

And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors

1. Intro: Dealing with some difficulties

A. Why did it take so long to get here?

- a. Not an indication of the non-seriousness of sin.
 - 1. Our assessment of sin must begin with the holiness of God.
 - 2. The need for forgiveness is so great, we need to be assured that God is gracious to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
 - A. bread = physical need; forgiveness = spiritual need (both are DAILY — need for daily prayer)

2. Debts and forgiveness

A. Two kinds of debt: monetary and moral

- a. Example: not having enough to pay vs. stealing
- b. We owe both kinds of debt beyond any ability to pay: State of enmity
 - 1. Jonathan Edwards: men hate God because of his holiness in light of our sin
 - A. His holy standard that reveals our unrighteousness; his omniscience; omnipotence; immutability; undiminishing wrath toward sin.
 - B. He is an opponent to sinners who can never be defeated; our only hope is forgiveness.
 - a. Psalm 51

B. Two levels of moral debt: legal and personal

a. God is no longer our judge!

- 1. Ellis Crum:
- 2. Luke 18:13 — the tax collector's prayer: "Make propitiation for me!" (Heb. 2:17 — *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*)
- 3. Jer. 31:33-34 — *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
- 4. Thankfulness! God is a forgiving God!
 - A. Ps 103: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities*
 - B. Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

three words about the nature of sin: sin = falling short, iniquity = fault of character, transgression = knowing/willful disobedience

forgiveness = ^{add the full debt} wash away, blot out

God's character: mercy, unfailing love, great compassion

He paid a debt He did not owe
 I owed a debt I could not pay
 I needed someone to wash my sins away
 And now I sing a brand new song: Amazing Grace
 Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay

b. God is our Father!

- 1. "Although we no longer have cause to fear God's wrath and judgement upon [our sins], we may as his children provoke his displeasure." (Prime)
 - A. 1 John 1:8-10 — *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*
 - Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*
 - Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*
 - For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*
 - For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah*
 - I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;*
 - I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*
 - B. "The whole of the Christian life is to be one of continual repentance, that is to say, a daily turning from sin to God, and a daily asking for his forgiveness where we have not turned away from sin quickly enough. Repentance rightly becomes a principal and a habit, and we see our wrongdoing no longer as attractive but loathsome."

- C. Requires self-examination: DAILY inventory and testing our lives by what we read in Scripture.
- 2. Confession is for joy! Psalm 31:
 - A. Simon the Pharisee and the woman (Luke 7:36-48)
- 3. The washing of the feet (John 13): *Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He *came to Simon Peter. He *said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter *said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus *said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."*
 - A. Emphasizes the need for daily forgiveness, and the assurance of our justification that comes with the sanctifying act of daily repentance.
 - a. We are not asking for new justification each day — we are asking for a renewed experience of God's gracious presence in our lives that is the outworking of our justification. We cannot receive this daily (or more!) blessing without first being justified, but we also cannot receive it if we are ourselves so callous to our own sin debt and Christ's propitiation that we do not extend that grace to others.
- C. As we also have forgiven our debtors
 - a. *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
 - 1. The washing of the feet... again: *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."*
 - A. If part 1 is about forgiveness, so is part 2!
 - B. The need for humility: taking the role of servant to one another
 - b. We can only truly forgive when there is genuine repentance—but we should pray for and long for the opportunity to forgive.
 - 1. *2 Cor. 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

