

Forgive us our Sins

Matthew 18:21-35 Ephesians 4:17-32 Psalm 103:1-12

October 15, 2023
Pastor Dave Bolte



The “**Lord’s**” Prayer is *Jesus’ Prayer* that He shares with us. In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray “*forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*” Here is how we learn it in the Small Catechism:

THE FIFTH PETITION OF THE LORD’S PRAYER

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer; for we are not worthy of anything we ask, neither have we deserved it. But we pray that He would give us everything by grace, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment; and **we on our part will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.**

Forgiveness starts with God, and then flows through us. Forgiveness never starts with us¹; it’s impossible for us to forgive others on our own. Our sinful nature **seeks revenge** on those who hurt us, we **hold grudges**, and we **grow bitter** towards those who sin against us. That is why *Forgiveness always starts with God --- and His Son Jesus.*

¹ This is where the “analogy of faith” is clearly seen. You cannot interpret Jesus’ words to mean: God will forgive you AFTER you forgive other people. Forgiveness is not a “quid pro quo” arrangement that God makes with you. That would be sheer works righteousness, and is condemned in Scripture. . . In order to let “Scripture interpret Scripture” (another way of saying the “analogy of faith”), then we interpret this phrase in the light of clearer verses, such as Ephesians 4:32: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (and other verses).

The “analogy of faith” or the “analogy of Scripture” or “Scripture interprets Scripture” means that the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture, because Scripture always agrees with Scripture. The noble Bereans employed this rule when they compared Paul’s teaching with other Scripture (see Acts 17:11) Our goal then, in interpreting Scripture, is to compare Scripture with Scripture. If we arrive at an interpretation that appears to contradict another teaching of Scripture, we are wrong in our understanding of at least one of them. The phrase “analogy of faith” is Biblical: when Romans 12.6 speaks of the gift of prophecy . . . the Pauline injunction is given that this gift of prophecy must be exercised “according to the proportion [ἀναλογίαν = analogy] of faith.”

The **most important teaching** in Christianity is the forgiveness of sins through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

This is exactly what separates Christianity from all other world religions. The world religions do not teach *forgiveness*, but rather about *making up* for your sins and appeasing their god². They teach that **you do something** in order to find salvation; Christianity teaches that God does something for you: **He forgives you because of His Son Jesus Christ**. When you think of God's forgiveness to you in Christ, keep these two things in mind:

1. Jesus has done 100% of the work for 100% of the people. God sent Jesus to do the work of salvation for you; He does not ask you to do it. When Jesus died on the cross, He was there for you, in your place, as your substitute.

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them 2 Cor 5:19

By His life, death and resurrection, Jesus has done **100% of the work for 100% of the people**. This includes you and your sin; you are forgiven because of Jesus.

² The many world religions have various ways of appeasing God, such as: overcoming evil, striving to be pure, self-improvement through reincarnation, mantras, moral living, social conformity, meditation, asceticism, live in harmony with nature, sacrifices, social justice, obeying a set of laws, and etc. ALL world religions are "Law-based" – that is, dependent on the person and the performance of these works. Christianity is the ONLY place where you find forgiveness from God alone. There are two phrases that picture the difference between World religions and Christianity: "Monkey hold" and "Cat hold". A baby monkey holds on to its mother's back otherwise it is left behind; a mother cat picks its kitten up by the neck and carries it. The "monkey hold" pictures works; the "cat hold" pictures grace.

2. God's forgiveness is a free gift: you cannot earn it. The Biblical word for this is “grace”, a word that means “gift”. Forgiveness, life and salvation are gifts from the Father in Heaven; **THEY ARE NOT REWARDS, PAYMENTS, OR MERIT.** Faith receives God's gift; and even faith is a gift from God.

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. Eph 2:8-9

God's forgiveness is a free gift of His grace, received through faith.

Be sure to apply it to yourself.

Jesus died on the cross for you --- He has done the work of forgiveness for you and He gives that forgiveness to you as a gift. It means that your sins are forgiven;

- ⇒ Whatever is in your past, it is forgiven!
- ⇒ Whatever guilt you are carrying, it has been removed from you!
- ⇒ Whatever sin Satan harasses you about, it has been nailed to the cross!
- ⇒ No matter how unworthy you feel, God really does love you!

You are forgiven! Your sins are removed! You are set free from sin and guilt! **Your relationship with the Heavenly Father is restored because Jesus has done 100% of the work for 100% of the people and He gives it to you as a gift of grace through faith!**

*Forgiveness always starts with God in His Son Jesus,
and then flows through you to other people.*

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to forgive other people as God has forgiven us. Martin Luther puts it like this: **“We on our part will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.”** That gets difficult. It gets personal. It gets right into your relationships with other people.

We heard a parable from Jesus today about forgiving the sins of others. The King forgave one servant a **huge debt**; but that same servant went

out and refused to forgive a **very small debt** someone owed him³. The King was furious, and threw the servant into prison.

*It's a parable that teaches you
to forgive others as generously as God has forgiven you!*

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

This is tough to do, especially when someone has sinned against you and caused you all kinds of trouble, problems and pain. Remember, forgiveness doesn't start with us, but it flows through us from God. *God's forgiveness for you in Christ motivates you to forgive others.*

If you don't forgive, then bitterness and anger, resentment and hostility will fill your heart. It consumes you. If you don't forgive, it leads to grudges and all kinds of unhappiness. Bitterness is a poison that corrupts from the inside. This is not God's Will for you; God's Will is that you forgive, as God has forgiven you. God's Will is that you forgive others from your heart. The only way you can do that – **the ONLY WAY** – is because God has first forgiven you in His Son Jesus Christ.

The word **Forgiveness means “release, set free”**. Forgiveness means that you “release” other people's sins, that you “set them free” in your heart and in your mind. That you don't hold their sins against them. God has released your sins; He has set you free! Let God's forgiveness flow through you so that you can release other people's sins against you; and set free them free.

*Forgiveness always starts with God in His Son Jesus,
and then flows through you to other people.*

AMEN!

³ The core of the Parable is the comparison of the debt; of course, we are the one with the very large debt that has been forgiven. If you have a hard time forgiving others their sins against you, just remember that God has forgiven you a 1000 times more for sins against Him. God's forgiveness of your sins empowers, strengthens, and motivates you to forgive others.

Lord God,

we praise you that you sent Your Only Begotten Son to suffer and die on a cross to forgive our sins.

We thank you that our forgiveness comes from you, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Send us the Holy Spirit so that we too can forgive other people, as you have forgiven us.

Help us to love others, and to set them free from their sins against us,

so that we do not become filled with bitterness and anger towards them.

Father forgive us our trespasses so that we can forgive those who trespass against us.

We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen

Psalm 103:1-12

1 Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.7 He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:8The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.9He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Ephesians 4:17-32

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. 20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”