

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: February 17, 2019

SUBJECT: THE LORD'S PRAYER—A Model: Our Relationship with God and Man (2 of 2)

SCRIPTURES: Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Luke 11:4a; Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-5; 6:35-37

AIM: To show the children that we must forgive one another as the Lord has forgiven us. If we do not forgive others from the heart neither will our heavenly Father forgive us.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES: Matthew 6:12 (And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors); 14 (For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also); 15 (But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses); Colossians 3:13 (Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 180 (If We Confess our Sins); 183 (When God Forgives, He Forgets); 6724 *Bible Story Songs Matthew Vol. 2 Song #18* (Then Peter Came and Said to Him); 110 (Jesus Can Do Anything)

CRAFT IDEA: 3-D forgiven and forgiving heart. For instructions, see:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BweN0cUJ4P64NmVrYjkxM3pESVZTWVRGMIZIaUR5eTUzbDY0/view?usp=sharing>

BACKGROUND: Last week we covered the first part of Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts,...”. This week we will continue Matthew 6:12 “...as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Our debts are our sins or offenses against God and others. Our debtors are those who have sinned against us or offended us and whom we must forgive.

APPROACH: Ask the children: Has anyone ever made you upset or angry? How easy is it to forgive them? Did you find it difficult? What if you feel the other person is not really sorry for what they have done? What if the person does the same thing several times; will you still be able to forgive?

CONTENT:

III. Our Relationship with Man (continued)

It is hard to avoid offending others—in our families, at school, in children's meeting, etc. Likewise, others often offend us as well. It is clear from the Lord's pattern of prayer given to us that we must ask for forgiveness if we offend others. But how about when others offend us?

- **We must forgive all the time.** If our debtor (offender) is sincere in his repentance, it may be easy for us to forgive him, especially if our feelings were not too hurt. But if he is not sincere, it may not be so easy. Like us, the disciple Peter had such a problem, so he went to the Lord and asked, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Seven times seems to be a lot; maybe we can only forgive three times. But the Lord answered, “Up to seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:21-22). That equals 490 times, which really means no limit. Moreover, if our brother sins against us seven times in a day, and seven times in a day this brother turns again to us seven times, saying, “I repent”, we must forgive him (Luke 17:3-4). We need to forgive everyone, every time, and all the time, yet this is so difficult to do. How can we be helped?
- **We must see God's capacity for forgiving us (in extent and amount).** We may feel that it is too hard to forgive in this way. This is because our focus is on ourselves—how much we got hurt, how and much we have forgiven. But if we switch our focus to God's capacity forgiving us, it would be very easy to forgive others. Consider how much we have offended the Lord. Let's say a 10-year old child had offended the Lord once a day; he would have offended the Lord 3,650 times already. If he offended the Lord seven times a day, he would have offended the Lord 25,550 times! Yet God loves us. He does not keep an account of our sins. Instead He forgives all our sins (Psalms 103:3a).

- **To illustrate how much God has forgiven us, the Lord used a parable in Matthew 18:23-35.** The Lord Jesus told a parable about a slave that owed an extraordinary amount of money—ten thousand talents (worth billions of dollars in today’s money). This was an impossibly large amount that could never be repaid! But the king had compassion on him and forgave him after he begged for forgiveness. Yet the slave turned around and would not forgive a fellow slave who owed him a tiny amount of money, only 100 denarii (worth only a few dollars in today’s money).
 - **God’s forgiveness is immeasurable.** The amount that the slave owed was huge and impossible to repay! Yet the king forgave him. If we realize the extraordinary amount that God has forgiven us, then we could easily forgive others and not be stingy in our forgiveness.
 - **God’s forgiveness is unconditional.** The King did not require the slave to pay off his debt by making him promise to work harder or by putting him on probation. He simply forgave. Yet often we are so narrow and refuse to forgive someone unless he promises to improve and not repeat his offense.
 - **God’s forgiveness is thorough and complete.** When God forgives, He does not remember our sins anymore (Jeremiah 31:34c). He even says that He casts all our sins into the depths of the sea! (Micah 7:19b) Can you find anything in the deep sea? As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12). He forgives and forgets, yet how often we remember every incident of offense against us, even very minor offenses. If only we would realize God’s abundant grace and mercy toward us, it would be easy to forgive others.
- **God’s desire is that we would be like Him in forgiving others.** Whoever needs mercy must learn to be merciful and whoever has obtained mercy must also learn to be merciful. We all need mercy! And we all have obtained mercy from God! See how evilly the slave who was forgiven treated his fellow slave! It was unreasonable! In God’s eyes, it is unreasonable and evil not to forgive others. If we do not forgive our brother, we are like this slave. The slave was strict in demanding righteousness—he put his fellow slave in prison because he was unable to pay his debt of 100 denarii, which is less than a millionth of 10,000 talents. (Compared to what he had owed, how small this was!) However, as our Father’s children, we must be strict to ourselves but treat others with grace and mercy. When the king called the slave back to Him, He said, “Evil slave, all that debt I forgave you, because you begged me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave even as I had mercy on you?” (Matthew 18:32b-33). One who has obtained mercy and has been forgiven of all debts must say, “Lord, thank you for forgiving all my debts! I am also willing to forgive all my debtors. You are so willing and ready to forgive; I want to be like you.”
- **The Lord’s warning—the consequences of not forgiving others.** Some might think it does not matter whether or not we forgive. It does matter!
 - **God’s discipline.** In this parable, we see that the master was angry with this slave and delivered him to the torturers until he repaid what was owed. Here the Lord shows us one who falls under God’s discipline and dealing! “So also will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts” (Matthew 18:34-35). What a warning! May we all learn to forgive our brothers from our hearts and not hold any grudge against them nor remember their offenses. Although He loves us as His children and disciplines us for our profit (Heb. 12:6-10), it is much better not to fall under His chastisement.
 - **We will not be forgiven by our Father.** In Matthew 6:14-15, the Lord continued, “For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.” This shows us clearly that if we do not forgive others, the Father will not forgive our offenses. This is another warning and encouragement to us to forgive others.

We can pray to ask the Lord to help us to forgive one another as the Lord has forgiven us. Only the Lord can help us see how much we have been forgiven so that we could willingly forgive others.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting lessons: 6/13/82; 9/16/90; 8/23/98; 8/25/02; 2/24/08; 2/16/14