

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 6:12; 14-15 | The Lord's Prayer: Forgiveness
February 26, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 6.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

We have been studying Matthew's Gospel verse-by-verse.

Specifically, examining the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus is teaching us how to pray correctly—as we're learning that The Lord's prayer (Disciple's Prayer) is not only a prayer to be recited but is better viewed as a model/structure/outline to keep us focused as we pray.

Last Sunday, we learned the value of depending on our Heavenly Father for our daily provisions.

Give us today our daily bread.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we move from physical nourishment to spiritual nourishment.

We will look at verse twelve and fourteen-fifteen today and learn how forgiveness nourishes our eternal souls.

It's been said that forgiveness is the key to happiness.

It's been said that forgiveness is man's deepest need and highest achievement.

Both statements are true.

Let's now turn to the Word of God and find out how and why forgiveness applies to our lives today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 6:12; 14-15 CSB

+ **Matthew 6:5**— "Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.

+ **Matthew 6:6**— But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.,

+ **Matthew 6:7**— When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words.

+ **Matthew 6:8**— Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

+ **Matthew 6:9**— "Therefore, you should pray like this:
Our Father in heaven,
your name be honored as holy.

+ **Matthew 6:10**— Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

+ **Matthew 6:11**— Give us today our daily bread.

+ **Matthew 6:12**— And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:13— And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:14— "For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly
Father will forgive you as well.

Matthew 6:15— But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive
your offenses.

*And dear friends, these are the very words from the inerrant, inspired, and
infallible Word of Almighty God.*

PRAY:

Lord, may you be blessed;

teach me your statutes.

With my lips I proclaim

all the judgments from your mouth. (Psalm 119:12-13)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 6:9— "Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,

your name be honored as holy.

Matthew 6:10— Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:11— Give us today our daily bread.

Matthew 6:12— And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

We have learned that the beginning of the Lord's prayer deals with God's glory.

- ***Our Father in Heaven***—reminder that we are made of dirt and live on the earth.
- ***Your name is holy***—God's name is different—it's uncommon. There is an "otherness," uniqueness, and reverence to God's name.
- ***Your Kingdom come***—not our kingdom!
- ***Your will be done***—not my will!

So verses nine and ten are all about God.

The second half of the Lord's prayer is about us.

Last week we prayed, ***Give us...our daily bread.***

Today we pray...***forgive us...***

So let's learn about **Biblical Forgiveness**—

In the OT, Forgiveness is expressed by someone ~~will~~ not "remembering" the offense."

OT Forgiveness is the result of **choosing** to forget the debt or offense.

In the NT, forgiveness offers the idea of release— meaning we're not to count the number of times someone has sinned against us.

The apostle Paul defines love and mentions this idea of forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 13:4—Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant,

1 Corinthians 13:5— is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs.

Questions: How many of us turn into CPAs and have a spreadsheet in the back of our minds with every wrong committed against us for the past several decades?

The idea of forgiveness paints a beautiful picture of releasing someone from an obligation or removing a burden.

+ **Matthew 6:12**— *And forgive us our debts,*

What's fascinating about forgiveness in verse twelve is the *Greek term, **aphiēmi*** (Ah-fee-ah-knee)

Aphiēmi means to to remove the guilt associated with the sin.

We see the same association in the OT.

In Psalm 51, King David is begging for forgiveness from God because of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder Uriah, her husband.

+ **Psalm 51:1**—*Be gracious to me, God,
according to your faithful love;
according to your abundant compassion,
blot out my rebellion.*

+ **Psalm 51:2**— *Completely wash away my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.*

+ **Psalm 51:3a**— *For I am conscious of my rebellion.*

David confesses here that he knows what he did through adultery and murder was sin but— chose to do it anyway.

+ **Psalm 51:3b**— *and my sin is always before me.*

David's guilt is crushing him.

A guilty conscience is due to a lack of confession & repentance.

Psalm 51:4— Against you—you alone—I have sinned
and done this evil in your sight.

So you are right when you pass sentence;
you are blameless when you judge.

Now David not only sinned against God, but he also sinned against Bathsheba and the entire nation of Israel.

