



Matthew 6:5-15 "Forgive... or Else?"
Wk. 23 Sermon on the Mount
By Pastor Onan Coca January 26, 2025

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[READ THE TEXT]

"People of God, this is the Word of God!"

Congregation - "Thanks be to God!"

[PRAY]

Before I start today, I'd like us to look at a pair of quotes from two great men of God, which should set the tone for our study today.

"The Christian is not a good man. He is a vile wretch who has been saved by the grace of God." — Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones

"If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him; for you are worse than he thinks you to be." — Charles H. Spurgeon

As you can see, we'll be focusing on positivity, self-care, and sunshine! Not! Just kidding...



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While I'm not here to condemn anyone today, I think as we progress through our study, you'll see why these two very true and very important quotes are applicable to us today.

For the last four months, we have been walking through Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Over the course of that time, Pastor Jody has repeatedly reminded us that this Sermon isn't a recipe for being a better Christian. No, this sermon is more of an explanation of what a Christian already is.

In the last few weeks, we've been settling into Jesus's description of how we should "practice our righteousness," and our Lord focused on three things – giving, which Pastor Jody preached about last month; praying, which Pastors Jody and Mike have preached on the previous two weeks and which I'll wrap up today, and fasting which we'll cover over the next couple of weeks.

Today, we will spend our time looking at an area that Jesus felt needed EXTRA focus and attention.

I think, when we read through the Sermon on the Mount, we sometimes skim past this faster than we should, or we don't realize that Jesus is underlining an important point here – but to His original audience, it would have seemed as if He were really hammering this forgiveness point home. This moment in His sermon would have been a pretty monumental one for those listening.

It should be a monumental moment for us, too.

Have you ever wondered why the only part of the Lord's model prayer that Jesus chooses to expand on is verse 12? No?



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The fact that our Savior expands on the 5th petition and even digs in and says, "If you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you," is extremely important for God's people.

I hope you'll "forgive" me today because I'll be leaning on several giants who came before me as we discuss this—theologians and Pastors who have pulled apart this straightforward but hard teaching from our Lord. So, let's talk about it. Our passage in Matthew 6 says,

Matthew 6:12

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

And Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Our main point today is that **forgiveness is hard, but it's what we're called to do, and it's worth doing.**

Main point: Forgiveness is hard, but it's what we're called to do, and it's worth doing.

Let me begin by laying some groundwork.

1. What forgiveness here isn't and what it is.

What aren't we talking about? We're not talking about our justification – or our final salvation. According to Romans 3, Romans 8, Galatians 3, and elsewhere, justification is God's once-and-for-all legal declaration that we are righteous through faith in His Son, who has done all the work necessary to save us.



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The Baptist catechism puts it like this in question 36.

36. What is justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins (Romans 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8) and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Romans 5:17–19), and received by faith alone (Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9).

Our justification isn't based on our good works – something Scripture says again and again... here's a few examples:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Romans 10:9

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

John 5:24

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

So we know that our justification, our salvation, isn't about us. It's about Jesus.

That means when Jesus tells us that if we don't forgive others, the Father won't forgive us – He isn't talking about our salvation.



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He's not saying that if you don't forgive, you aren't saved anymore.

He's talking about forgiveness in our **daily walk** with the Father. He's talking about our sanctification.

While justification may be a "once-for-all time" event, faith leads the believer into a lifelong process called sanctification.

Again, the Baptist Catechism helps us to understand what Sanctification is:

38. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace (2 Thessalonians 2:13), whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Ephesians 4:23, 24) and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness (Romans 6:4, 6; 8:1).

We would call justification "monergistic," meaning the work of God alone, but sanctification is "synergistic," or God and the believer both working to conform the believer into the image of Christ.

So when Jesus speaks of forgiveness in the sermon on the mount, He is talking about a daily-needed, faith-filled, good work that every Christian should pray for help with.

So, while it doesn't mean that a Christian who won't forgive isn't going to be saved anymore. It does mean that a Christian who won't forgive won't be growing in grace and becoming more like Jesus. It does mean that a Christian who won't forgive should take a good, hard look at himself and his own faith.



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Remember, this is the Lord's model prayer for us. He is telling us that when we pray - and as Pastor Mike said last week, Scripture tells us we should be praying all the time – when we pray, we should pray **LIKE THIS**.

Jesus expects us to ask for forgiveness of our sins every day because we do sin every day.

And He expects us to need help forgiving others every day because we are likely sinned against every day!

