for consequences in life. Coming to Jesus doesn't automatically take away all harmful effects of our sin.

Q4. IF I'M ALREADY SAVED, WHY DO I NEED TO REPENT?

1. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance (Matt. 3:8)
2. We all stumble in many ways (James 3:2)
3. We are "being transformed" into the image of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18)
4. We all have remaining sin (1 John 1:9)

Q5. WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL FORGIVEN?

Just like giving forgiveness is a process, often so is receiving it. You must keep fighting to believe the truth of God's word, keep living as a forgiven person, let it go deep in your heart.

1. You may not be forgiven
2. You may have an idol in your heart
3. You may be letting experience trump God's word
4. You may be repenting for the wrong sin - arrogance

Q6. IS MY FORGIVENESS CONTINGENT?

1. Yes and no. One of those tensions that we have to live with
2. No — we are saved by a sheer act of God's grace. It is not through any "works" that we can do, and our salvation, our forgiveness is a gift from God. Eph. 2:8
3. Yes — If we are unwilling to forgive others, it shows that we don't truly have a repentant heart. It shows that we think we deserve the forgiveness we've received. Matt. 18:35
4. Our forgiveness of others will show if we really understand the forgiveness we've received.

SO, WHERE ARE YOU AT TODAY?

1. Do you have perspective?
2. Process (Matthew 18:21-22)
3. Are you keeping short accounts?

“Jesus paid it all” is big enough to cover not just the debt we owe to God, but also the debts we owe to one another.

CALL TO RESPONSE

1. Financial Giving

2. Discussion Questions:

1. How does the Lord's prayer define sin? Why is this metaphor important?
2. Why is it important that Christians still practice repentance even after becoming a Christian?
3. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Why can unforgiving Christians rightly be called hypocrites?
4. What can we do to move toward forgiveness when the sin is very serious? How can we help one another grow in forgiveness?

3. Prayer Points

1. Pray personal prayers of repentance for areas of sin, passivity, or hard-heartedness toward God.
2. Pray prayers of forgiveness for those who may have hurt you, or for those you have been holding unforgiveness toward.
3. Pray that many non-Christians would come to know the joy of repenting of their sins and receiving God's grace

4. Communion & Singing

5. Prayer Team