The point in verse four is that God is the ultimate judge of sin.

Every time we sin, we have committed a moral crime against a thrice holy —God that must be paid.

I mentioned David's guilt here—

It is imperative to note that forgiveness focuses on the guilt of the sinner and not upon the sin itself.

In other words, the event of the sin is not undone with the act of forgiveness—

A person can never undo/reverse a sin they committed against us.

However, we can release the person's guilt from the sin—that's Biblical forgiveness.

Many of us have learned that forgiveness often means to 'to wipe out,' 'to blot out,' or 'to do away with,'—which is true.

But please know that it's not possible for us to forget a sinful event, but it is possible to remove its guilt.

That's why our personal testimonies are so powerful.

We all have the same testimony—

I was once blind, I met Jesus, and now I see! (John 9:25)

All that sin that we committed while being blind and spiritually dead—it's still a part of our past.

However, as Christians, we don't live in our past.

We are free and forgiven— through the sacrificial, substitutionary blood atonement of a blood-stained cross and the proof of Christ's empty grave.

Using legal terms, we would say that we, as ^{condemned} criminals— have been pardoned/absolved/exonerated/acquitted from our moral crimes against God.

KEYPOINT #1

Biblical forgiveness means to remove the guilt resulting from sin.

That's why there is such an emotional and spiritual release when someone forgives us—

The crushing weight of our guilt has been lifted.

King David once again writes about forgiveness in Psalm 103:

Psalm 103:8— *The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love.*

Psalm 103:9— *He will not always accuse us or be angry forever.*

Psalm 103:10— *He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities.*

+ **Psalm 103:11**— For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his faithful love
toward those who fear him.

+ **Psalm 103:12**— As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed
our transgressions from us.

Some people teach that God **forgets** our sins.

However, that psalm doesn't mean God has forgotten our moral sins against Him.

It means that God doesn't **hold** that sin against us.

In other words, God doesn't say, "*Remember when you did that—I do.*"

That's the behavior of sinful mankind.

God doesn't hold our past sins over our heads like some form of divine blackmail.

God doesn't **shame us** with our sins.

Because we're pretty good at that ourselves.

Let's also not forget that Satan and His demons are the ones who accuse God's children (Rev. 12:10)

If you are a child of God, please know that forgiveness is also about compassion.

+ **Psalm 103:13**— As a father has **compassion** on his children,
so the Lord has **compassion** on those who fear him.

Which means that God deals with people who don't fear Him differently than His children.

Why does God have this kind of compassion on His children?

Psalm 103:14— For he knows what we are made of,
remembering that we are dust.

God knows our weaknesses.

God knows our personal struggles along with the power of sin.
That's why God is a compassionate God.

When Moses was making new tablets for the Ten Commandments, the Lord passed in front of Moses and said this:

Exodus 34:6 LSB—Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and called out,
"Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and
abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

Exodus 34:7a LSB—who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives
iniquity, transgression, and sin;

The prophet Micah says this...

Micah 7:18— Who is a God like you,
forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He does not hold on to his anger forever
because he delights in faithful love.

Micah 7:19— He will again have compassion on us;
he will vanquish our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

In other words, God doesn't hang on to our sin so that He can use them as a
weapon.

This casting of sins into the sea is illustrated in a special ceremony on the first day of the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah).

Traditional Jews go to a lake or ocean and cast breadcrumbs or stones into the water.

This ceremony is called *Tashlikh* (Tash-leak)

If God has cast our sins into the sea, not holding them or using them to shame us or embarrass us like a prosecuting attorney providing exhibits A, B, and C.

It's probably good for us to let our sins stay there at the bottom of the lake.

We don't need to go fishing and relive our sinful past. Why?

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, (2 Cor. 5:17)

Matthew 6:12— And forgive us our debts,

Debt is an example of what we're forgiven from.

In both the OT and the NT, there is a close relationship between financial debt and moral debt.

Debt—*opheilēma* (Oh-fee-la-muh).

The big picture is that ^{our} the moral debt ^{incurred} is the result of sin.

Opheilēma (debts) is one of five New Testament Greek terms for sin.

