



WEEK 5: FORGIVEN FORGIVERS

TEXT: MATTHEW 6:1-13

Introduction:

Whenever we turn to prayer we should be mindful that we are talking to our father, who is in heaven. We are coming to our 'papa' who cares for us immensely and knows what is best for us. In addition our attitude ought to be one of reverence for he is holy. This week we continue that sentence "*give us this day our daily bread*" with a conjoining word "and" which is followed by "*forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*" That word "and" indicates that as we ask for daily bread, we need to daily ask for forgiveness and daily forgive others.

1. WE NEED FORGIVENESS

"...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" Matthew 6:12

Forgiveness is the bridge between sinful man and a holy God. God provides us with forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus. We all need forgiveness because:

- We have all sinned against God (*Romans 3:23*)
 - Sin has separated us from God
 - Sin is a moral and spiritual disease
 - Sin is our spiritual debt to God
 - God is holy
 - A holy God cannot be in relationship with sinful men
 - A holy God cannot tolerate wrongdoing
 - He cannot approve of evil (*Habakkuk 1:13*)
- ❖ Q: Why is forgiveness from God critical to our relationship with him?
- ❖ Q: Why is forgiveness critical to our relationships with others?
- ❖ Q: When last did you hold onto unforgiveness, that then turned into bitterness, and what impact did it have on your relationship with that person, as well as on your own mental health?

2. WE ARE FORGIVEN

"...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" Matthew 6:12

We are justified by God, when we put our faith in the finished work that Jesus did on the cross for our sins (Ephesians 1:7 & 2 Corinthians 5:17). Being justified means that as the judge, God declares us not-guilty because Jesus took our guilt on himself, and paid the price on our behalf. So, we are considered not-guilty, regardless of how we feel. Part of the reason we often feel so guilty is because though we are forgiven, we continue to mess up and sin, which affects our joy and intimacy in our relationship with the Lord. Instead of running away from God, we should run to him, confessing our sins to him, knowing that he will forgive us. '*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*' (John 1:9). Though we are forgiven by God for our sin, confessing sin and seeking to turn away from it, back into God's presence restores our relationship with him, and he accepts us willingly when we do.



We confess our sins to the Lord because:

- *We know that God is going to give us a gracious and forgiving reception*
- *It is a sign of humility*
- *It is for our JOY*

- ❖ Q: Why do you think that we feel so guilty when we sin, even though we know that God is willing and able to forgive us?
- ❖ Q: Why do we need to confess our sins to God when we have already been justified through faith in Christ?
- ❖ Q: Why is our continual confession of sin to God a sign of humility?

3. FORGIVENESS IS PERSONAL AND PLURAL

“...and forgive US our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” Matthew 6:12

Jesus did not just pay “my” debt; he paid for the sin of the whole church (all people of God throughout history). At times it’s necessary for a body of believers to confess its collective sin. It is in that place of repentance that our joy as a body is continually restored.

- ❖ Q: Why is it important to notice that our confession and forgiveness is not just something we do individually?
- ❖ Q: What is the benefit of corporate/communal confession and repentance?
- ❖ Q: Are there any sins that we as a Gospel Community are guilty of, and therefore call us to communal confession and repentance? (These can be sins of commission or omission. E.g. what have we neglected? Where have we failed God and each other?)

4. FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE OTHERS

“...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” Matthew 6:12

One of the signs of Christian maturity is the ability to forgive others as God has forgiven us. All of us love the sound of forgiveness, but only when we are the ones who need it. When someone has wronged us, we struggle to forgive them, and instead our inclination is to make them pay for what they have done to us – “sweet revenge”. When a person sins, someone always pays the price for it. When we choose to forgive someone for sinning against us, we are choosing to pay the price for their wrong-doing, and we let them go free. We know that we have truly forgiven that person when we no longer hold bitterness in our hearts towards them. This does not mean that what they did was right, or that it did not affect you. But it releases them from it, which makes restoration between you and God possible. There may even be times when the person cannot or will not ask for forgiveness, but we need to still forgive them, because God has forgiven us. We should at the same time be mindful that our own words and actions towards others have potentially damaging consequences to their lives, as theirs have on us. None of us are beyond hurting others.

Some of us struggle with forgiveness, for a variety of reasons:

- We have not yet been forgiven by God
- We cannot seem to forgive others because we do not believe we have been forgiven ourselves
- We have a hard time forgiving because we have forgotten what Christ has done for us



The only way that we can really forgive people, is to reflect on what Christ has forgiven us for. People who have been given grace are able to authentically give grace.

- ❖ Q: Do you find it easy/really difficult to ask for forgiveness? Explain why.
- ❖ Q: Why is it so hard for us to forgive people?
- ❖ Q: When last did you choose to count the cost for someone's sin, and what was the benefit of doing so?
- ❖ Q: Why is it impossible to really comprehend God's grace, and still hold bitterness in our hearts towards someone who has hurt or wronged us?

Personal Reflection Q: Who do you need to forgive and set free?

5. FORGIVEN FORGIVERS ARE RECONCILERS

- Read 1 Corinthians 5:17

When we forgive, we become reconcilers. When we realise our own need for forgiveness and embrace the fact that God has absorbed our debt, then we will be able to bring the good news of God's forgiveness to all the broken and hurting people around us.