

Learning from the Sermon on the Mount #24
“The Correct Attitude for Prayer: Forgiving”
Message Notes, August 1, 2021

Matthew 6:9-13 NIV

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)’

■ **What is “debt”?**

1. **Debt** (Greek) *opheilêma*: a debt, a required duty, figuratively, the word translated as “sin” (*hamartia*): off target, warped are closer to expressing that intent. In the biblical context, human being, without exception, carry some type of spiritual debt.
2. **The influence of debt**: regardless of our awareness, we are all subject to the effects of our indebtedness. Often it takes the form of guilt and inferiority complexes that bind us and makes our lives feel constricted despite the freedom we have been given.
3. **Example**: When asked if a woman said to be caught in adultery should be stoned, Jesus said a) no one is righteous enough to judge others (hidden guilt often motivates people to judge others), b) people should not judge others for their failures, but take the opportunity for self-reflection (i.e., remembering and being thankful for being a forgiven sinner) John 18:1-11

■ **Why do we pray for forgiveness?** Are we not forgiven for our past and future wrongdoing through the cross of Jesus?

✧ If you have already been forgiven, then there is no need to pray, right? There may also be things that we have done without realizing or remembering them. If we must pray for everything to be forgiven, isn't it impossible? In spite of that, do we still have to pray?

1. **We commit wrongdoing daily**: Even if we say that all our sins are forgiven, we still make new mistakes (owe a debt) every day, so even if we know we are forgiven, we are still bound by guilt. We pray for release and to move forward in our lives.
John 13:9-10 ⁹“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” ¹⁰ Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”
2. **Don't be afraid**: It is not necessary to face things about which you are currently unaware. Don't be fearful, live confidently.
1 John 3:20 If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.
3. **The Bible will teach us when we need to know: John 16:8** When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement. Then, when we become aware, we pray for forgiveness:
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

■ **Even though I pray, I don't feel forgiven**

1. **My heart does not feel what my head knows**: I've made mistakes and prayed for repentance, but I don't feel like I've been forgiven. This is because although I feel bad, I doubt my repentance, thinking that I will make the same mistake again. Rather than being truly repentant, I am afraid that if I don't pray for repentance, I will be punished or judged by God. In other words, how can we break through the reality that we are only offering token prayers for forgiveness?

2. **Consider to whom I am praying:** He is not a distant, cold God. He is like a gentle "father" who continues to love me as a child.
 - Did the father of the prodigal son accept his son because the son repented? Or did he forgive him regardless?
 - Imagine the father running up to his son, hugging him, and kissing him even when he was still far away.
 - You are not forgiven based on the condition of your prayer of confession. So, how can we get closer to God?
 - Being pampered by God (?) Have you ever been pampered by God? For what reason is it hard for you to accept his pampering? Fear? Shame?

■ **What should I do?**

1. **What does "as we have forgiven" mean?**

- X He does not say, "because you have forgiven." E.g. "Forgiving to receive forgiveness" Amish
- X He does not say, "based on the fact that you forgive."
- O Because I have experienced the Lord's forgiveness, I must forgive, and it is natural (expected)
- If I feel an unwillingness to forgive, it means that I have not truly experienced forgiveness.
- Ex. Matthew 18:21-34 A man who was forgiven a debt of 10,000 talents (\$2 billion) turned around and threw in jail a friend who owed him 100 denarii (\$10,000)
- Forgiveness (Greek) *aphiême* means entrusting the wrongdoing to God, letting go of it, not condoning it. In other words, leaving it with God and not being bound by it any longer. It is the difference between "what can be changed and what cannot be changed"

2. **Forgiveness is the barometer of the heart**

- The extent to which we have received God's forgiving love can be seen by whether or not we have forgiven others.
- Martin Lloyd-Jones
"Pray to God and say, "Forgive me O God as I forgive others because of what Thou hast done for me. All I ask is that Thou should forgive me in the same manner; not to the same degree, because all I do is imperfect. In the same way, as it were, as Thou hast forgiven me, I am forgiving others. Forgive me as I forgive them because of what the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has done in my heart."

3. **To what extent are you forgiven?**

- Is there someone in your life you cannot forgive? If there is, has it damaged you more than what God has forgiven you? Or do you have no real sense of God's forgiveness?
Luke 10:20 "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
- Jesus is saying here that if there is someone that you cannot forgive, use that situation as an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of your own forgiveness. What does it mean for you as you look back now and "rejoice that your name is written in heaven"?
- We don't really understand the extent to which we have been forgiven. How can we have a deeper appreciation of this reality?