



FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

This is part 7 of the PrayER – Learning From Jesus How To Pray sermon series

SUMMARY

God knew that as we make our way through life that there would be certain elements and circumstances that would come into our life that were simply greater than we are. His solution to the problems of our life was to make Himself and His resources available to His people. The means by which we can tap into the presence, the provisions, and the power of God is prayer, and yet, most of prayer lives are struggling to show any signs of life. In this series of thoughts, we are taking our prayer life to the emergency where we will learn from the Great Physician how to pray.

REVIEW

In this study, we're journeying through the model prayer and we're discovering how to pray. So far, we've considered the following:

We looked at the phrase "...Our Father which art in Heaven..." and we found that when we pray, we should pray according to our **ADOPTION**, according to our Father's **AUTHORITY**, and according to a right **AFFECTION**.

We looked at the phrase "...Hallowed be thy name...." and we found that our prayers should consist of two parts: the **VERTICAL** part (our relationship with God) and the **HORIZONTAL part** (our relationship with the world around us). Prayer is more than just a way for us to **GET**

SOMETHING FROM GOD; prayer is a way for us to **GIVE SOMETHING TO GOD**. We give God glory when we recognize the holiness of God when we enter into His presence.

We looked at the phrase “...*Thy kingdom come...*” and we found that it is an expression of the heart that desires for the **WORD** of God and the **WORK** of God to become a reality.

We looked at the phrase “...*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven...*” and we found that the goal of our prayer life must be our surrender to the Lord’s will. There is nothing that we **WANT** that is more important than God’s **WILL** for our life – **NOTHING!**

This marked a shift in the model prayer from the vertical (our relationship with God) to the horizontal (our relationship with the world around us). We found that the latter portion of this model prayer is focused on the needs of our life: our **PROVISIONS**, our **PARDON** (forgiveness), our **PROTECTION**, and our **PRAISE-GIVING**.

We looked at the phrase “...*Give us this day our daily bread...*” and we found that God is a good God and that He is ready and willing to give good things to His children. He cares about the **DESIRES** of our heart, He cares about the details of our life, and He cares about the day-to-day needs of our life (physically and spiritually), and we should bring **ALL** of them to Him in prayer.

MESSAGE

Matthew 6:9-15 says, “*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*”

If you’re in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I’d like to draw your attention to verse 12 where the Bible says, “*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*”

For a few moments, I’d like to consider this thought: **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.**

As we continue forward in the model prayer, we come to the very reason why this prayer cannot be referred to as the Lord’s prayer. Why? Because we’re dealing with the issue of sin in the life of the one praying. Many times, Jesus prayed, “*Father, forgive them,*” but He never once prayed, “*Father, forgive Me.*” Why? Because He did not need forgiveness of sin. He never once committed a single sin. Our sins were placed on Jesus while He was on the cross of Calvary paying for our sins, but He was never a participant in sin.

Not only is this a portion of this prayer that Jesus could never, and that Jesus did not ever, pray, but it is also portion that we struggle to pray as we ought. One preacher said it this way: “While “...*Thy will be done...*” might be the most **DIFFICULT** portion of this prayer to pray, “...*Forgive us*

our debts, as we forgive our debtors..." is the most **CONVICTING** portion of this prayer to pray." And he's right, but why? Well, I think its convicting for two reasons:

- (1) To pray this prayer is to acknowledge personal participation in things that we ought not participate in (We've done something that we shouldn't have done).
- (2) To pray this prayer is to acknowledge the lack of personal participation in things that we ought to participate in (We didn't do something that we should have done).

Jesus is teaching us that our prayer life is not simply the **EXPRESSION** of what is going on in our life, nor is our prayer life simply **ENTREATING** God for things that we want or need. Our prayer life is to be much more than that. It is first and foremost to be an **EXAMINATION** of what is going on in our mind, in our heart, and in our life and whether or not those things match up with what is pleasing to the Lord.

As we journey along on the Christian life, we find that while bread is necessary for our physical life, forgiveness is just as necessary for our spiritual life. **WE NEED TO BE FORGIVEN**. Now, when we think about forgiveness, we need to understand that there are two types of forgiveness: (1) there is **POSITIONAL** forgiveness and (2) there is **PRACTICAL** forgiveness.

Positional forgiveness has to do with our **RELATIONSHIP** with God while practical forgiveness has to do with our **FELLOWSHIP** with God.

Positional forgiveness takes place the very moment that we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Saviour from our sins (In that moment, the sufficient payment of Jesus' blood was applied to my life and all of my sins - past, present, and future - have been completely forgiven), while practical forgiveness is something that needs to take place in our life on a daily basis. Why? Because even though we're saved from our sins, we still sin...daily.

1 John 1:9 says it this way, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

While I am grateful that I have a loving and forgiving heavenly Father, I am troubled personally by the fact that I need forgiveness for so many things on a daily basis.

Now, throughout the New Testament, we find that there are a variety of debts that we need forgiveness for. I'll refer to these debts as **UNINTENTIONAL** debts, **INTENTIONAL** debts, and their **NEGLIGENT** debts.

Unintentional debts are sins that are committed in the heat of the moment. It slipped. It wasn't something that I meant to do, but in the midst of all the motion and the emotion it happened. Now, that isn't an excuse. Sin is sin regardless of how it happened in our life, and all sin needs to be repented of and confessed to a holy God, but sometimes the old me shows up before I can stop him.

Intentional debts are sins that are committed on purpose. They are premeditated - thought on, thought through, and thought out. "I knew that it was wrong, and yet, I decided to do it anyway." By the way, we're all guilty of them. The writer of the book of Hebrews referred to them as our "...besetting sins..."

Negligent debts are things that we are supposed (commanded) to do but didn't. These are daily duties that we have a responsibility to do, but for whatever reason, we didn't. In the past, these debts were referred to as sins of omission.

James 4:17 says, *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*

Now, this type of sin is divided into two categories: First, negligent debts in our relationship with God, and then, negligent debts, in our relationships with others.

We're to seek first the kingdom of God.

We're to be good stewards of all the resources that God has given to us.

Men, you are to love your wife as Christ loved the church and give yourself up for her.

Ladies, you are to love and respect your husband even when he doesn't desire.

Young children are to obey their parents in the Lord and older children are to honor their parents in the Lord.

Did you pray without ceasing this last week?

Did you rejoice in every season of this last week?

Were you not anxious about anything this past week because you cast every single care on the Lord and trusted Him completely to work everything out for good.

Have you forgiven everybody that has wronged you this past week the way that Christ has forgiven you?

These debts are areas where we have made the decision to rob God of what rightfully belongs to God, but there are also duties that God has commanded us to do towards others as a proper representative of Him.

Colossians 3:12-13 says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Ephesians 4:31-32 says, *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Sin hinders our fellowship with God, but sin also hinders our function before the Lord, and what we need is for God to forgive us (give us a clean slate) so that we can get out of our life that which hinders our fellowship with God and that which gives a poor representation of the forgiveness and love of God.