

## **Matthew 6: 7-13 "Forgive us as we forgive"**

### **Read Matthew 6:9-15**

The three petitions in the Lord's prayer are joined by the Greek word 'kai' (and), telling us that these are the three things we need to sustain life. Life is sustained when we have our material needs met (daily bread), resources for right relationship (forgive us as we forgive), and protection and preservation (deliver us from evil and temptation).

1. (vs.12) The Lord's prayer invites us to confess our sins in a way that is very different from how we normally envision repentance. In the context of the Lord's prayer what do you think it means to ask for forgiveness of debt?

*Some of the earlier phrases give us an indication. Our father in heaven – we are to live into our family name. Hallowed be your name – may everything live to your praise and glory. Your Kingdom, your will – I lay everything down to your plan and purposes for us and for our world.*

*In the midst of these lines we are giving everything over to God and it should bring to the surface where we have not given everything over to his plan and purposes and glory.*

*We owe God everything – for he has made us, formed us, saved us – we respond as the scriptures command by loving the Lord our God with all our heart soul mind and strength and loving our neighbours as we love ourselves. Have we given ourselves all over to him? Have we given ourselves over to love?*

*It may be helpful here to bring up the opening line of the Anglican book of common prayer confession. I have left undone the things I ought to have done. The most grievous things are the loving acts and words I have failed to live into.*

2. In the Lord's prayer confession comes out of adoration. "Heavenly Father, Hallowed be your name, forgive us..." How does confession look when it arises from adoration?

*In the sermon Tim used the reflections of Stephen Charnock who spoke of a legalistic confession that comes from considering God's justice – what is right and what is wrong – which is often a confession born of fear.*

*The godly repentant if focusing on the love and acceptance of God who is seeing sin as spurning a tender and loving father. Confession in this respect arises from our assurance of his love and acceptance.*

## Read Matthew 18:23-33

This parable includes the same language as the petition. It is an illustration of the petition.

3. What do we learn about the process of forgiveness from the example of the King?
  - I. *Pity – meaning his heart went out – he identified with the one who had wronged him. We often don't identify with the one who wronged us. We think they are very different from us. We define them by the thing they have done to hurt us. As Miroslav Volf put it – forgiveness flounders when we exclude the other from the community of humans even as we exclude ourselves from the community of sinners.*
  - II. *Let go of justice – Justice demanded in that culture (with no bankruptcy protection laws) that he and his family be sold into slavery until they could pay off the debt.*
  - III. *Absorb the cost – At personal cost, and the cost of his Kingdom the King is the one who pays the debt another owes.*
4. How is the servant's response to the King incongruous with a natural reaction to what has happened to him? What does this reveal about what is to motivate our forgiveness of others?

*The huge discrepancy – 10K yrs of labour vs. 1/3 of a year of labour – in contemporary terms ½ a billion vs. 16 thousand - is revealing to us that to be forgiven of so much should naturally make us forgiving people.*

*What should motivate us then is a reflection on the enormity of God's forgiveness of us – to the degree that we see the enormity of our forgiveness will be the degree that we can forgive others.*

*Next to what God has forgiven us of, we are to see the hurt the other has caused us as comparatively tiny.*

*If people get stuck answering – you could ask it this way: Put yourself in the place of the servant – how would you respond to the person who owed you.*

5. How does the forgiveness that Jesus brings us through the cross shape our forgiveness of others?

*Jesus takes the justice we deserve so that we can go free.*

*Jesus shows us mercy by not giving us what we deserve.*

*Jesus gives us grace in that through his work we are rescued from sin, death and hell – we are made inheritors of a heavenly kingdom – and are made children of a heavenly father by adoption and grace.*

6. Think of the relationships who are currently in – how could your reflection on this text change those relationships? What is one step you will commit to? How can you pray for and encourage one another in moving toward right relationship?

*This is a question that moves us away from academic responses to where the rubber hits the road. It would be helpful to next time you meet follow up with people so that you can lovingly hold one another accountable and give thanks together for where the word of God has invited us to reconciliation.*