Just like we pray every day that the Lord will meet our needs, we also pray every day for forgiveness of the new sins we have committed.

But our expectation should be that we will only be forgiven as much as we have forgiven others! Does this strike you with fear? I know that it's concerning to me.

Why?

2. Forgiveness is Not Natural.

Because forgiveness is not natural.

One of the most famous directives in Scripture is something we call "the Golden Rule." It comes to us from Matthew chapter 7, which says,

¹² "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

And it also appears in Luke 6, where it says, **³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.**



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But you know what Jesus also explains in both places? The Golden Rule is not a "natural" thing.

Jesus calls loving like this "a hard way." He says, "Few" find it. He says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." He says, This kind of love, where we treat others as we wish to be treated, is not natural to the world, but we are to be merciful as our Father is merciful. We are to do good and love even when we are reviled.

There's another way for us to see that forgiveness isn't natural.

[Pastor Voddie Baucham expressed it well](#) when asked how he would answer someone who says that people are inherently good, not inherently sinful.

Pastor Voddie responded by saying, and I'm paraphrasing here, "They should have kids. You have to teach kids almost everything. You know what you don't have to teach them? How to sin. You don't have to teach them how to lie. You don't have to teach them how to steal. You don't have to teach them how to hate—just the opposite. You have to teach them how to respect other people's property. You have to teach them to tell the truth. You have to teach them to be kind."

Voddie's right. In fact, I'd add another one on there. You have to teach kids how to be sorry and how to forgive as well. Think about it, parents. How often did you have to tell your kids to be kind, to apologize, or to forgive?

Apologizing and Forgiving do not come naturally to us. These things wage war against our flesh. Our flesh says, "Don't apologize," "Don't



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forgive,” “Don’t love!” God’s Word says, “Apologize,” “forgive,” and “love.”

Just like the Golden rule isn’t natural, forgiveness – which is just loving those who have sinned against us – isn’t natural either.

Our Lord clues us into the backward nature of forgiveness when He reiterates his thoughts on forgiveness after wrapping up His model prayer.

The theologian Matthew Henry tells us in his commentary on the book of Matthew that,

“Most of the petitions in the Lord's prayer had been commonly used by the Jews in their devotions, or words to the same effect: but that clause in the fifth petition, As we forgive our debtors, was perfectly new...”

to the Jewish audience.

Jesus had to come back to it because this **duty to forgive** others was not something the Jews had ever heard before!

Up until this point, most references to forgiveness in Scripture went one way – from God to man. But from here on out in the Scriptures, God demands that those of us who have been forgiven become people who forgive.

This was not a natural impulse for the Jewish audience of Jesus’ day, and it’s not a natural impulse for us either. In fact, forgiveness is so alien to us but so vital that it’s a theme that the New Testament will come back to again and again.

The Apostle Paul covers it in Ephesians, 2 Corinthians, and Colossians – here’s a taste of what he has to say –



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Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

But really, Paul is simply reteaching what Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount and a few other recorded times during His earthly ministry.

For example, Jesus discusses this topic with Peter in Matthew 18.

There Jesus is speaking about how the church should handle discipline issues. Our Lord explains that when believers have problems between them – they should handle them directly and with love.

This leads Peter to ask the natural question – “how many times do I have to forgive these jerks?” I’m kidding, but let’s read Matthew 18:21-22 together, and you’ll see how unnatural forgiveness is to us by hearing Peter’s question about it.

21 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.

Peter’s like us... “do I have to?” Jesus says, not only do you have to, but you have to do it over and over and over again. This phrase here seventy-seven times isn’t a literal number. It’s a turn of phrase that this Jewish audience would understand to mean **“NEVER STOP.”**

In his commentary on the book of Matthew, Pastor John MacArthur tells us that Peter actually believes he’s being generous here. The rabbis of Jesus’s day used a few verses in Amos to wrongly teach that you only needed to forgive someone three times, but Jesus says you forgive EVERY time.



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Listen to Jesus’s words in Luke 17, verses 3-5,

³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Notice Jesus doesn’t put a number on it. In Luke, He says that if he sins against you seven times, you forgive him seven times. In Matthew 18, He says, not just seven times Peter, but seventy-seven times!

These numbers aren’t the limits of our willingness to forgive but the starting point. Christian, it may not feel natural, but our ability to forgive should be limitless!

Okay, so forgiveness isn’t natural, so why should we do it? Two reasons.

