

Weaving the Word

As We Forgive

Part 40 – August 2, 2015

Welcome to where we're counting the cost to follow the One who paid the price!



We're going through the Lord's Prayer Guide.

Last week was: "Forgive us our debts"

This week is: "as we forgive our debtors"

This comes just after Jesus tells His newly appointed apprentices to *"Love your enemies ... and lend to them without expecting to get anything back."* (Luke 6:35)



Ever feel incapable of forgiveness?

You try to forgive, for real, from the heart, like Jesus, but when you spot the *wrongdoer* or remember their *wrongdoing*, you're hit with a fresh wave of anger, resentment, or anxiety.

So, did it not work? **Did your forgiveness not take?**



Is God's expectation unrealistic?

This is no trivial matter: "Forgive us our debts" has that unnerving clause: "As we forgive our debtors", i.e. those who owe us ... *whatever: apology, acknowledgement, remorse, repentance, restitution, etc.*

It's the only line in the prayer guide with a condition.

FYI: some Bibles omit *"For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."* That's because it's not in the earliest known manuscripts (copies of the Bible). We'll deal with that another day; so, don't let it throw you.

Jesus knew His boys would most likely overlook that condition.

So, watch how He declares the clause the moment He closes.

*"Forgive us our debts, **as we also have forgiven our debtors.** 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.* For **if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.** But **if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**"* – Matthew 6:12-15 NIV

So, where's that leave us if our forgiveness doesn't "take"?

Unforgiven.

What?! We have to *earn* our forgiveness? Work for our *salvation*?! No.

"Forgive us our debts" is a daily confession, of the daily dirt that soils and muddies-up our harmony and intimacy with our Father.



Our salvation debt is paid in full the moment we receive it.

By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever ... – Hebrews 10:14a NIV

And, our daily debts are deleted the moment we confess 'em.

... those who are being made holy. – Hebrews 10:14b NIV



And, I highly recommend *not using* God's grace as a license to sin.

If we **deliberately keep on sinning** after we have received the knowledge of the truth, **no sacrifice for sins is left**, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. – Hebrews 10:26-27 NIV



To **"deliberately keep on sinning"** is in contrast to sins committed **inconsiderately, ignorantly or in weakness; and sins that produce no Godly sorrow and regret, or any attempt to repent.**

If you're afraid this might be you, that's pretty much the proof that *it isn't*. If it *was*, you wouldn't care less. Nevertheless, **after Jesus washes away our sin, we're soon leaving dirty footprints.**



Remember Jesus washing His disciples' feet? And Peter said, **"You shall never wash my feet,"** and Jesus said, **"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me,"** and Peter said, **"Not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"**

Jesus answered, "A person **who has had a bath** [the one-time cleansing that comes only from Christ] needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." [He's referring to Judas (John 13:11)] – John 13:10 NIV

A clean body and dirty feet was a fact of life.

[Afterwards, Jesus said] "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. [Including your Judases] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." – John 13:14-15 NIV

"Forgive us our dirty feet as we forgive the dirty feet of those who trespass against us, and walk on us, and trample over us."



He doesn't expect *perfection*, but He does expect *practice*.

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who **practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous; the one who **practices sin is of the devil** ... – 1 John 3:7-8a NAS

After Jesus says to ask our Father to “Forgive us our debts”, we’re asked, as God’s children, to practice forgiving *our* debtors.

Brilliant! By simply practicing what He preached our heart will soften.

After personalizing this portion of the Lord’s Prayer Guide, by pouring out our own dirty debts, and asking for our Father’s grace and mercy and forgiveness, we *then* pray, “As we forgive our debtors.” And, pause. And ... *how can we not ... after receiving so much?!*

It’s like the parable of **The Unmerciful Servant**, who is forgiven a debt of billions by the king, and then refuses to forgive one who owed *him* ten thousand. (Mat 18:21-35) **It isn’t that the amount he was owed was insignificant, but that it was insignificant compared to the amount he was given.**

“But I’ve tried, and it doesn’t take!”



Ever heard the expression: ***“Practice, practice, practice”?***

You shoot the ball till it goes in the hoop.

You don’t give up and say *it didn’t take!*

Ever heard the expression: ***“Practice makes perfect”?***

Not in this case! Perfect makes practice! By one sacrifice He’s made you *perfect forever*. Clean as a whistle!



Embracing our “bath” empowers us to *practice, practice, practice!*

Even as He hung, suffering, at the hands of His enemies ...

Jesus said, ***“Father, forgive them ...”*** - Luke 23:34a NIV

Wow! **We’ve been spectacularly *forgiven* on the cross!** Yet, we can be **ridiculously *unforgiving* in spite of it.** But, **to remain unforgiving is to *not fully take seriously* or solemnly the enormity of our sin, His sacrifice, and my gratitude;** because, **our forgivingness is an expression of our gratefulness.**

We love because he first loved us. **[In fact]** If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. – 1 John 4:19-20a NIV

So, don’t lie to yourself; **withholding forgiveness is *hate*.**

“But, hate is exactly what my wrongdoers deserve!”

Yes. *I agree!* But so did we. *Especially that Judas!* **Your wrongdoers *don't* deserve your forgiveness ... *Jesus does!* Forgiveness is worship! Forgiveness is praise!**

Questions is: **Am I *grateful enough* to forgive my debtors?**

To err is human, and to forgive divine. *Literally.* It's *of God.* So, He empowers us by His Spirit when we do our part. *Which is?* Focusing on the forgiveness we receive. "Forgive us **our** debts." Pause. Personalize. "As **we** forgive ..." You see, **being forgiving is a function of being forgiven.**

Just as hurt people hurt people, forgiven people forgive people.

This doesn't mean we downplay or excuse whatever they did; just the opposite. **We *face* the truth and confront ... *with compassion.* Forgiveness, doesn't minimize sin, it *neutralizes* it.**

And, **it doesn't mean we *forget* what they did.** Just the opposite; **we learn to live with our painful memories.** And *that takes practice.* We have to put into practice what forgiveness *really is.*

Forgiveness is surrender. You surrender your desire to get even.

Forgiveness is trust. You trust that your Father is perfectly just.

Forgiveness is ongoing.

Just as you rehearse a grudge over and over, you must practice releasing it over and over.



We forgive the offense, and then re-forgive the wave of pain whenever it threatens to overwhelm us.

Forgiveness is freedom!

Resentment always robs us of our peace and joy.

Do you know the two greatest barriers to peace and joy?

Guilt and resentment.

Guilt comes from what we do to others.



Last week I compared it to a warning signal. And, **the only true fix is to sincerely confess our sin and receive *forgiveness.***

Well, **resentment comes from what others do to us.**

And, **the only true fix is to sincerely profess our pain and *offer forgiveness.***

So, **the very best way we can ever pray for peace and joy,** is to sincerely say, "**Forgive us our debts**" ... "**as we forgive our debtors**". And then, of course, **pause** and **personalize.** And *then,* say "Goodbye" to guilt and resentment. And *then,* say "Hello" to peace and joy.