

Lord, Teach Us To Pray

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Lesson 6

Forgiveness and Temptation

Objective: To meditate upon God's free gift of forgiveness in Jesus, by way of a famous parable, so as to be deepened in what it means to be God's Forgiven and Forgiving People. To consider the last petition of the Lord's Prayer in light of Jesus' own victory over his temptations and trials, so as to be strengthened ourselves by God's grace in the day of evil (Eph. 6.13)

1. A Familiar Parable as a Lens to Understanding the Petition (Luke 15.11-32)

a. A Better Title: The Prodigal Son or the Shamed Father

b. The Father's Forgiveness

- The Father doesn't simply tolerate
- The Father doesn't sweep things under the rug
- The Father welcomes (forgives) at a great cost to himself, a loss of dignity

c. The Work of Jesus

- What's In a Name? (Matt. 1.21)
- The Kingdom, Healing and Forgiveness (Mark 2.1-12)
- The Cross of Jesus and Forgiveness (Col. 2.13-15)

2. God's Forgiveness-Of-Sins People

a. Asking For Forgiveness (I Jn. 1.9-10; Ps. 32. 1-5)

The great, great granddaddy of all sins is the denial of sin, the refusal to admit sin. Such refusal is odd because, as G.K. Chesterton once observed, sin is the only empirically verifiable item in the entire Christian belief system. No one has seen God at any time, but we see sin with our own eyes all the time. And yet denial is commonplace...the remedy for sin is not the extermination of sin, not long training in not-sinching, not a rigorous program conditioning us in a Pavlovian revulsion of sin. The only effective remedy for sin is the forgiveness of sin – and only God can forgive sin. If we refuse to deal with God, we are left dealing with sin by means of punishment or moral education or concocting some strategy of denial. None seem to make much dent in the sin business. No. The way, the only way, is to get in on God's forgiveness. And we do that by confession. No excuses, no rationalizations, no denial, no New Year's Resolutions, only, 'I will confess'...Confession is entrance into the vast world of forgiveness, encompassed with God's deliverance and steadfast love (Peterson, Eugene. *The Jesus Way*, pp.91-92).

- Confess Boldly...Remember you are coming before you're Father
- Confess Specifically and Honestly
- Confess Communally, 'Forgive Us...'
- Confess Confidently (1 Jn. 1.9)

b. Extending Forgiveness...'Forgive Us, As We Forgive'

- A Little Scary Humor?...'*Father make sure you forgive me as I have forgiven others*'
- Practicing Forgiveness as God's Forgiven People (Eph. 4.32-5.2; Col. 3.12-15)
 - A Parable (Luke 7.36-50)
 - The Empowerment (God's Word and Spirit)

Having received God's forgiveness themselves (Jesus' people), they were to practice it amongst themselves. Not to do so would mean they hadn't grasped what was going on. As soon as someone in one of these Jesus-cells refused to forgive a fellow-member, he or she was saying, in effect, 'I don't really believe the Kingdom has arrived. I don't think the Forgiveness of God has actually occurred.' Failure to forgive one another wasn't a matter of failing to live up to a new bit of moral teaching. It was cutting off the branch you were sitting on. The only reason for being Kingdom-people, for being Jesus' people, was that the forgiveness of sins was happening; so if you didn't live forgiveness, you were denying the very basis of your own existence (Wright, N.T. *The Lord and His Prayer*, p. 54).

3. Trials Or Temptation Or Both

a. *Peirasmos* – Trial, Testing, Temptation (Jas 1.2-15)

The same circumstances which are, on the one hand, opportunities to go forward are, on the other hand, temptations to go back...Every trial is a temptation. Throughout the New Testament the *peirasmos*-group words mean circumstantial trial or temptation to sin, according to the context (Motyer, J.A., *James*, p. 50)

- God leads into testing and trial for our good (Jas. 1.2-4, 12)
- God does not tempt us to evil in the trial (Jas. 1.13)
- Our own sinful desires tempt us to evil (Jas. 1.14-15)
- Satan tempts us to evil (Matt. 4)

4. Jesus' Temptation (Matt. 4.1-11)

a. Spirit-Led Trial and Preparation (Mk. 1.12)

b. The Temptation to Be a Cross-less Messiah (see also Mk. 8.27-37)

c. The Whole Of Jesus Ministry Was One of Temptation For Us (Heb. 4.14-16)

5. The Garden of Gethsemane and the Cross (Matt. 26.36-46)

a. Jesus Garden Prayer Was, 'Do Not Lead Me Into the Great Trial...the Trial of the Cross'

b. God's Response to Jesus Was 'No'

c. Praying, 'Lead Us Not...'

- We needn't worry about undergoing the Great Trial for our sins because Jesus has already been there and done that...He took the punishment!
- We can be confident that God is with us and for us in the midst of our various trials, that he will deliver us from evil (the temptation to evil)and work it for our good

6. But Deliver Us From Evil (Eph. 6.10-18)

a. Remember who God Is

b. The Armor of God

c. The Call, 'Stand Firm'