3. Forgiveness is Commanded.

First, it’s commanded.

We see it in Luke 17, verse 4; Jesus concludes his statement with, “**You must forgive him.**”

But this isn’t a one-off statement, and it’s not solely about forgiving believers. It’s not even about just forgiving people who ask for forgiveness.

Look back at our main text with me.

Matthew 6:12

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

Matthew 6:14-15



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For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Do you see any qualifiers in there? Does Jesus say, “Forgive other believers?” How about “Forgive those who repent?” No, He doesn’t.

Again, this is a daily prayer for us. God, you are holy. God, let your will be done here just like in Heaven. God, take care of my daily needs. God, keep me from sin and keep me safe. God, forgive me when I sin in the same way that I forgive others who sin against me.

The teaching is so unique that Jesus then explains – that if you don’t forgive others for their sins against you, your sins against God won’t be forgiven.

Folks, this is a clear command to forgive. Every sin. Every day.

If we think back to Matthew 18 and Peter’s question about forgiveness, you’ll notice that Jesus wasn’t surprised by Peter’s question, and He knew we’d need more meat for those bones. So, after telling Peter that he needed to keep on forgiving, he illustrated his command to forgive with the parable of the two servants who owed debts.

You remember it – one servant owed a ton of money to the king. More money than he could ever hope to pay back, but when he begged mercy, the king had compassion and forgave him. Sadly, that forgiven servant left and found another servant who owed him a few bucks. When he couldn’t pay – the forgiven servant threw the debtor into prison. The king found out and was rightfully angry. He then called the servant back to him and “unforgave” his debt before throwing him into prison.



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Jesus finishes the story by telling his audience, **35 *So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.***

This famous parable should deeply impact us as good, reformed folk because it reminds us of the depth of our own depravity. It should knock us down a few pegs every time we read it. It should call us back to a time when we were still lost in our sin and rebellion against a holy God.

If we have truly *experienced* God's forgiveness, then we **MUST** be ready, willing, and able to forgive others.

In his book “A Theology of the New Testament,” Theologian George Eldon Ladd explains,

“The point of this parable is that when a man claims to have received the unconditioned and unmerited forgiveness of God, which is one of the gifts of the Kingdom, and then is unwilling to forgive relatively trivial offenses against himself, he denies the reality of his very profession of divine forgiveness and by his conduct contradicts the life and character of the Kingdom.

Such a man has not really experienced the forgiveness of God.



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Forgiveness is an essential trait of the Christian because it is an essential trait of the God we serve!

When we refuse to forgive, we act like the atheist, pretending there is no God. When we refuse to forgive, we act as the rest of the world does and make ourselves the god who must be worshipped. When we refuse to forgive, we act as if we and our feelings are more important than the Savior who suffered all things for us.

Let that not be us, church.

Instead, listen to Matthew Henry again as he explains how the Christian must respond,

“We must forgive, as we hope to be forgiven; and therefore must not only bear no malice, nor mediate revenge, but must not upbraid our brother with the injuries he has done us, nor rejoice in any hurt that befalls him, but must be ready to help him and do him good, and if he repent and desire to be friends again, we must be free and familiar with him, as before.”

We forgive as we hope to be forgiven. And if they repent, we mend that bridge.

If they don't repent? **We still forgive**, though the relationship may never be the same again.

See, whatever sin anyone has committed against us can never be compared to how we have sinned against the Father. There is no sin that any human could possibly commit against us that could hold a candle to the traitorous evil we are guilty of, brothers and sisters.



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And so Jesus warns us that if we do not obey this command to forgive others for their relatively minor infractions, then our Father will also not forgive us.

This is no idle threat, friends.

Again, while the danger here is not of losing the justifying nature of Christ’s work on the cross because once had, the Bible promises us that it can never be lost.

There is a danger in the breaking of fellowship with our Lord.

Remember, forgiveness has been commanded of us, and Hebrews chapter 12, verses 5-7 reminds us of the discipline that comes to all believers:

“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

**“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reprov'd by him.**

**⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”**

**⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons.
For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”**

God will discipline our disobedience.



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In his commentary on Matthew 6, verses 14 and 15, Pastor John MacArthur explains,

“Believers are to confess their sins in order to obtain a day-to-day cleansing (1 John 1:9). This sort of forgiveness simply washes a person from the worldly defilements of sin but does not repeat the wholesale cleansing from sin's corruption that comes with justification. It is like a washing of the feet rather than a bath (cf. John 13:10). God threatens to withhold forgiveness as a day-to-day cleansing from Christians who refuse to forgive others.”

