

J.J.

MASTER'S DEGREE IN PRAYER

Matthew 6:5-13

Shoutout to my son Zak who's turning 25 years old tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

I came across a little prayer in a magazine, headed: "A Morning Prayer for Help" - note that I said "morning"! "Dear God, so far today I've done alright, I haven't gossiped, lost my temper, been nasty or selfish. But in a few minutes God, I'm going to get out of bed and from then on, I'm going to need all the help I can get."

(Lou Nicholes - Missionary/Author).

Prayer shows our dependence on God.

Matthew 6: 5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.*

*10 Your kingdom come,
your will be done,*

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Pray

QUICK REVIEW

What is prayer?

Etymology : proseuchomai "pros" and "euchomai"

Pros (preposition) towards, near "euchomai" pray to God

Prayer is going near to God. "Lumalapit ka sa Dios".

To the people of God, PRAYER IS PRIORITY ONE.

And this is how our Lord taught the disciples how to pray.

People call this The Lord's prayer but this is supposed to be The Disciples Prayer.

Luke 11 : One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

And more than reciting this, it should serve as a guide when we pray.

We already discussed

- I. **THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN PRAYING**
- II. **THE RIGHT APPROACH TO PRAYING**
- III. **THE RIGHT APPEAL WHEN PRAYING.**

1. Provision

11 Give us this day our daily bread

By this alone, our Lord is teaching us that we should regularly connect with God knowing that we depend on Him.

Quote : "Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" - Corrie ten Boom

2. Peace/Pardon

*12 and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,
15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

12 and forgive us our debts,

One time, I was invited to give a talk to a group of men, the topic was about forgiveness.

One of the men said that he doesn't ask for forgiveness anymore because Jesus has already paid for his sins. This is a rather fair statement but still needs to be clarified and corrected. Allow me to explain through God's Word.

True. Jesus has already paid for our sins once and for all.

If you have truly believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, then all of your sins have been paid.

In the eyes of the Lord, you are holy, blameless and righteous.

THIS IS YOUR STANDING BEFORE GOD!

Hebrews 10: 16 This is the covenant I will make with them....

17 "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." 18 And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

This is our standing before God and as taught last week, this is the reason why when you believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, you become a child of God.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

This the reason why we can call God “Our Father” because the truth is we are now His children.

Now, our Lord taught us to ask for forgiveness from Our Father. Why?

As explained last week, we still sin while we are here on earth.

And when we sin, we do not lose our “relationship” with God, we lose our “fellowship”. We lose the pleasure and the intimacy of our walk with God.

That’s why look at this passage.

1 John 1 : 5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess homologeo (same...logic...same word...it means...you agree) our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

You see this. God who is our Father is light. There is no fellowship between darkness and light. If we are sinning, we are in darkness but if we walk in the light... meaning we are aware of God’s holiness and we are aware of our sins, we have that fellowship with God. That why John said, we need to confess our sins, he is faithful and just. It means God our Father is faithful to remember and just to remember that our Lord Jesus has already paid for our sins and that’s why there is forgiveness and purification and thus have fellowship again with Him.

That’s why our Lord said to Peter when He was washing the disciples feet.

Background : Our Lord was washing the disciples feet and Peter wouldn’t allow Jesus to serve him. (Remember, it was dusty in the road and one sign of hospitality is a slave would wash your feet since they all sit on the floor where they also eat). If you read the passage, Peter doesn’t want Jesus to wash his feet. What did Jesus answer?

John 13:8 Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

Obviously, Jesus was talking about, if I don’t clean you, you have no fellowship with me and He is now talking figuratively here.

That’s why Jesus has to say to Peter in v. 7

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

So Jesus said to Peter said, to our Lord.

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."

See this, it's saying because you believe in who I am, you are already forgiven, saved, pure and clean and you need only to wash your feet. It means, while you are walking in this world, we can still sin and we are aware of it and we want to have fellowship with God and that's why we need to ask for forgiveness.

Last week :

- **What does the Lord mean by "*debts*" and "*trespasses*" which also means sin?**
- **What is forgiveness?**
- *as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

What does "debt" and "trespass" mean?

Etymology :

debt "ophilemie" something that is owed legally

trespass "paraptoma" deviate

To explain it simply :

Debt – something of value that belongs to you is taken away from you that needs to be paid back.

We understand that clearly because most of us listening right now have debts or have experience having debt.

But something of value aside from money can be taken away from you.

Someone took away your reputation e.g. you were embarrassed

Someone took away your dignity

Someone took away your livelihood

someone took away your rights.

Trespass – a deviation of an agreement (para – beside pipto falling) a falling away from an agreement.

Illustration : If you are friends, you have a social agreement to have each other's back or not to hurt me because we're friends. But when we betray the trust of a friend, we deviate from the social agreement – that's a trespass.

What is our trespass against God?

Remember trespass (paraptoma), it means a deviation.

When we deviate from God's will or design, that's a sin.

Both "debts" and "trespass" is an offense against God and others...in short, it's sin.

What is forgiveness?

The original language is interesting here.

Etymology : forgive "aphiemi" apo – to separate "eimi" to go

So to forgive means, literally "to let go".

It means letting go of their debts and trespasses.

So we can paraphrase this by

*12 and LET GO OF our debts,
as we also LET GO OF our debtors.*

14 For if you LET GO OF others' trespasses, your heavenly Father will also LET GO OF YOUR TRESPASSES, 15 but if you do not LET GO OF others' trespasses, neither will your Father LET GO OF your trespasses.

In order to understand what forgiveness is, we need to understand what is "unforgiveness"? If the meaning of "forgive" is to let go, then unforgiveness means to "hold on to"

Unforgiveness means you are holding on to your pride, you are holding on to the pain, you are holding on to your anger, you are holding on to bitterness, you are holding on to hatred, you are holding on to past memories.