Hamartia (harm-uh-tea-uh) is the most common term for sin and carries the general idea of missing the mark ^{for all sin}.

All Sin misses the mark of God's standard of perfection and righteousness.

An example of *Hamartia*.

+ **James 1:13**— No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God," since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt anyone.

+ **James 1:14**— But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire.

+ **James 1:15**— Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin (*Hamartia*) is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

missing the mark of God's perfection

All sin leads to death - sin is the reason we will physically die - Death is the proof that we're sinners.

Now, we also see sin described as a trespass, iniquity, a transgression, and lawlessness.

You may have noticed ^{those terms} that when we were reading the Psalms earlier.

There are different levels of sin, and it's important to know the differences—so let me show these to you.

Starting with iniquity—guilt associated with the sin.

A trespass (*paraptōma*) conveys the idea of slipping or falling.

The picture here is that our sin is careless.

It's not so much intentional disobedience but carelessness—which is still sin.

+ **Ephesians 2:1/2**—And you were dead in your trespasses (*paraptōma*) and sins (*Hamartia*) in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world

PAR-top-toe-walk

In other words, we were careless about God and His Ways.

A sin of transgression [*Parabasis* (Paw-raw-bah-sees)] refers to a choice.

Transgression is a stepping across the line of morality.

Transgression is where we intentionally do something we know is wrong.

+ **1 Timothy 2:14**— And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed.

The sin of transgression is more conscious and intentional.

Lastly, there is the sin of lawlessness.

Lawlessness means exactly how it sounds—no law applies to me.

Greek, *Anomia* (Ann-oh-me-ya) is a sin to where it is the most intentional and blatant, and brazen.

Lawlessness is a direct and open rebellion against God and His ways.

There is no talking sense into someone who lives in lawlessness because they believe that God's law doesn't apply to them.

+ **Titus 2:14**— He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession,

So no matter where we fall on this scale of sin—iniquity, trespass, transgression or lawlessness—sin is still sin.

Sin is a moral crime against God and humanity.

Sin is also an act of hostility.

Sin is a moral and spiritual debt to God that must be paid.

That's why Scripture teaches that God is a God of justice.

Justice for sin is paid by two ways:

1. Through faith in Christ Jesus
2. Through eternal conscious punishment in a very real place called hell.

If we go back to the story of Moses, where God tells Moses about Himself and reveals His character...

Exodus 34:6 LSB—Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and called out, "Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

Exodus 34:7 LSB—who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

KEYPOINT 2:

Our greatest problem is our sin debt, therefore, our greatest need is forgiveness.

So as we prayed last week, "Give us today our daily bread," we also pray, "Forgive us our debts" on a daily basis.

We need not only pray for daily provision for our physical health but daily forgiveness for our spiritual and emotional health.

If we have repented from our sins and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, we have been forgiven for our SIN.

Question: How many sins does it take to become a sinner?

Psalm 51:5—Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

In other words, we all have sinful DNA thanks to Adam and Eve.

How many sins does it take to become a sinner?

Scripture states that we are all guilty before we were born.

However, when we are born again, we have been justified, forgiven, and free from the ultimate crime of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

So all that to say this—as Christians, we still need God's daily forgiveness for the sins we continue to commit.

Yes, we are forgiven and being forgiven.

In the same way that we are sanctified and being sanctified.

KEYPOINT 3:

Forgiveness is the central theme of the Lord's prayer.

Forgiveness is mentioned six times in eight verses.

Praying "Forgive us our debts" is a prayer for daily restoration because of our daily sins.

However, there is a catch to our daily sins...

Matthew 6:12—*And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

As we also have forgiven our debtors—that phrase from Jesus is the prerequisite for receiving God's forgiveness for our daily sins.

If we forgive others on a daily basis, we, too, will be forgiven for our daily sins.

However, if we have not forgiven or refuse to forgive others—we will not be forgiven for our daily sins.

KEYPOINT 4:

A forgiven person is a forgiving person.

Forgiveness is the true mark of a Christian.

Our forgiveness shows others how God has forgiven us.

KEYPOINT 5:

Nothing in the Christian life is more important than forgiveness.

