

# "Forgive Us!"

## Fifth Petition in the Lord's Prayer, Part One

### Matthew 6:14,15

February 1, 2004  
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14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:  
15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your  
trespasses.

The Fifth Petition in the Lord's Prayer is this: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

On this Fifth Petition, the H. C. says:

Q126: What is the fifth petition?

A126: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; that is, be pleased, for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us miserable sinners our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which always cleaves to us;[1] as we also find this witness of Thy grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.[2]

Mankind knows that religion has to deal with evil. All religions have provisions on how to deal with evil. Islam has no forgiveness of sins: the enemies of Allah must be destroyed. Judaism does not have any true forgiveness of sins, either. Both of these religions have faulted Christianity over the years for our doctrine of forgiveness of sins. But it is essential to our Christian faith for us to confess and really believe the article in the Apostles' Creed which says, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

There are two things to consider: 1. The fact of forgiveness; 2. The evidence of forgiveness.

I. The fact of forgiveness.

A. As I said above, Forgiveness of sins is an integral and distinctive property of the Christian faith. Consider the following:

1. Eph. 1:3-7

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

**4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

**5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

**6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

**7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

a) Not all have this forgiveness: only those chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world.

b) This choice was unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to God himself, and is according to the good pleasure of His will.

c) It is of grace, by which we have been made accepted in the beloved. This is Jesus Christ, and we are loved of God in Jesus Christ. This is to the glory of His grace.

d) The redemption [forgiveness of sins] is through the blood of Christ and is according to grace. As Lee preached a couple weeks ago, we have truly been reconciled through the sufferings of Christ. Blood=sufferings.

2. 1 John 1:3-7

**3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. 5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

a) The forgiveness is the result of being called by the Gospel into a fellowship of mercy and grace and light.

b) Notice how the apostle's message and doctrine, the fellowship of the people of God, and the forgiveness of sins go together and are lumped together by the apostles. You have heard the doctrine of the apostles, you have fellowship with us, and with us you have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and walking in this light we have fellowship with each other, and our sins are forgiven us.

c) There is a solemn warning that self-deception is possible, for it is impossible for us to have fellowship with God and walk in darkness. The call of the Word of God to forgiveness of sins is also a powerful call to fellowship with God and His people, and it is self-deception to think they can be separated.

d) This forgiveness come by confession and faith. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

3. 1 John 1:1,2

**1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**

**2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**

a) This mercy in Christ, although it is limited to the elect, is not to be construed as though it were the property only of Israel, or one nation, or one cultural group. No, people out of every tribe, people, nation, and time will be included among the elect. Only the elect will

be saved, but the elect will come from the whole world. Just as when Paul said that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world, he did not mean that every individual was talking about it; he simply meant that people from everywhere were talking about it.

b) Jesus Christ is our advocate, and it is through Him that we have access to God. Notice the words: these things are written that you don't sin; but if you sin, your advocate is Jesus Christ, the righteous [the only righteous one].

B. But what is this sin that brought the Lord Jesus Christ to the sufferings and the agony of life on the earth, and a horrible death on the Roman cross?

1. I would refer to the Sunday School lesson:

a) Original sin. The curse inherited from Adam.

b) Actual sin. Transgressions of the law of God.

c) Habitual sin: those patterns of behavior and attitude that are contrary to the requirement that we love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds; and our neighbor as ourselves. Although we are prone by nature to hate both God and our neighbor, yet in Christ we have forgiveness of sins.

2. The catechism includes all three of these in the words: "our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which always cleaves to us;"

3. None of these things are imputed to us through the obedience of Jesus Christ, as Paul says in Romans 4: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin..." Without any deserving of our own, God for the sake of Jesus Christ does not count any of our sins to us. There are people on the earth whose sins are not counted to them by God, but they are as if they had no sin, because they are in Christ, and His perfect righteousness is counted to them, both as to His obedience and as to His sufferings. You are forgiven, not because you keep the law, nor because you suffer for the truth, but because Jesus kept the law and Jesus suffered for you.

4. And so the Catechism says:

Q56: What do you believe concerning the "forgiveness of sins"?

A56: That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction,[1] will no more remember my sins, nor the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long;[2] but graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.[3]

II. The second thing: What is the evidence of the forgiveness of sins: that I am also ready to forgive my neighbor.

A. It is important to see that we are not forgiven because we forgive; we forgive because we are forgiven.

B. Look at several passages:

1. Ps. 51:5-7

**5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

**6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.**

**7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

a) David acknowledges that the source of his sin is Adam's sin and the corruption of his

nature from birth.

b) Sprinkling of the waters of cleansing speak to forgiveness of sin; the work of the Holy Ghost, to bring truth to the inner man—that wisdom might be in the hidden man of the heart.

2. Matt. 6:14,15 [see above]

a) The grace that saves is a powerful grace that begins a transformation in the heart.

b) Only a beginning is made in this grace, and it will not be completed until the return of Christ, and we see Him as He is. Until then, his grace is sufficient for us, and we also believe that it is sufficient for our neighbor.

c) The foundation of the fellowship that we have with one another in Christ is the forgiveness of sins, whereby we are reconciled unto God, and whereby we are reconciled to our neighbor.

But I will continue this next week, the Lord willing.