



CHOSEN PEOPLE
MINISTRIES

BLESSED
ARE THE
MERCIFUL



DAY 6



Forgiveness of sin is a major theme in the Bible. The Old Testament begins with the story of Adam and Eve sinning and destroying the perfection God originally created. Sin passed from Adam and Eve to their descendants, and the remainder of the biblical story focused on the way in which God would redeem mankind and the rest of creation from the ravages of sin and disobedience.

Early biblical promises of redemption and forgiveness were first heard in the Garden of Eden in passages such as Genesis 3:15. The Bible not only began to focus on redemption and deliverance but also on a redeemer and deliverer—a person who would be used by the Holy One to reverse the effects of the sins committed by the first man and woman. This hope was further outlined in Messianic prophecies throughout the Bible: Genesis 12:1–3; 49:10; Deuteronomy 18:15ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6–7; and in the magnificent servant song in chapter 53.

Ultimately, these prophecies are fulfilled in the appearance on earth of the Promised One. He would pay the penalty for sin by giving His own perfect life in death, conquering the curse, and rising from the grave to offer redemption for individuals. Eventually, His sacrifice would also restore all of creation marred and tainted by sin.

Is it any wonder, then, that the Messiah Jesus often spoke of sin, forgiveness, redemption, and how we can enjoy a “remembrance of the garden” and foretaste of future glory today? Issues related to sin, forgiveness, and redemption were some of His favorite topics, as He had come as a friend of sinners to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus promised an abundant life to those who followed Him (John 10:10), and this abundance would include a deeper, more profound relationship with the Creator.

The renewal of our relationship with God also has the ability to transform relationships between individuals; heal marriages, families, friendships, and all broken relationships approached according to His will. In the well-known Lord’s Prayer, Yeshua revealed the secret of renewed relationships to His followers as He encourages His disciples to learn the joy of forgiving others.

Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our

daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9–13, emphasis added.)

The great theme we bear in mind as we press ahead toward Yom Kippur, which is the conclusion of the Ten Days of Awe, is forgiveness—God forgiving us and us forgiving others. What can we learn about being forgiven and forgiving others from Yeshua’s prayer? Can we be forgiven of our sins without forgiving others?

The simple answer is yes and no!

A Definition of Forgiveness

The Bible uses many different words to describe forgiveness. It might be best to think of various words in the Scriptures as terms that are in the *forgiveness* family. There are a variety of terms translated as “forgiveness,” or seemingly used as a synonym in Scripture. *Propitiation*, *redemption*, and a number of illustrations, Old Testament examples, and parables (the prodigal son, etc.) are used to get the point across.

The Greek word used for “forgiveness” in this prayer is *aphienai*. *Aphienai* means “to send off,” but can have such varied nuances as “to release,” “to hurl,” “to let be,” “to pardon.” *Aphesis*, which is less common, is used for “release” (from office, obligation, debt, penalty), *pariemi* means “to send by,” with such nuances as “to leave behind,” “leave off,” “let be,” “give up,” or “remit.” Essentially, forgiveness is depicted as the release from an obligation.

The word used to represent the idea of sins in this prayer is “debts,” or *opheilēma*. Jesus often speaks about people being debtors to God (Matthew 6:12; 18:23ff.; Luke 7:41; 17:10), but only in Matthew 6:12 is sin specifically equated with debt. Jesus uses the illustration of debt to explain the breach in relationship to God. The debt is portrayed as so great that no amount of good deeds can offset our guilt. We are totally dependent on His divine mercy for the repayment of our “sin debt.” The amount is so vast that it is simply too large and impossible for any human to pay.

Additionally, the Messiah teaches us that God's gracious forgiveness imposes a corresponding obligation upon the forgiven to also forgive. In other words, we can only forgive as we have been forgiven! Once we understand God's grace and view the sins of those who hurt us in light of God's mercy toward us, then we can do no more for others than what He has done for us.

Our ability to forgive others is evidence that we have been forgiven. The opposite is true! If we are incapable of forgiving others, then we have either misunderstood His grace or not allowed the redemption we have through the Messiah to seep into our souls and transform even the most difficult of our relationships.

The secret to forgiveness is being able to view others as Jesus views us, not hold their sins against them, and be willing to forgive as He has forgiven us. Sometimes this is a challenge because we have not sufficiently acknowledged the depth and horror of our own sins toward God and others. We are tempted to view the sins of others as far worse than our own.

Understandably, forgiveness is harder to extend toward those who have hurt us or our loved ones more deeply. We have to admit forgiveness is difficult, which is why Yeshua addresses the matter in this foundational prayer that helps direct us toward some of the most basic steps in developing of our relationship with God.

The only way to really forgive others is to ask God to give us His power and do our best, through prayer, counsel, and the encouragement of others to work toward saying, "Lord, as You have forgiven me, I forgive_____." Just add the name of the person who has hurt you or your loved ones the most and then leave them in God's hands.

As Rabbi Saul of Tarsus wrote, "*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Messiah also has forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:31–32).

Scripture Meditation:

The above Bible verse speaks to my heart. The Apostle reminds us that we need to view ourselves as God does—fallen but also dramatically and eternally forgiven. In turn, knowing what God has done for us, we now need to do for others. We forgive as we have been forgiven.

Take a moment and think about those you need to forgive during this season of repentance. I am sure you know who they are and understand that, until you forgive, you are vulnerable to bitterness and guilt. Perhaps today is the day when you will be able to release the anger and unforgiveness that so easily damages your soul. You might begin by thanking God for forgiving you and then extend that same forgiveness to those who have hurt you.

I know this is not easy and I hope that you will take some time to pray, reflect, and ask God to give you the strength to do what seems to be humanly impossible: to forgive those who have sinned against you or those you love. If you do, you will be set free!

Today's prayer:

Abba, thank You for Your forgiveness and for the reality that whom the Son sets free is free indeed! We ask that our not-yet-believing Jewish friends and neighbors would realize that no amount of good deeds could ever atone for their sins. May they acknowledge their dire need for the

Savior and respond by placing their faith in Him. Thus, may they experience this same freedom! Help us all to forgive as we have been forgiven, and as we do so, may we enjoy a deeper, more intimate relationship with You!