

Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom

Forgiveness • Message 5

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Prayer Points:

1. Thank God for the forgiveness He gives when we confess and repent of our sins.
2. Pray for Brookwood to be a church where people experience God's mercy and forgiveness.
3. Ask God to soften our hearts and show us where we may be holding on to bitterness and unforgiveness, so that we can forgive others as He forgave us.

Scripture Reading:

The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; He does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For His unfailing love toward those who fear Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him.

Psalm 103:9-13 (NLT)

I. Introduction: Continuing part 2 of series, Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom.

- Matthew 6:12, 14-15; C/R: Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23

A. Today's message from Matthew chapter 6 of Lord's Prayer is titled **Forgiveness**.

1. Theme verse: **Matthew 6:12 (NLT)** - "... forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us."
2. Forgive (Greek *aphiēmi*, af-ee'-ay-mee, means literally "to hurl away, to send off, to release, to pardon, to put away")
3. Sin (one of five New Testament Greek words: *ōphēilēma*, of-i'-lay mah, debt, something owed,)
4. Violating God's standards creates a moral and spiritual debt (not a financial one) that we owe to God because we have offended His character, disobeyed His Word, disregarded His will - we incurred an obligation which must be satisfied.
5. This indebtedness must be paid for God to be just, for us to be right with Him.
6. This debt separates us from our Creator; this sin misdirects our lives.
7. **Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)** - *It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, He has turned away and will not listen anymore.*
8. Sin is the cause of every crime, every conflict, every immoral action, every evil thought, all physical illness, and much of the pain and sorrow people endure.
9. There is no human solution to this estrangement from God - and it affects us all!
10. **Romans 3:23 (NLT)** - *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.* (which alienates, introduces distance, from God).
11. Only God provides the solution: forgiveness, pardon for our sin, salvation from eternal punishment, by providing His Son to pay our debt by sacrificing His life.
12. How can we receive forgiveness from God?

B. Receiving Forgiveness (Matthew 6:12,14-15)

1. Requires **FAITH**. (Matthew 6:12; C/R: John 3:16; Romans 3:23-24; 8:1-2; Hebrews 11:1,6)

1. Lord's Prayer request of God at **Matthew 6:12 (NLT)**: "... forgive us our sins..."
2. Our greatest problem is sin because it separates us from God - the source of life - so our greatest need is forgiveness - which reconciles us (returns us) to Him.

3. God provides pardon for our sin, cancels our debt to Him, but it requires our faith.
4. **Hebrews 11:1,6 (NLT)** - *Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. ... And it is impossible to please God without faith. ...*
5. Faith (Greek **pistis**, pis'-tis means *persuasion, conviction* (of God's truth), *belief, reliance* upon Jesus for salvation; *constancy* of such profession, trust, assurance.
6. **John 3:16 (NLT)** - *"For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."*
7. Faith does not merely mean that we believe God exists or even that Jesus is His Son, though both facts are essential for faith; faith means we believe what God says about His Son being the sacrifice for our sins is true - and we trust in it!
8. By faith, we believe that the death of one man - Jesus - is sufficient to pay our spiritual debt to God and eliminate all punishment for our sins! ("Believers!")
9. Christians experience God's once-for-all judicial forgiveness when we trust Jesus as Savior; we are no longer condemned, no longer under judgment, no longer destined for hell (Romans 8:1); we have been pardoned, justified, declared righteous!
10. Though we are forgiven the ultimate penalty of sin once-for-all-time, we still need God's repeated forgiveness for the sins we continue to commit.
11. Jesus told His followers to request forgiveness whenever they prayed.
12. Sins committed after being completely forgiven when we first come to faith don't cancel our complete cleansing and pardon of debts (justification), but they do interrupt our close connection (intimacy) with Him. (Does God ever feel distant?)
13. Because we sin, we frequently require God's gracious forgiveness, not as our judge, but as our loving Father, who is eager to continually forgive His children.
14. APP.: Do you believe Jesus died for your sins - and His death was sufficient?
15. Let's symbolize our faith through participating in the Lord's Supper.
16. **Lord's Supper - 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (NLT)** - *For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord Himself. On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord*
BREAD: *Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then He broke it in pieces and said, "This is My body, which is given for you. [Some manuscripts: which is broken for you] Do this in remembrance of Me."*
CUP: *In the same way, He took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with My blood. Do this in remembrance of Me as often as you drink it."*
[PRAY]
17. Let's continue to examine how to receive forgiveness.

