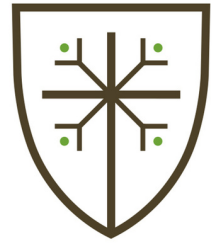


# SERMON NOTES



## The Lord's Prayer *Fall Sermon Series*

October 29, 2023

### SERMON INFO

#### TITLE

"Forgiveness from the Heart"

#### PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

#### TEXTS

Proverbs 17:9-14

Colossians 3:12-17

Matthew 6:9-15; 18:23-35

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What are ways in which the practice of forgiveness can be formed in us despite a culture that is moving further and further away from it?

#### God's Expectation

The King in our parable asks "Should you not have had mercy on him as I've had on you?" It's important to grasp that this is not a relationship of exchange – if we forgive, God forgives. God's forgiveness to us and our forgiveness to others are connected because God's forgiveness, when truly received, should restructure our very hearts and change our nature. It should move us beyond anger to love and forgiveness. When you truly believe and receive God's forgiveness, you will have mercy on others. It can't not restructure your heart.

Every instance of forgiveness involves a cost that is absorbed. Forgiveness is not making others pay for the wrongs done to you by them. It absorbs the cost. Justice without forgiveness, without a gospel of absorption, only hardens hearts. Jesus absorbed, took on to himself the just anger of God, so that he could be long-tempered and forgiving with us. Such is his infinite and unimaginable love for us and his desire to do so.

We are able to forgive by drawing on the very nature of God in which we partake through Christ. As Christians, we absorb because we can. But we must begin with God. If you begin by simply confessing your sins, it will crush you. But if you begin with praise, with who God is, it will unburden you.

### SERMON IN SUMMARY

How do we even begin to forgive? As Tim pointed out in this week's sermon, our culture is one that has largely forgotten how and what it means to forgive. But in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, this is the culmination of every other petition that has come before it. And it is repeated twice. The first thing we must understand is the difference between our nature and God's nature. And then, from that, we see God's expectation for us.

#### Nature

Fundamentally, even without sin, we are debtors to God. Our very life and breath is owed to our Creator. Being alive in this world is a gift of God that, if we were ever asked to pay, would be an utterly inconceivable amount. That is the point Jesus is making in the parable of the King and the debtor. But more than just our creaturely indebtedness, our nature marred by sin is absurdly bad in contrast to God.

The King in the parable is not angry, greedily exacting money from people. He desires to settle his debts for the sake of making the relationship right. And the debtor asks him to "be long-tempered" with him. As we say in our eucharist liturgy every Sunday, "it is God's property always to have mercy." The word is pity, meaning moved from his very heart. That is what God is live – moved from his very depths to forgive.

But sin has twisted our nature. We don't innately desire to forgive. We are like the debtor who went out looking for someone who owed him in order to violently enact his own justice. When left to ourselves, we cannot forgive. And the further we move away from God, the less able we are to forgive. Our culture has moved further and further away from the equator of God's nature and has become increasingly devoid of forgiveness, even to the point of telling people not to forgive. We say we want justice, but what we really want is what we see as or dues from the people we say are wrong-doers.

The first thing we must do is admit that this is our nature. This is me apart from the grace of God.