



Week of May 24, 2020: The Lord's Prayer – "... As We Also Have Forgiven our Debtors"

Discussion Questions Set #1

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:9-13)

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins". (Matthew 6:14-15)

"Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37)

"Forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32)

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you". (Colossians 3:13)

In sermon, it was asked why the much clearer presentation of the connection between our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness by others in Matthew 6:14-15 is absent from the most widely presented version of the Lord's Prayer. It was reasoned that two possible answers exist: it is absent because we struggle with the connection between our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness of others or because we find forgiveness of others difficult in and of itself.

1. Why do you think we often struggle with the connection between our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness of others?
2. In sermon, we were urged to think of our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness of others as causally linked – because we are forgiven by God, we now forgive others. How does this help you to interpret Matthew 6:14-15?
3. Both Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 urge the follower of Jesus to forgive as they have been forgiven by Jesus. Appoint someone as a "scribe" to record your answers and take some time as a group to describe using words or phrases the forgiveness you have received from God. Reflect on this newly created list, evaluating whether the forgiveness you show others incorporates these same qualities.
4. In sermon, it was presented that an unforgiving spirit toward others proves that one does not fully trust Christ's forgiveness. Discuss how you understand this statement. How is an unforgiving spirit representative of a flawed understanding of one's own forgiveness by God?

Discussion Questions Set #2

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:12)

"I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more". (Hebrews 8:12)

"It is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God." (1 Peter 2:19)

In sermon, it was suggested that we often find forgiveness immensely difficult, because there is something in forgiveness we find difficult to relinquish. We misunderstand forgiveness as an exercise of power, when scripturally, forgiveness is a profound choice to submit to and trust in God.

1. What do Psalm 103:12 and Hebrews 8:12 suggest about the nature of God's forgiveness of us? What do they suggest about our forgiveness of others as followers of Jesus? Be honest: how easily it this kind of forgiveness to extend to others?
2. How do you think it is commendable, as 1 Peter 2:19 teaches, to open ourselves to unjust suffering in being obedient to God's directive that we forgive others?
3. How does an unforgiving spirit reveal a lack of submission to God?
4. In sermon we were asked to reflect upon the following two questions. Share any ideas that come to mind in relation to each question:
 - a. Do I struggle with forgiveness because my heart tends to be deeply oriented on other people more than it is upon God?
 - b. Can I move forward in forgiving others, even if it means that only God knows my hurt and pain and nobody else? Can I so trust God with the pain of sins received that I can forgive as I have been forgiven?