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Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
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The Lord's Prayer
5 – Forgive Our Debts



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from Noun Project

During the season of Lent, we will reflect on the Lord's Prayer. This is the example for talking to God the Father that Jesus gave to the disciples and to us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from all evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and glory forever. Amen.

Forgive our Debts ...

As We Forgive

Matthew 6:12

This segment of our prayer starts with the word "AND." What came before is included in this petition, which shows our relationship with our heavenly father. We see the effect of this reconciliation between God and ourselves: forgiveness. The previous segment says that we need our daily bread from the Father. In the same way, we need to keep our relationship with God and others. Daily evaluation of our relationships with

others is needed. What breaks our relationships? It is trespassing, which can only be resolved with forgiveness.

We see three petitions mentioned in this prayer.

- a. **Give us** this day our daily bread.
- b. **Forgive us** our trespasses.
- c. **Lead us** not into temptation and **deliver us** from evil.

A. Receiving forgiveness from God for our trespasses

Sins or trespasses break our relationships with God and others. It is us, humankind, who have sinned, not God.

Paul writes in Romans about the universal sin:

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” 6:23

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” 5:8

And these famous words are written in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

In the Old Testament, prophet Isaiah says:

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.’”

Isaiah 1:18

The above statement declares that the provision of forgiveness is completed. The only act sinners like us need to perform is to go to Him.

- a. repent of our sins
- b. ask for forgiveness from the Lord

b. accept this free gift of salvation by faith which is offered to us by his grace.

Paul describes it this way:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Romans 10:10

John also describes this act of confession and forgiveness:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

So, the first half of this part of the Lord’s Prayer reminds us that our trespasses/ sins/ debts against God are taken care of by repenting of our sins and accepting his offer of forgiveness through his sacrifice on the cross.

B. Forgiving Trespasses against us

First of all, this is not suggestion by the Lord to forgive others; it is a mandate or command. As his followers, his disciples, we need to fulfill his commands. If we love him, we will obey him.

Why it is necessary to forgive others?

1. First and foremost, this is the proof of God’s accepting our own repentance.
2. Our transformed life is the result of forgiveness.
3. This is the spiritual principle of a victorious Christian life.
4. This victory is over the world of sin and Satan.

5. We can feel light after forgiving them, because our burden is taken from us.

Examples of Forgiveness

1. Jesus Christ:

He forgives all those who have rejected him.

“He came to his own and his own received him not.” John 1:11

Even on the cross he made this statement:

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34

2. Stephen, one of the deacons of the early church, the first martyr:

Stephen forgave the people who were stoning him to death:

“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell down and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:59-60)

An Example of Un-forgiveness

Jesus told this parable in Matthew 18:21-35.

He was answering Peter, who had asked him, “How many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?” Jesus replied to him, “seventy times seven.” He explains this to the disciples through a parable.

A king was settling accounts with his servants. One of them owed him ten thousand talents. He could not pay, so the King ordered his family and property be sold to pay the debt. The

servant begged to the King to show pity on him, and he promised to pay the debt. So, the king canceled his total debt and let him go.

The servant came out and found one of his fellow servants, who owned him a hundred denarii (a much smaller amount). Look at his response – the one who had been forgiven grabbed him and began to choke him and asked him to pay back his debt. The other servant asked for more time, but he did not listen and put him in jail till he could pay back his one hundred denarii.

The other servants who saw everything were greatly distressed and reported to the king about this man's behavior. You can imagine what the king will do now. He called him and said, You wicked servant, I canceled all that debt of yours, but you could not do the same with the little amount your fellow servant owed to you? You begged, and I forgave you but when the other begged, you did not follow my example.

The King ordered him to be tortured in jail till he paid back the amount he owed to the king.

Jesus wanted to emphasize to the disciples: "This is how my heavenly father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Vs. 35.

So, we who are forgiven people should forgive others.

Some ideas from:

Ortberg, John. *The Lord's Prayer: Praying with Power*. New Community Bible Study Series, 2008

Also found in Ortberg, John, and Hybels, Bill. *Life Lessons from Jesus*. Zondervan, 2014.