

## Matthew 6 :12&14 “This Terrible Petition”

“**PRAY!** [Matthew 6 verse 8](#) Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. <sup>9</sup> In this manner, therefore, pray: *Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> **AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.** <sup>13</sup> *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

<sup>14</sup> “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**Forgive:** To grant free pardon for; or remission of debt. "Let go of the anger, disappointment and hurt"

[Matthew 18 verse 21](#) Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

**RABBI JOSE BEN HANIANA** says “He who begs forgiveness from his neighbor must not do so more than 3 times”

**RABBI JOSE BEN JEHUDA** “If a man commits an offense once, forgive him; if he commits an offense a second time, forgive him; if he commits an offense a third time, forgive him, the fourth time... do not forgive him. Peter knew the standards of the religious elite... so he wants to impress his Rabbi. He starts with 3 doubles it and adds one for good measure. Peter you rock!

**Of course Jesus responds with 70 x’s 7.** No way 490 times in one day!!!  
**Maybe Jesus was telling us that our heart for forgiving should exceed someone’s ability to sin against us.**

Jesus as He so often did further illustrates with the Parable of unmerciful servant. He brings alive to Peter the forgiving heart of God.

One man owed the King 2 million dollars... begged for time and forgiveness... King was moved with mercy and forgave all his debt... The one who was forgiven so much left and found a fellow countrymen and demanded payment of the \$20 owed to him. The guy who just was forgiven 2 million dollars would not forgive 20 bucks...

**We pick up the story in Matthew 18:31** *So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.<sup>32</sup> Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.<sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'<sup>34</sup> And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.<sup>35</sup> "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*

James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Forgiveness demonstrates whether we have been forgiven.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

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**WOW! THIS IS HEAVY!** St. Augustine called this request "**the terrible petition**" because he realized that if we pray "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" with an unforgiving heart, we are actually asking God not to forgive us, **for "debts" here really means "sins."** "Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us." Jesus does not want anyone to misunderstand here, so he states it categorically in verses 14-15: "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."

Up to this point almost everything Jesus has shared has been contrary to the teachings of the day. While the Pharisees and scribes had taught forgiveness is given **“with limits”** others taught the necessity of forgiveness. Shocking as Jesus’ words are, they are really nothing new but common to Jewish understanding.

Ecclesiasticus is a work from the early 2nd century B.C. (approximately 200-175 B.C.) written by the [Jewish](#) scribe [Jesus ben Sirach](#) of [Jerusalem](#). The author of Ecclesiasticus, The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, says, “Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.” Then to drive home his statement, he asked **three** questions:

1. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet seek for healing from the Lord? The unspoken answer is, **“Absurd!”**
2. Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins? **“Absurd!”**
3. If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make expiation for his sins?

Thomas Watson, the great Puritan, said, “A man can as well go to hell for not forgiving as for not believing.” And Charles Spurgeon stated, “Unless you have forgiven others, you read your own death-warrant when you repeat the Lord’s Prayer.”

**And in our own time C. S. LEWIS WROTE:** “No part of His teaching is clearer: and there are no exceptions to it. He doesn’t say that we are to forgive other people’s sins provided they are not too frightful, or provided there are extenuating circumstances, or anything of that sort. We are to forgive them all, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated. If we don’t, we shall be forgiven none of our own.”

**“THE TERRIBLE PETITION?”** only if one holds unforgiveness in their hearts.

**HUGHES SAYS THIS.** “Sometimes our unforgiving hearts make our prayers die on our lips. The Lord’s Prayer can then be nothing more than a self-inflicted

curse – a prayer of doom instead of blessing, for if we pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” with unforgiving hearts, we are asking God not to forgive us!

**GRUDGES, BITTERNESS UNFORGIVENESS...** termites eating away at our character, **suppressing the fruits of the Holy Spirit...** love is gone, joy dissipates, peace comes infrequently, patience morph’s into agitation, kindness has a harsh edge to it, goodness erodes and self control is lost to disorder of the mind. Then comes depression as an unforgiving, offended self turns inward. Spiritual death awaits those who do not forgive.

Oh this this fifth petition can be a “**terrible**” one if not heeded to.

*Before you languish in despair...* There may be some who have been **RECENTLY** offended and are still in emotional shock and so have not been able to properly respond with forgiveness.

We are not talking about people who are struggling with forgiveness. It is those who have **no desire to forgive** who are in soul danger.

The one who has no desire to pardon his former business associate... The one who nourishes hatred, cherishes animosities, revels in malice. Refusal to forgive that Father who terribly wronged you... Even the spouse who cheated on you needs to be forgiven... **for you are the prisoner that needs to be set free**

**The point is:** If we are Christians, we **CAN** and **MUST** forgive!

The fact that you have forgiven and continue to forgive is a sign of grace.

As we pray... <sup>12</sup> **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.** with prayerful insight God the Holy Spirit will honor and melt away the pain of unforgiveness.

So this prayer teaches that we are to engage in daily, ongoing confession of sin. In fact, to do so is a sign of spiritual maturity and health.

First, we are to ask God to forgive us.

The second thing this fifth petition tells us to do is to forgive those who have wronged us.

**[Ephesians 4:32](#)** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

When people fail, don't rub it in. Rub it out. Forgive them.

Are there people you need to forgive?

So may you forgive as you've been forgiven, may you give to others what's been given to you, may you set someone free and find out that it was you, and may you do it today, because you might not have the chance tomorrow and not doing so is a "terrible" thing.

We are never closer to God, or more like God, than when we forgive! When we forgive, we are like the Father and like the Son, who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." ([Luke 23:34](#)). We say "TO ERR IS HUMAN," and that is true. But the last part of that truth is, "to forgive is divine," and so it is.

You are never more beautiful or noble or healthy than when you forgive, for then you are like Jesus.



of Matthew West "Forgiven"

Pastor Brian and the team sing "Forgiven"

I need forgiveness. Apart from God's forgiveness heaven is out of my reach. And that's why I need to forgive. Can I deny you my forgiveness, when God forgives me so freely?

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