

## THE LIFE OF JESUS

### How Jesus Taught Us To Pray – Part 4

Matthew 6:1, 5-13 - Jesus said, “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>5</sup> And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

<sup>9</sup> “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, <sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

#### Praying The Way Jesus Taught Us To Pray

##### 1) We acknowledge the greatness of God.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...”

##### 2) We desire to see Jesus reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

“your kingdom come...”

##### 3) We want God’s plan to be our plan, not the other way around.

“your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

##### 4) We ask God to give us our daily needs.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

##### 5) We confess our sins and we forgive others.

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”

#### Five Greek Words For Sin In The New Testament

- Debts (*opheilema*) – moral or spiritual debt to God that must be paid
- Sin (*harmartia*) – missing the mark of God’s standard
- Trespass (*paraptoma*) – sin from carelessness more than intentional
- Transgression (*parabasis*) – sin that is more intentional
- Lawlessness(*anomia*) – direct and open rebellion against God

#### Why did Jesus choose the word “debts” when referring to sin in this prayer?

While many Americans view debt as an annoyance, in the ancient world debt was punishable by prison sentence. In the Roman Empire, prisons were not generally filled with criminals; they were populated with debtors. Most convicted criminals were executed or were forced to serve some other form of punishment for their crimes, but those who could not make good on their payments were incarcerated until they could pay what they owed. This system was meant to put pressure on the families of the incarcerated debtor to find the necessary money to pay their debts to free their loved one from prison.

In the Roman Empire, then, debt typically meant severe pain and tragedy for an individual and a family. In our day we experience frustration and anxiety with debt, but in the days of Jesus, debt was a matter of life and death. This is the context in which Jesus teaches us to pray “forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Jesus’ use of the word *debts* is meant to evoke in our mind both a serious offense and a corresponding serious punishment. To be forgiven a debt was not a minor action, but an act of extravagant mercy.

#### •We ask God to show us mercy rather than punishing us as we deserve.

##### - Mercy is the gift of God’s undeserved kindness and compassion.

Ephesians 2:1-5 - You were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

#### •When we understand how much God has forgiven us, it will cause us to extend mercy and forgiveness to others.

Ephesians 4:31-32 - Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Matthew 6:14-15 – Jesus said, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”