

HC 126 – Pray the Father Will Forgive Your Sins

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God commands you to hallow his name. But for God's name to be hallowed you have to build his kingdom in your heart, church, and country. And to build his kingdom you must teach, believe, and live God's will – which is the Gospel. And in order to do God's will you need a sufficient supply of food and material things. But to get food and material things to build God's kingdom, you need to be close to him by getting his fatherly forgiveness. This is the message today.

Let me distinguish between fatherly forgiveness and judicial forgiveness. When you were justified (declared righteous) and became a Christian, all your sins were forgiven (judicial forgiveness). But in your day-to-day life you sin against God and you daily need to ask your heavenly Father for his forgiveness. It is this 2nd type of forgiveness (fatherly forgiveness) that we will focus on today.

Our headings are:

God promises forgiveness

You need forgiveness

You must respond to forgiveness

Our goals are: That you would recognize your daily need for fatherly forgiveness so you can remain close with your Father, so you can get the things you need, so you can do the things you have to do to honor your Savior.

126 Q. WHAT DOES THE FIFTH REQUEST MEAN?

A. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors means, Because of Christ's blood, do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are, any of the sins we do or the evil that constantly clings to us. Forgive us just as we are fully determined, as evidence of your grace in us, to forgive our neighbors.

God Promises to Forgive

1. You have debts – debts of sins - that you cannot pay.

The word “debts” normally referred to legal bills which had to be paid.

Luke used the word “sin,” (“Forgive us our sin -the general use of the word sin – but it is the same idea) Luke 11:4).

You owe God a moral or spiritual debt. Your debts are not dollars. Those would be easy to pay.

And worse, every time you break God's law you owe him more.

Those who use translate the word “debt” as “trespass” are following the error of the Anglican Book of Prayer and William Tyndale. “Trespass” means a “deviation from truth.” So trespass (doing what you shouldn't) is a weak translation—half the meaning. You have 2 debts – doing things you shouldn't do and not doing things you should. So your guilt is more! Confessing half your sins is to give Christ half the glory that belongs to him.

2. Because you have debts that you cannot pay, God, out of love, bound himself to forgive both debts you owe...sins of omission (not doing what you should) and sins of commission (doing what you shouldn't-trespases).

3. God forgives you your debts because you are a child of God through the blood atonement of Christ.

Hebrews 9: 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

God is obligated to forgive you. This may seem like strong language, but it is not. Christ redeemed you by his blood and God cannot reject you.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If God did not forgive you your sins it would contradict his promise to forgive. He keeps his promises. If God contradicted his promise, then God would contradict his nature.

4. So you must confidently make this petition for your debts to be removed, regardless of the seriousness of your sins - knowing God will forgive you. (Do you get this?)

Because you are God's child by adoption through Christ, you get God's fatherly forgiveness for all – even serious sins. Count on it! And don't think that someone who committed a terrible sin –worse than you committed - will not be forgiven.

Romans 8:1 **There is therefore now no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

And you also know that God forgives his children without limit.

Hosea 14:2 Take words with you, And return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; **Receive us graciously**...

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have **redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

No child is afraid to go to his good father and ask for good things, and neither should a child of God be afraid to go to him and plead for forgiveness...something you daily need.

1John 2: 1 **My little children**, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And **if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous.

What wonderful joy forgiveness brings every day when your heavenly Father forgives you!

You Need Forgiveness

1. When you pray “forgive us our debts,” you acknowledge you are a sinner in real need of forgiveness.

You acknowledge that you are guilty of **the sins you inherited** from Adam and **your actual sins** that you commit everyday. You daily add to your condemnation by your sins of thoughts, words, and actions.

Those actions include attitudes that are sinful (**Children, beware of this.**), like not correcting a brother in sin, or not setting an example that is worthwhile of being followed.

Romans 3: 10 As it is written: "**There is none righteous, no, not one**; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known."

Psalms 130: 3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

2. And notice the language of the catechism: You are described not just as sinners, but as “poor sinners.”

Consider how David described himself after he failed God and committed adultery and murder. He showed he was spiritually very poor. Get the deep sense of his spiritual poverty.

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, **Blot out my transgressions.** 2 **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity**, And **cleanse me from my sin.** 3 **For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.** 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

You must respond to forgiveness

1. There is that strange part at the end of this petition: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

“Forgive us our debts *as we forgive our debtors*” **does not mean you cause God to forgive you** because you forgive others. God does not forgive you based on your good work. **You are forgiven only because Jesus took your sins on the cross. Even if you did forgive others, your forgiveness is never pure and never full.** You might forgive so people would think good things about you. You might forgive and still hold hatred in your heart.

2. Forgive us our sins “as we forgive our debtors” simply means “forgive us our sins just as we forgive our debtors.”

We know our debtors need forgiveness when they sin against us...so we know we need forgiveness too.

So forgiving others **does not cause salvation** but it **describes our own need for forgiveness**.

3. Now look at a passage some try to misuse to teach that forgiving others causes God to forgive you.

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their offence, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive your offences.

The meaning is the same as before: Just as you forgive men their sins against you, just so your heavenly Father will also forgive you. So it is **not causative but descriptive**. (So you can use the words "since." Since you forgive men, knowing they need forgiveness, God will forgive you.)

On the other hand, just as you don't forgive men their offences, which means you are not a Christian, just so God will not forgive you. It is **not causative but descriptive**.

One more illustration showing forgiving others does not cause your forgiveness but describes normal actions. (Keep in mind you were saved by grace alone – not by good works!)

Matthew 18: 21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. **23** "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.**24** "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. **25** "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. **26** "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' **27** **"Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.** **28** "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' **29** **"So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'** **30** "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. **31** "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. **34** "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. **35** **"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."**

Conclusion:

God is obligated to forgive your sins if you are a Christian; God obligated himself to do so. Every Christian knows he needs forgiveness, for his sins are a great debt he owed but could not pay. He sins in thought, words, and actions (including attitudes, failure to set a good example, and ignoring correcting others). He knows no payment, regardless of how rich he may be, can remove his sins—only Christ's blood can. He then forgives others.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus:

1. It is not common to speak of yourself as needy and dependent, but you are. You are trained to think of yourself as independent. **But the Lord commands you to recognize you are needy and need the impediment of sin removed, so you can come near to him, so you can do the work he has called you to do!** Yes, to be close to God you have to remove any impediment, namely, your debt.

2. So you must ask God to cancel all your debts (things you shouldn't do, but you did, and things you should do, but you didn't) because Christ died for your sins of the past, present, and future.

3. Every time you look at your neighbor and remember he has sinned against you, forgive him. This is good for him and this is good for you, as it reminds you of what you have received from him and continue to receive.

Finally, if you aren't a Christian, you owe God! If Jesus hasn't taken away your sins you owe God. If you owe God you will have to pay for it with your life in hell. But there is a way out! Praise God there is! Like we do, call on God to accept Christ's death as full payment for all your debts and bring you close to himself.