B. Receiving Forgiveness

2. Reacts to **CONFESSION**. (1John 1:8-9; Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; Acts 3:19)

1. **1 John 1:8-10 (NLT)** - *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*
2. Asking God for forgiveness indicates awareness, admission, confession of our sins.
3. Confess (Greek **hōmōlōgēō**, hom-ol-og-eh'-o; means "to say the same thing, to agree with, to admit," not merely acknowledging we have done something wrong, but viewing the wrong as God does.
4. When we confess our sins, we agree with God that they are wicked, evil, defiling; we see them not only as something to be forgiven of, but as something to avoid.
5. We often admit our sins as an excuse for them: "of course I sin; everybody does," which actually minimizes them and diminishes Jesus' suffering because of them.
6. When believers confess, we agree that we are disobeying God's law, disregarding His will, and declaring our desire to change. (1 John 3:4; James 2:10-11; 4:17)
7. Christians who readily identify and regularly confess their sins to God prevent what John Stott calls "the process of moral hardening" whereby we drift away from God as we become desensitized to our sin.
8. ILL.: Continually admitting wrongs and apologizing keeps all relationships close and intimate. (Stubborn people who won't apologize won't have close friends.)

9. As the Holy Spirit transforms (sanctifies) believers He produces within us a growing hatred for sin which results in willingness to quickly acknowledge and readily repent of sin. [Greek *mētanoō*, *met-an-ō-eh'-o*; to *think differently* or *afterwards*, i.e. *reconsider*] (Proverbs 8:13; Psalm 97:10)
10. A Christian who is sensitive about offending God will never see His willingness to forgive as freedom to sin, which abuses God's love and presumes on His grace.
11. **Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)** - *People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.* [Psalm 32:5]
12. APP.: Do you readily confess your sins to God? What about to others?

B. Receiving Forgiveness

3. Responds to **MERCY**. (Matthew 6:14-15; C/R: Mark 11:25; Colossians 3:13; James 2:13-14)

1. In verse 12 we are instructed to ask God to "...forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us." [Assumes our forgiveness of others.]
2. Jesus' lesson on prayer concludes with a reminder - a second comment about forgiveness, specifically, our forgiveness of each other.
3. This is the only request of the seven included in the Lord's Prayer to which Jesus gives additional instruction, emphasizing its importance.
4. **Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)** - *"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. [Jesus adds a condition, then restates it in a negative way.] But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."*
5. Jesus communicated a requirement for forgiveness: if we have forgiven, we will be forgiven; if we have not forgiven, we will not be forgiven.
6. "But that seems to conflict with free forgiveness from God and salvation by grace - foundations of our faith." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
7. It certainly indicates that there are conditions for answers to prayer to be received.
8. Regarding forgiveness, it appears that God deals with us as we deal with others.
9. **Mark 11:25 (NLT)** - *"But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."*
10. We are to forgive others as freely and graciously as God forgives us.
11. Perhaps Jesus is exposing an unconverted heart, someone who is not truly born again, who hasn't experienced forgiveness, so is reluctant to grant it to others.
12. This seems to be what James is saying in his letter to scattered Jewish Christians.
13. **James 2:13-14 (NLT)** - *There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when He judges you.* [Then he adds...] *What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?* [No, it can't.]
14. Assuming you are saved (forgiven), what explains your unwillingness to forgive?
15. Perhaps you won't forgive someone who hurt you because you think your unforgiveness is holding the person accountable, it's punishing them and protecting you, but it's not - you're the one being punished.
16. Unforgiveness of others prevents God's forgiveness of us but also robs us of peace of mind, happiness, satisfaction, even healthy functioning of our bodies.
17. Understanding the ugliness of our sin and God's complete forgiveness should alter our character so we will be merciful toward others and freely forgive.
18. God has forgiven us of innumerable sins, sins we aren't even aware of, or don't recognize, but He does because He is more sensitive to sin, more aware of its destructive presence than we could ever be, yet, He freely forgives every sin.
19. Release the person who has hurt you, "hurl away the harm they caused!" Forgive!
20. You will be the one who is set free!
- Care volunteers will be at the front and in the Care Connection room across the Concourse.
- **Memory verse: Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)** - *He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.*