The command to forgive others or face God not forgiving us - is all about fellowship. Fellowship with others and fellowship with the Father.

When we, out of selfishness, choose broken fellowship with those around us, we simultaneously, break fellowship with our God.

This, right here, is when and why our prayers become ineffective.

If I am not in fellowship with God, how can my prayers glorify Him? How can I be aligned with His will when I refuse to align myself with Him? How can I pray rightly when I refuse to submit to Him? How can He hear me when I harbor sin and unforgiveness in my heart?

Oh, brothers and sisters, what pain do we cause ourselves when, in our pride, we choose unforgiveness? What a blessing and reward we miss out on when we refuse to forgive.

Which brings us to our last point today.

4. Forgiveness is Rewarding.



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Forgiveness isn't natural, but it is commanded, and it is rewarding.

a. Forgiveness makes us right with God.

What are a few ways that forgiveness can be rewarding? Well, first, it makes us right with God.

Mark 11:25 says, “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

Forgive so that your Father may forgive you as well.

Jesus here is talking again about that every day relationship we have with God the Father. When we sin, we break fellowship with Him. This is why living a life of repentance is so important – we must be constantly begging for the forgiveness of our sins so that our fellowship with God may remain intact. However, when we refuse to forgive, it means that we are refusing to repent of sin, and fellowship is broken. But when we forgive, our repentance is confirmed, and our fellowship with God is restored.

Forgiving others is the outworking of the faith and repentance in our hearts. It is the true evidence that the Lord has forgiven us (through justification) and that He is forgiving us (through sanctification).

So Forgive and be rewarded with a fruitful and sweet fellowship with the Father.

b. Forgiveness gives us Power.

Secondly, Forgiveness doesn't just make us right with God; it also gives us power.



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Look back at Mark chapter 11 with me. There, we find a short parable on the lesson from a Withered Fig Tree, where Jesus explains the connection between faith and forgiveness.

Mark 11:20-25

20 As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” 22 And Jesus answered them, **“Have faith in God.** 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 **Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.** 25 **And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”**

This story no doubt reminds you of the passage in Matthew 17 and in Mark 9, where after Jesus cleanses a child from demon possession, the disciples ask Him why they couldn’t do it, and he responds that they lacked faith.

He tells them that if they had only had the faith of a tiny mustard seed, they could move mountains.

How? With their faith-filled prayers.

Now, we see why Jesus concludes the story of the withered fig tree with a sentence about forgiveness - because the person's faith in the story is proven in their prayers, prayers that would be hindered by unforgiveness.



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It is by faith in Him that we will move mountains and accomplish ALL His Good will, church.

Matthew Henry says it better than I could,

“It is by faith that the world is conquered, Satan's fiery darts are quenched, a soul is crucified with Christ, and yet lives; by faith we set the Lord always before us, and see him that is invisible, and have him present to our minds; and this is effectual to remove mountains, for at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, the mountains were not only moved, but removed.”

When we refuse to forgive, we become powerless.

When we forgive, we become filled with God's power to do everything He calls us to do. It's that simple.

c. Forgiveness Brings Glory to God.

So, forgiveness makes us right with God and it gives us power, but it also brings glory to God.

I made a chart to help with this, but it wasn't good, so I asked Pastor Bill to help.

The logical chains look like this – (CHART for SCREEN)

A. Person lacking faith -> won't forgive -> fellowship with God is broken -> person lacks power to glorify God

B. Person has faith -> forgives others -> has fellowship with God -> has power, through faith, to glorify God



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Forgiveness and Faith are inseparable. Faith and the ability to please God are inseparable. This means that forgiving others and the ability to please God are also inseparable.

Let me prove it to you - Please turn with me to Hebrews chapter 11, the Hall of Faith. Look at verse 6,

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Suppose the ability to forgive others is an expression of faith.

If that is the case -which from what we’ve seen in Scripture today it is - when you choose not to forgive, you are choosing not to please God. For without faith, it is impossible to please Him.

Look with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verses 18-21.

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Jesus reconciled us to Himself, earning our forgiveness from God, and then He gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

It’s literally our job to reconcile people to each other and to God!

Why? **So that** in Him we might become the righteousness of God.



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WOW!

