

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 15:11-24 and Acts 7:51-60

EXTRA READING: Apostle's Creed and Canons V, 2

SINGING: 68:1-4 – 362:1-4 – 83:1-3 – 233:1-3, 6

CHRIST'S COMMAND TO PRAY THE FIFTH PETITION

I. Reveals that there is forgiveness with God

II. Reveals that saving grace is reflective of God

I. CHRIST'S COMMANDS IMPLIES THAT THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH GOD

A. As we daily need bread, so daily we need forgiveness

1. God marks all we are and does so with a holy standard: Ps. 130:3

a. He weighs each action – reaction – inaction against His Law of Love and this easily tallies to the debt referred to in Matt. 18:24)

b. He cannot pass any sinner by His Holy standard

2. Therefore Jesus commands His disciples to always pray for forgiveness

B. Jesus' teaching & manners reveal the truth that *God is ready to forgive*

1. No truth is more hidden and yet more emphasized in Bible revelation

a. consider Ps. 86:5; Luke 15:20; 23:42-43; 17:3-5

C. Forgiveness is a costly act on God's behalf

1. Human forgiveness is mainly *dismissal of wrong upon confession*

2. Divine forgiveness is only possible through *transfer and substitution*

- The cross is the cost of God's forgiveness!

D. Let God's revelation of His willingness to forgive draw you to confession

II CHRIST'S COMMAND REVEALS THAT SAVING GRACE IS REFLECTIVE OF GOD

A. The meaning of *as* in 'as we forgive our debtors'

1. Not that *God's forgiveness is dependent upon our forgiving*

2. But that *our forgiving of others resembles God's forgiving*

B. It is God's holy command to forgive our neighbor his debts towards us

1. debtors are all those *who fail to pay the debts of love they owe us*
 - a. God's command is: *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*

2. actual forgiveness isn't always possible: *for actual forgiveness cannot only be upon actual confession – request for pardon (Luke 17:3)*

3. Forgiving others is one of the hardest duties of the Gospel
 - a. we think forgiveness great and beautiful till we need to do it

 - b. pray especially for this grace for them who have been violated

TWO CLOSING THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER ...

A. What glory have we seen in this revelation of God's heart!

1. Neglect not God's golden scepter of grace stretched out to you!

2. Never fear not to seek His forgiveness: *He is ready to pardon!*

3. Never bypass the cross of Christ in seeking forgiveness

B. What glory when we may reflect this grace of God toward neighbor!