

The Garden
Matthew 6:12
10/11/22

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Twelve words. That is all there is in this powerful message. In this passage, Matthew uses the word debt. In the parallel passage in Luke 11 the word sins is used.

Luke 11:4a

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us

The word forgive here is the Greek word *aphiemi*. It means to send forth, cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up. It is used many times in the New Testament because of its many additional meanings. For example, when Satan left Jesus after having tempted him in the wilderness the word is used. It is also used when Jesus sent away the multitude after having taught them. The word is very useful, but it is not only translated forgive here. There are many instances of the word being translated forgive throughout the New Testament. I'll include two here:

Matthew 18:21

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

Mark 2:10-11

"But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic – "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."

When I think about the Lord's prayer, it brings back memories of standing in church and reciting it with the rest of the congregation. I know that even though I

was proud that I knew all the words as a little girl, I never thought about what it meant to be in debt or even to whom I was in debt. I wonder if even the adults thought much about it. There is a lot said in the commentary world about this short verse. My favorite is the commentary by Adam Clarke:

And forgive us our debts... Sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and as our sins are many, they are called here debts. God made man that he might live to his glory and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does anything that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice, how much more is he debtor when he breaks the law by actual transgression! It has been justly observed, "All the attributes of God are reasons of obedience to man; those attributes are infinite; every sin is an act of ingratitude or rebellion against all these attributes; therefore, sin is infinitely sinful."

Forgive us. -Man has nothing to pay: if his debts are not forgiven, they must stand charged against him forever, as he is absolutely insolvent. Forgiveness, therefore, must come from the free mercy of God in Christ: and how strange is it we cannot have the old debt cancelled, without (by that very means) contracting a new one, as great as the old! but the credit is transferred from Justice to Mercy. While sinners we are in debt to infinite Justice; when pardoned, in debt to endless Mercy: and as a continuance in a state of grace necessarily implies a continual communication of mercy, so the debt goes on increasing ad infinitum. Strange economy in the Divine procedure, which by rendering a man an infinite debtor, keeps him eternally dependent on his Creator! How good is God! And what does this state of dependence imply? A union with, and participation of, the fountain of eternal goodness and felicity!

- Because of the great _____ of God, our debt is forgiven!
- This is through the _____ of Jesus Christ to bear our sins on the cross and pay the debt we owed but could never pay.
- Oh, the great love of our God!! This should cause us to _____
_____ and eternally.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Let's look at the second part of the verse, "as we also have forgiven our debtors". According to Adam Clarke's Commentary in Jewish religion a person must forgive anyone who has offended him or risk eternal punishment. As we have studied in the Sermon on the Mount, many of the Jewish laws and teachings had loopholes established to make human sin seem acceptable. Jesus, as usual, comes right to the point. God insists that we forgive others because of the forgiveness of the huge debt that we have incurred through God's mercy and grace. We may say that we have forgiven someone and yet still harbor malice in our hearts toward that person. A tricky part of knowing whether we have truly forgiven someone is understanding our own thoughts and motives. I know that I often ask God to show me my motives because I really don't know. I want to please God in all my thoughts, motives, and actions but I know myself well enough to know that I can also deceive myself in to thinking that I am pure as the driven snow but really, I still have not forgiven someone.

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?

- It is apparent from scripture that God is _____ about this issue of unforgiveness.
- At the end of the Lord's prayer Jesus elaborated on the part about _____:

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Later in Matthew Jesus used a story to illustrate unforgiveness:

Matthew 18:23-24

For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who weighed to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents.

Matthew 18:25-26

But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.'

Matthew 18:27-28

And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what was owed.'

Matthew 18 29-30

So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' He was unwilling however but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

Matthew 18:31-32

So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him his

lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me.

Matthew 18:33-35

Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you? And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

I think this story illustrates well how God feels about unforgiveness on our part. How presumptuous for us to hold a grudge against someone when we have been forgiven the huge debt we owe to our loving God.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:1

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Let's take a few minutes to meditate on how great a gift we have been given. Our sins have been forgiven and we can have peace with God. Peace is not something that can be obtained through anything the world has to offer. Because of what we have been given it makes sense that we can be forgiving toward others. Our cups overflow with the blessings of God! Let's let it flow out of our hearts toward other people. Write down any thoughts you would like to share.