The Westminster shorter catechism tells us that we exist to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Do you want to do your job? Do you want to glorify the Father? ***Then forgive others!***

Here’s another quote from theologian George Ladd on forgiveness:

“Forgiveness... is therefore the church's duty to display in an evil age of self-seeking, pride, and animosity the life and fellowship of the Kingdom of God and of the Age to Come. This display of Kingdom life is an essential element in the witness of the church to the Kingdom of God.”

Amen! Forgiveness is an essential part of how we glorify God and witness to the world about His goodness.

d. Forgiveness is good for us.

So, when we refuse to forgive, we become powerless.

When we forgive, we become filled with God’s power to do all things, and we glorify Him. But there’s one more thing to mention about forgiveness. It’s good for us.

In the passages we’ve already covered, we’ve seen that if we forgive others, God will forgive us. That’s good for us.

James chapter 2 highlights that point again.



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James 2:8-13 “Show no partiality”

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors...

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 **For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

Love your neighbor well, and don’t show partiality. Forgive everyone, and you will be forgiven. When we show mercy, we get mercy, and God’s mercy is greater than anything we can give.

My parents have always been a great example of mercy to me...

For as long as I’ve been aware, my parents have always been merciful people. They are wonderful forgivers. In my memory, they always have been.

My brothers and I were exactly what Voddie Baucham described when he spoke about the sinfulness of children. I was a naughty, selfish, wicked – though very cute – kid. Time and time again, I failed my parents, and time and time again, they forgave me. Not begrudgingly but sacrificially. They even forgave me when I didn’t ask for forgiveness! They mended bridges I burned down, even when I didn’t ask them to.

As I grew older, I watched and noticed that other people would sometimes sin against my parents. I was, and still am, awestruck at how they handled it. My dad would say, “You have to let things roll off your back.” And “You have to take things like that with a grain of salt.”



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I might not have understood the idiom, but I understood the point, especially when he’d turn around and lend a hand to the same person who had sinned against him earlier. I’d watch my mom interact with someone who sinned against her and be shocked when she’d warmly smile and greet them like nothing ever happened!

When I asked about these things, they’d say something like, “Anger, bitterness, or choosing not to forgive is like poison. Eventually, your choice to remain unforgiving will be more damaging to you than the original sin was.”

And you know what? [A recent Harvard study](#) concluded that my parents were right! These Harvard scientists say that forgiveness leads to better mental and physical health and can deepen your relationships with others.

Like any other sin, lack of forgiveness will eat your soul church.

It will break fellowship with our Lord and make you feel a million miles away from His good graces. Instead of pushing yourself away from God, forgive and listen to what Jesus promises for you in Luke chapter 6.

Luke 6:37-38

37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. **Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.** For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”



Matthew 6:5-15 “Forgive... or Else?”

Wk. 23 Sermon on the Mount

By Pastor Onan Coca January 26, 2025

God graciously gives back to us even more than we give to others. When you forgive, He not only promises to forgive you, but He will go far above and beyond what you thought possible.

And that’s the whole point church.

We are Christians because we know that we are not “good” people and that each one of us is actually worse than what others realize.

SHOW ON SCREEN AGAIN

“The Christian is not a good man. He is a vile wretch who has been saved by the grace of God.” — Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones

“If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him; for you are worse than he thinks you to be.” – Charles H. Spurgeon

If you’re like me you’ve even had times of prayer where you agonize and apologize – “O Lord, I am so sorry. I don’t know why I keep doing this. I don’t know why you would want to forgive me of this sin for the thousandth time, but please, oh please, do forgive me again!”

We are sinners. We sin each and every day, though our prayer is that as the Lord sanctifies us, we will hate our sin more and more and that we will sin less and less.

If our perfect and holy God can forgive us time and again for all our treasonous thoughts and actions, why would we withhold forgiveness from other image-bearers whose sins against us are far less egregious than our own sins against God?

May it never be.

Christians are to be a forgiving people, and so I pray that you would forgive others, just as Christ has forgiven you.



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Church, **Forgiveness is hard, but it's what we're called to do, and it's worth doing.**

Please pray with me.

[PRAYER]



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[CALL TO OBEY]

Our call to obey comes from Colossians chapter 3 where the Apostle Paul exhorts the church at Colosse to love each other well and to forgive each other graciously.

Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; **as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

Christian, forgive each other as our Lord has forgiven you.

[COMMUNION]

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

Congregation - recites

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

**¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,**

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

**¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

[BENEDICTION]

[RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY]

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

John MacArthur's Bible Commentary

Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology

George E. Ladd 'A Theology of the New Testament'