

Lesson: The Need for Forgiveness (Matt 6:9-12; 18:21-35)

- A. The Lord's Prayer demands we seek the Lord's forgiveness. (Matt 6:9-12a)
 - 1. Jesus told us to address our heavenly Father as the holy one. We are to pray for his kingdom and his will on earth as in heaven. We are even to ask him to feed us. God's design and planning are better than our own.
 - 2. We are to ask him to forgive us of our debts. We owe God through sin and disobedience. God owes us nothing. We are asking him forgiveness and not demanding it.
- B. BUT God's forgiveness is to be correlated with our willingness to forgive. (Matt 6:12b)
 - 1. Jesus said to ask for forgiveness AS we forgive others.
 - 2. We who receive forgiveness do not understand forgiveness if we are unwilling to forgive others.
- C. Jesus's teaching on forgiveness: forgiveness should always be open for offenders. (Matt 18:21-22)
 - 1. Peter approached Jesus and asked how many times someone should be forgiven for offenses. It could be understood as the same offense. Jesus's response was alarming. Peter thought seven times would be enough.
 - 2. Jesus said, seventy times seven. In other words, lose count. Keep forgiving.
- D. The parable of the unforgiving servant shows teaches us especially important lessons, the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 18:23-35)
 - 1. We owe the Lord a debt we cannot repay. What we owe God would require that God sell us away.
 - 2. It is incumbent upon us to come to God in humility and ask him to forgive us. Since we owe God so much, we would do well to remember that God has all rights to throw us away.
 - 3. **Never be willing to ask for something you are unwilling to give.** One of the fundamental teachings of the kingdom of God is to treat others as you desire to be treated (Matt 7:12).
 - 4. We should fully expect God to punish us if we are unwilling to forgive other people. It is ridiculous to ask God to forgive us if we do not want to forgive other people. Furthermore, our unwillingness to forgive others bespeaks a desire for God not to forgive them either.
 - 5. Our forgiveness should be sincere. Jesus said, if we choose not to forgive "from the heart" then God will not forgive us. We must be willing to forgive people truly knowing that we have received God's forgiveness.