

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

My grandmother was a patient lady. She had much to be impatient about in her life but she was patient. She would choose the thinnest gossamer thread and the smallest possible crochet hook and spend hours upon hours creating the most intricate works of art in the form of table runners, doilies and the like. I would wonder at how some intertwined loops could hold together like they did and how each loop was dependent on the one next to it to hold it's form. But if one of those loops were to be faulty and break the whole work would be lost in the eyes of my grandmother.

The past few weeks we have been studying the Lord's prayer. And I hope you have appreciated the extraordinary complexity behind the wonderful simplicity of a prayer that can be a comfort to a child and yet explored and devoured for years and years without finding the end to it's depth.

prayed
has brought light to the hearts of many.

But like my granny's crochet work it's every sentence depends on the the integrity of the sentence before and after it. For if we compromise even one word the Lord has given us the whole prayer falls apart!!!!

And, so, it is with this in mind that we approach the next line, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

Notice that Jesus couples **food with forgiveness!** Last week we saw how we proclaim our dependence on God to feed us and provide for our daily needs. Water and food are our basic building blocks for life and along with that the Lord knows that our **greatest need** is forgiveness from him and from one another. **Our greatest needs are to be fed and forgiven!**

When I accepted Mark's invitation to marry him I made my choice out of absolute selfishness! You see, I knew my self so well that I knew I had to find a husband who's overwhelming quality was forgiveness! It wasn't his athleticism, it wasn't his bank account, it wasn't his great head of hair that attracted me to his proposal it was his wonderful, generous, self giving nature that drew me in. I also supposed there wouldn't be much forgiving to do either! I knew that if I yoked myself to a person who found it hard to forgive, he and I would be miserable but the Lord knew what I needed and sent me Mark.

↙ 22 Anyone here who is or has been married knows how intrinsically important forgiveness is to keep that marriage alive.

↙ Anyone here who is part of a family knows how important forgiveness is to keeping that unit functioning well and in any community group or work place a certain level of forgiveness is a must. It seems that the closer the relationship the more forgiveness is needed to oil it's various parts.

And when it comes to that closest of relationships, that one between God and his child, we see forgiveness in it's greatest glory.

Jesus teaches us to ask God the Father to forgive our sins. You might think it strange or bothersome to God to day in and day out to hear us ask for forgiveness but God LOVES to

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forgive us. It is his nature to be giving and forgiving! We see it in the story of the Prodigal Son and how the son hardly gets out his apology before the Father is reinstating the Apologetic son to his former glory

Our heavenly Father never tires of hearing our request for forgiveness and to his forgiveness their is no end.

Photo

Mark recently took me to Niagara Falls. Even when we were far from the falls themselves there was this wetting spray even in the car park. As we walked toward the falls that spray got thicker until we saw the falls themselves! The power, the magnitude and the constant flow of water was amazing. The water flowing and falling day and night for years and years to come. A great reminder of the power, the magnitude and the constancy of God's forgiveness for us.

But why does God keep forgiving us? When we offend him often and greatly?

The Bible tells us that God does it for Jesus sake! Ep 4:32

For every time God forgives us : *its an opportunity for God to:*

Jesus is thrust into the spot light,

Jesus is glorified,

Jesus is rightly honoured.

Did you know part of God's day to day job is to glorify the son!

..... and every time we ask for forgiveness God, even before the words have come from our lips has forgiven us and in great excitement lifts us to our feet and points us to Jesus, "look at him! isn't he amazing, wasn't he wonderful in his obedience that bought your forgiveness, remember his willingness to go to the cross for you? he loves you so much. He picks us up and draws our eyes to Jesus and his brilliant magnificence, takes us to the very heights of His shining glory..... then he says to us

"You are forgiven, now go and do likewise....go and forgive just as you have been forgiven"

And in the light of God's forgiveness of us and Jesus in all his glory..... our answer is YES! Of course!

There are two types of people in our world. " Sliders and Deciders"

The slider will go with the flow, live with an idea of a suggestion and then slide into a decision. The decider is definitive in his or her decision. God leaves no room for sliders here folks..... and there is no room for a "no" decision!

If we are unwilling to forgive others then this prayer becomes a CURSE to us! For we are asking God "NOT" to forgive us.

Jesus warns us in Matthew 6;14-15

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Friends if we call ourselves Christian and have a spirit of unforgiveness, we have misunderstood Jesus and all he has done for us.

If we call ourselves Christian and have a spirit of unforgiveness we can't pray this prayer.

If we have a spirit of unforgiveness this whole prayer has fallen apart for us. Just like my granny's crochet work.

If you are here today and you are harbouring a spirit of unforgiveness, this prayer doesn't belong to you.

~~This prayer does not belong to you~~ Your's, I suggest, is a different prayer!

Your prayer goes more like this.....

God in heaven..... you are not my father

I will have nothing to do with hallowing your name

I am interested only in building my puny kingdom, not seeing yours come

My will be done in my world and I don't care what happens in heaven

I work and buy myself food. I am totally self sufficient

I don't need your forgiveness because I wont forgive that person who needs mine.

We mustn't think we can domesticate God's forgiveness for us. We mustn't think it a luxury consumable that we can take and bathe in and keep to ourselves!

Bought by the death of Jesus → *Power of the resurrection*

God's forgiveness is the foundation of a cataclysmic new world order!

God's forgiveness is the currency of a new race of people!

A people not defined by their DNA/

Or where they were born /or the colour of their eyes or skin

But A race of people born of God the Father

Concerned for his name and his Kingdom

Dependent on him for everything they need

Defined by being **forgiven** by God and at work being **forgivers!**

If you are a Christian you are *Part of this race* (and must continue to be) a **forgiven forgiver** *2?

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

I would suggest, friend, if you are holding on to unforgiveness you are in an untenable position if you call yourself Christian.

Are you in that position? Are you relishing that beautiful bitterness?

sometimes forgiveness is the hardest thing for us to give.

But Susan, you say! You have no idea what I've been through! What I've seen, how I have been offended! Friend I haven't and I can't know your pain. But if God is your true Father, he does.

A man from our Roseville congregation told Mark he could never forgive the Japanese for all they did in the war. What is God's response to that?

I understand, it was a horrible time. They did unspeakable things, as did people all over the earth. I know how you feel.

Did you see what was done to my son?

Did you see how he was beaten and killed even though he was innocent?

I understand your pain..... Vengeance is mine, leave it with me, I will repay. Forgive them and go and be free of your unforgiveness"

God looks upon YOU, the abused child, YOU the betrayed spouse and YOU seriously wounded people (physically and spiritually) ^{He} sees how sin has marred all that he made good for your life. His heart breaks. *God*

I know your pain. I feel your pain with you. You have been greatly wronged, beaten and battered. Im so sorry.

Did you see how everyone betrayed my son in his hour of great need.

Did you see how he was stripped and publicly humiliated

Did you see how no one rescued him from the scourging.

Did you see how unrecognisable he was as he tried to carry that cross only to be crucified though he'd done nothing wrong?

Did you see how his best friends even ran away from him.

BUT *did you see him lay down his hands for those nails*

did you hear what he said as the nails were driven through his hands?

"Father forgiven them, they have no idea what they are doing"

Dear forgiven one..... vengeance is mine.... be assured I will repay..... I will bind you up and help to heal those wounds..... now go and forgive as I have forgiven you.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Is there blessing in this sentence for you? Are you a child of God the Father?

A forgiven forgiver?

Or will this sentence be a curse to you and will a continuing spirit of unforgiveness render you **unforgiven**.

May God forgive our unforgiveness and give us the grace and strength to do for others as he has done for us.