

HC 126 – Forgiveness: Giving and Receiving

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: When God's name is hallowed 为圣, his kingdom will come. When his kingdom comes, his will will be done on earth as the angels do his will in heaven. But for his name to be allowed, for his kingdom to come, and for his will to be done, you need sustenance – food – your daily bread. But there is a 2nd thing you need for God's name to be hallowed, for his kingdom to come, and for his will to be done on earth. You need forgiveness. You see, your needs are more than physical food. You have spiritual needs to do God's work-forgiveness.

Let me first, however, distinguish 鉴别 between fatherly forgiveness and judicial 司法 (legal 法律) forgiveness. When you were justified 称义 (declared righteous) and you 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 come to your heavenly Father and ask for his forgiveness. It is this 2nd type of forgiveness (fatherly or paternal) about which you will hear from the Lord.

Our headings are:

The nature of forgiveness

The need for forgiveness

A note about forgiveness

Our goals are: That you will **recognize your daily need for fatherly forgiveness in order to carry out your covenant tasks before the Lord to bring glory to him.**

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**.

The Nature of Forgiveness

1. When you pray "**forgive us our debts,**" you are acknowledging that because you are a child of **God (and he is your Father) through the blood atonement of Christ, that God is obligated to forgive you.** This is strong language, but it is the truth. God is bound to forgive you. He bound himself to forgive you. Christ redeemed you by his blood and God cannot reject you. What blessed assurance! What a wonderful gift you have as a believer.

Hebrews 9: 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and **without shedding of blood there is no remission.** 按着律法，凡物差不多都是用血洁净的，若不流血，罪就不得赦免了

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 would not forgive you your sins it would contradict 违反 his promise to forgive and God would contradict his nature 本性.

2. What about this word “debt?” (Matthew 6) The word “debt” usually refers to legal bills one owed. You legally owed God what you could not pay. You owed him for failing to live up to his law.

Instead of saying “forgive us our ‘debts’” Luke, a Gentile, said, “Forgive us our “sin.” (Luke 11:4) While “sin” can have a limited meaning, as in not doing what is required (omission), it is often used to describe all areas of failure – sins of omission and commission.

Those who say, “Forgive us our trespasses” are following the error of the Anglicans and William Tyndale. “Trespass” means a “deviation 偏离 from truth.” “Trespass” does not have the double meaning as “sin.” So this translation “trespasses” misses the scope of the prayer. Christ was teaching about all you owe God. Your guilt is more than going where you shouldn’t (trespass) – a sin of commission. **So just praying for the forgiveness of your trespasses robs the Lord of the fullness of his work and robs the prayer of its full meaning.** This robs him of his glory. Further, when you pray only for the removal of your trespasses 侵入 you are limiting God’s obligation to you. God bound himself to forgive you everything you owe...sins of omission 疏漏 (not doing what you should) and sins of commission (doing what you shouldn’t).

3. When you make this 5th petition, you are expressing confidence, that regardless of the seriousness of your sins – idolatry, adultery, rebellion - that God will forgive you. Your record is clear and clean because of your judicial justification – that forgiveness you received when you became a Christian. Because you are God’s child by adoption 嗣养 through Christ, you get God’s fatherly forgiveness, even for your worse sins. You can count on it!

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. So boldly come to him.

Hosea 14:2 Take words with you, And return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; **Receive us graciously**, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

No child is afraid to go to his good father and ask for things, and neither should a child of a perfect God be afraid to go and plead for forgiveness.

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 中保 with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** And He Himself is the propitiation 挽回祭 for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

The Need for Forgiveness

1. You need forgiveness to fulfill your service to God. After all, how can you work for someone who knows you are guilty of wrong doing? How can you worship God if you are not in a talking relationship? You acknowledge that you are guilty of the sins you inherited 继承 and you daily add to your condemnation. Further, you sin in thoughts, words, and actions. Those **actions include attitudes** that are sinful (**Children, beware of this.**) **So you need forgiveness.**

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";

But there is the follow up – hope through Christ!

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

So how do you pray for God's paternal forgiveness? Learn from the language that David used to describe himself after he committed adultery and murder and use them. You get that deep sense of his poverty by his personal expressions. **With sin resolved, he could worship God again!**

Psalm 51: 1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. 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. 7 Purge me with hyssop 牛膝草, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

2. You need forgiveness to fulfill your duties 责任 to your fellow Christians. How can you correct your brother of his sin if you know you have your own unconfessed sin? If you are guilty of sin you might be tempted to ignore your brother's sin. And you certainly won't set an example for them.

3. You need forgiveness in order to evangelize 传福音 and advance God's kingdom – fulfilling your duties to the world. After all, how can you go and preach Christ if you have not repented of your sins in your heart? Won't this hinder Christ's kingdom from coming in fullness? David said: When you forgive me, I will teach transgressors your way!

4. You need forgiveness to enjoy your Christian life. Look at David's prayer as he asked for paternal forgiveness!

Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

A Note about Forgiveness

1. There is that strange part at the end of this prayer. Jesus continued speaking about forgiveness.

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

Some people wrongly to interpret these verses to mean:

- a. When you forgive others you **cause God to forgive you.**
- b. When you forgive, you **set God an example to forgive you.**

2. Why are these interpretations wrong?

Regarding "a.," you are cannot cause God to forgive. It is his prerogative 特权 to forgive whomever and whenever he wants.

Regarding "b.," you are not a example worth following. You are a poor example to follow. Your forgiveness is never pure or full. You might forgive because you want someone to think well of you. You may forgive but hold hatred in your heart against the person you forgive. You may forgive but you don't forget.

So your forgiving of others is **neither a cause for God to forgive you nor is it an example of how God is to forgive** you. Those two interpretations contradict Scriptures.

3. Let us then look at a clearer passage to better understand this.

Mat 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.

So what do the words, **"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you"** mean? The Lord meant that **you need to be aware that you need forgiveness just as you are aware that your neighbor needs forgiveness.** You need grace because you are a

sinner like your neighbor is. It is easy to recognize that your neighbor needs help, so Jesus is saying you do too. You can read that verse: **“For (since) you forgive men their trespasses (knowing they need it), (even so) your heavenly Father will also forgive you”**

Conclusion:

1. God is obligated to forgive your sins because you are a Christian; God obligated himself to forgive your sins because you are his child through Jesus Christ.
2. Every Christian knows that he needs forgiveness, for he owes a debt he could not pay. He sins in thought, words, and actions (including attitudes, failure to set a good example, and refusing to correct others) and he knows that there is no man who can forgive sins.
3. The Christian understands his need of forgiveness when he considers how much his neighbor needs forgiveness.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You are being raised in a culture that is considered to be post-Christian. The former Archbishop 大主教 of Canterbury said recently: **One of the most evident ways of seeing that post-Christian environment is in the fact that people don't see themselves as spiritually needy.** They see themselves as independent 独立. They are trained to think that way. Yet, **the Lord commands you to recognize that you are needy** and he commands you, as his children through Jesus Christ, to call him to help you with your need.
2. So plead your debts before God and ask him to cancel those debts because Christ died for his sins of the past, present, and future. And be ready to urge others, when you see them sin, to repent and find forgiveness in their heavenly Father.

And if you are not a Christian, all the sins of Adam which condemn you, and all your actual sins, which are many, have to be paid. You owe God much. Either you pay for your debts or you ask God to count Jesus' payment as a payment for your sins. Which one will you choose? But one choice leads to death and one to eternal life. Choose life. Choose freedom. If you wish to learn more, ask me.