TO CONTINUE :

*12 and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*14 For if (conditional e.g. if you wash the dishes, I will wipe the dishes)
you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

You may ask, "Pastor, what does this mean?" I say, "It means what it means." That when we ask for forgiveness for our sins, our Father in heaven will only forgive our sins if we forgive others of their sins against us.

This is repeated several times in the Bible. There's no escaping it.

Mark 11 : 25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Even right from the beginning, our Lord included this in the Beatitudes :

*Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

Why?

There are many reasons but here is what I can think of according to God's Word by God's grace.

1. Forgiving others shows you comprehend God's forgiveness.

Let me explain this again to you.

Illustration : If you punch a neighbor, you might spend a night or two in jail. But if you punch the Prime Minister, the punishment is not just a night or two in jail. It will be much higher.

Remember it's the same punch.

Sin is the punching the face of an infinitely pure and eternal, Holy, Holy, Holy God.

Remember : We, man, who was made out of dirt have sinned against a perfect, pure, eternal and holy, holy, holy God who is the Creator of the universe. **It is but right that we deserve eternal punishment in hell.**

But what does the Bible say?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

In short, there is no way, we can pay our "debts" against God. It's because our debt is a gazillion dollars worth and there's no other way we can pay this debt but only through His Son Jesus Christ.

In short : Somebody has to die on our behalf. Your husband, your wife, your kids or even yourself cannot die on your behalf. Remember this, if a person dies, he is only paying for his own sin against God.

The answer is His own Son Jesus Christ... God Himself who is eternal must pay for our sin.

The problem is God cannot die and so our Lord has to become man in order to pay for our sin.

That's why the Bible says :

1 Peter 1 : 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

In short, we have a debt against a pure eternal and Holy, Holy, Holy God and this debt was paid by a pure, eternal and Holy, Holy, Holy God.

If you understand that, then you will be forgiving others of their sins.

Biblical Illustration :

Matthew 18 : 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Then Jesus tells about this parable

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[h] was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

And you know what this servant did. Look at this :

28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

The king found out about it and what did he say to this servant.

32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Brothers and sisters : God has given us a trillion dollars worth of grace and yet you still want \$1,000 from others who owe you?

We have a term for that : Who do you think you are? God?

That's why our Lord said to the woman who washed His feet.

Luke 7 : 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.

In short, a person who doesn't forgive, doesn't really understand the forgiveness and the love that God has given him or her.

But if you do, here's what the Bible says :

Ephesians 4 :32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

We forgive because God has forgiven us.

2. Forgiving others shows that you are a Christian – a follower of Christ.

The one thing that truly shows you are a follower of Christ, a disciple of Christ is forgiveness

"Pastor, I thought it's love..."

True.

John 13: 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Now, hear me out.

Love is the supreme ethic. It means, it's the greatest of all.

1 Corinthians 13: 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

When I say ethic, it comes from "ethos", this is the custom, habit or character or disposition of a person or a community...

In short, when others see you, they must see love.

How can people see love in us? Yes, by helping one another. Being kind to one another.

BUT NON-CHRISTIANS CAN ALSO DO THAT.

So what differentiates us...hear me out please.

Quote : If love is the supreme ethic, it's highest virtue is humility.

How do we show humility? Let's go to Philippians 2

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

*did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant, (doulos... slave)
being made in human likeness.*

*8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself*

But how did our Lord show His humility?

*by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

When you look at the cross, what does it mean to you? IT MEANS THROUGH THE CROSS WE HAVE FORGIVENESS!

So follow me here... if love is the supreme ethic (our disposition, our character, our habit), humility is its highest virtue and forgiveness is the ultimate display of humility.

Proof : What is the opposite of humility? Pride! Show me a person who doesn't forgive and I'll show you a person full of pride and lacking in love.

Illustration : It was said that a group of theologians were arguing what makes Christianity different from other religion and then C.S. Lewis came in and the people asked him, "What makes Christianity different from other religion?" C.S. Lewis said, That's easy, "Grace."

So, the question is, how do we display grace? THROUGH FORGIVENESS!

We have received grace and that's why we give grace.

3. Forgiving others show that you are a child of God.

Quote : To err is human, to forgive, divine – Alexander Pope
Forgiveness shows who our Father is.

*9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

Look at what our Lord says and observe the slave attitude here.

Matthew 5: 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

How do you know a person has a servant attitude? If he is treated like one.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Again, what is the ultimate display of love? THE CROSS... FORGIVENESS!
Now that you know, why we ask for forgiveness and why it is important that we forgive others before God forgives us.

Now a word of warning according to God's Word.

Quote : Unforgiveness attracts the evil one.

How?

Remember, verse 13 is sandwiched between verses 12 and 14.

*12 and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

**13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

*14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,
15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Remember, if we are in sin and we do not ask for forgiveness, we are not in fellowship with God... and remember, our forgiveness from God is dependent on our forgiveness of others.

And if we are not in fellowship with God, we are more prone to be attacked by the enemy.

Illustration : We went camping one time and it's in a more rough it out camping style. In the camping area where we throw the trash, they asked us to make sure we lock the garbage because it attracts bears, racoons and etc.

Unforgiveness attracts the evil one. And remember what does the evil one do?

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

And I have mentioned to you several times, forgiveness attracts blessings.

What our Lord wants for your life is life to the full (shalom, peace) and you can only have life to the full, if you have peace (shalom – completeness, wholeness) in your life.

Asking for forgiveness from God and forgiving others gives you that peace.

REMEMBER THE PRINCIPLE OF THE OPEN HAND. (LETTING GO)

S.G.D.