Not your doctrine, systematic theology, ecclesiology or eschatology.
 God's forgiveness for our sins through Christ must lead to the forgiveness of others.

KEYPOINT 6:

~~It's essential to recognize that~~ the forgiveness of our daily sins rests on an indispensable condition of forgiving others first.

Jesus reiterates this—in verse thirteen he moves on to teaching about forgiveness which we'll get to next week.

Matthew 6:13—*And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

But then ^{Jesus} he circles back to forgiveness in verses fourteen and fifteen.

Matthew 6:14—"For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well.

Two things:

1. Notice the condition that Jesus gives—"If."
2. Notice the order—we extend forgiveness first, then our sins are forgiven. ^{daily}

Matthew 6:15—But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

Notice the condition again, “if.”

Forgiveness is a choice that we have.

Yet, when God justified, pardoned, and forgave us through Jesus Christ our Lord—

He gave us a new heart and disposition.

We now have the temperament to forgive as God forgives.

The world says, “I’m sorry”—that’s not what we’re talking about here.

+ **Matthew 6:15**— But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

Let’s talk briefly about unforgiving Christians.

A Christian with an unforgiving spirit will eventually isolate himself, become bitter, and be preoccupied with self-pity.

Depression will soon follow as all the outward signs of unforgiveness turn inward.

All Friendships will eventually sour through unforgiveness.

+ **KEYPOINT 7:**

Forgiveness is divine. Unforgiveness is demonic.

We are never more like God than when we forgive!

+ **PREACH:**

The biggest problem with us praying this part of the Lord's prayer about forgiveness is that we don't think we actually NEED forgiveness.

We don't consider ourselves sinners.

We somehow have convinced ourselves that we're pretty good people, and we forget how guilty we truly are—apart from the saving work of Christ.

How quickly we forget our life before Christ saved our wretched souls.

+ **1 Corinthians 6:9a**—*Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom?*

And we, as church people, say, "Preach it!"

+ **1 Corinthians 6:9b**—*Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males,*

+ **1 Corinthians 6:10**—*no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom.*

And we, as church people, say, "Preach it!"

+ **1 Corinthians 6:11**—*And some of you used to be like this.*

And I wouldn't ~~hasten to~~ add—not so long ago.

So, let's do a little pop quiz for our daily sins:

- When was the last time you watched a TV show or movie filled with all sorts of sex, sexual innuendos, and dirty jokes—refusing to turn it off.
- When was the last time you had too much to drink?
- When was the last time you lost your temper?

Sexual impurity, drunkenness and anger are a small sample of daily sins we all struggle with every day—

These things must be confessed to our Heavenly Father on a daily basis.

+ **1 Corinthians 6:11**—But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

All that to say this—Yes, as Christians, we're forgiven and still being forgiven daily—if we first offer forgiveness to others.

If we think that our sins are forgiven by God, and we refuse to forgive somebody else—

We are making an eternal mistake.

+ **KEYPOINT 8:**

Our unforgiveness proves that we were never forgiven.

The person who knows he has been forgiven by the bloody cross and empty grave, is a person who must forgive others.

In other words, he cannot help himself!

He's the one who hears this message: Picks up the phone & makes things right today.

If we truly know Christ as our Savior—there is no way in the world we can refuse forgiveness.

Because God's forgiveness breaks us.

God's forgiveness changes us forever.

there is no holding grudges: Keeping a list of offenses.

We are so overwhelmed by the holiness of God and the depravity of our own sin—yet, God sends God to die for all that sin—

How can we be so proud, arrogant and defiant to refuse someone else's apology—and not offer forgiveness—refusing to realize their guilt—when God Himself has realized ours?

release

release

One last thing... Forgiveness doesn't mean that your relationship with that person will ever be the same.

Maybe it will - maybe it won't.

Some of us have been physically beaten, emotionally battered and sexually abused.

These are heinous crimes—but they still need to be forgiven.

Why? Because our moral crimes against God are so much worse than that crime against us.

So we can still forgive someone who has done those kind of things—but we certainly don't have to have a relationship with them moving forward.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Cor. 13:11 ESV)

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