

## The Lord's Prayer Part 6

### Forgive Us Our Sins

We are told in the Book of Jeremiah chapter 17, that the nature of every person's heart is corrupt, that it is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. And it asks the question, who is able to know their own heart.

And then also, in the Book of Proverbs chapter 27, we are told that "as a man thinks within his heart, so he is".

Also, in the Book of Proverbs, chapter 14, we are told that there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

As we consider these words of truth, and there are many more just like them, should we not stop and consider if these words are describing the person that we are . . . that we really are. And if we do find that this is who we are, and in light of the warning that Jeremiah give to us in his next words, should we not seriously consider what we might ought to do to become different? Listen to these next words given by the Prophet Jeremiah in chapter 17, where he tells us that,

<sup>10</sup> I, the Lord, search the heart, and I test the mind, Even to giving every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.(Jeremiah 17:10)

And then also, we are told in the very last words given in the Book of Ecclesiastes that "God will bring every act into judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it be good or evil."

Simply put, God knows the heart and mind of every man and woman. And He knows and makes a record of everything that we think and say and do. And He will surely call us to account for all of those things and He will surely bring them into judgment at the end of days. And yes, without question, if our sins are left unrepented and not atoned for, there surely will be consequences for all those things that have taken place during the days of this life.

Knowing all this to be true, then what are we to do with all of those things and behaviors that will have taken place during these days of our lives.

And that is the subject of this next portion of these precious words of the Lord's prayer. Listen again as I read these words given in Luke chapter 11, beginning in verse 1.

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

<sup>2</sup>And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. <sup>3</sup>Give us day by day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. (Luke 11:1-4)

In the days just before the Lord Jesus began His ministry of salvation, God sent John the Baptist out ahead of Jesus to prepare the way for Him, preaching and warning the people that the Kingdom of God was now among them, and that above all else, they needed to humble their hearts, repent of their sins, and seek forgiveness from God, else they would surely perish.

And that is also the message that the Lord Jesus has for us here in this next instruction that He gives to us in His "School of Prayer". Here, His instruction to us is to cry out, often and continually, for "forgiveness of our sins."

In some of the other versions of these scriptures, the translators chose words such as "forgive us our debts" and "forgive us our trespasses", and those are excellent translations, because those elements are most often present within the many forms of sin that we commit each day.

Our sins are often very much like the other "debts" that we owe, wrongful behaviors and conduct often thoughtlessly or arrogantly or foolishly done, saying harmful words and doing offensive things that really can't be "unsaid" or "undone", incurring "debts" of broken hearts and broken relationships that can never be "repaid".

And as we do those wrongful things, we "step across lines", and we "trespass" across boundaries that should never be breached, committing sins that, for many people, are "unforgivable".

And remembering that our sins, our debts and our trespasses, while they are most often focused against other people, our sins are first and foremost against

the very character and the very nature of God Himself. And it is to Him that we must first go.

And so, here in the words of this prayer, God gives us the first steps that are required for these sins to be atoned for and washed away, a cry, a heart-filled plea to God for His forgiveness and for His help, a fervent cry for mercy and grace.

And we know from the words of Psalm 51, that our prayers must come out from a broken and contrite heart, a crying out for God to remove our sins from us, to wipe them away. To cleanse our wretched souls from the sins that have captivated us and separated us from the deep and intimate fellowship that we ought always to have with our loving Father.

That sense of grief within the heart is so well spoken in those words of Psalm 51, after King David had so foolishly allowed himself to get caught up within the sin of lust, and then in the course of his conniving to fulfill his lust had committed so many other sins.

Folks, keep in mind that as Jesus teaches these men about the mysteries of prayer, He is not instructing unbelievers. But rather, He is teaching His own very devoutly believing disciples. There is a great deal of difference between the things that can be taught to believers and the things that can be taught to unbelievers. And sin resides at the heart of that difference.

But please know that even as believers, you and I still aren't truly able to grasp the seriousness and the severity with which God views the whole matter of sin. Our minds are too small to comprehend just how impossible it is for our sinfulness to co-exist with the purity and holiness of God. And also, how our sin divides and separates us away from our relationship and our fellowship with Him.

But you and I need to do our very best to know and to understand the awful nature of sin, especially from God's perspective. Else, we will never be able to truly enjoy the intimate fellowship that He desires to have with us. And we will never know the many blessings that our fellowship will afford.

Simply put, sin is never a small thing to God and we must not allow ourselves to count it as a small thing.

Turn with me to Psalm 32 and let's take a careful look at this thing that God calls "sin". And as we examine it, let's ask God's Holy Spirit to reveal sin's often complicated and deceptive nature. Psalm 32, verses 1 and 2. Listen!

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Psalm 32:1-2)

Hidden within these few words is a variation in meaning that does not easily reveal itself in our simple English language translation. These words, "transgression", "sin", "iniquity" and "guile" each have their own meanings, similar, but different, but each are still "sin". And we should know what those differences are and about the impact they have within our souls.

First, here in verse 1, the word being expressed as "sin" speaks of a special and unique predisposition within a person's soul that causes them to do things that are contrary to the righteousness and to the holiness of God, and not just once, or occasionally, but continually.

Until sin entered into men's souls, beginning there in the Garden with Adam and Eve, there was a special unity, an undivided oneness with God. But as that predisposition towards sin took up residence within their souls, God could no longer live within them and fellowship within them. So, He removed Himself. He took His Spirit from their souls. And from that moment forward, men and women, you and I, have been guided by and controlled by our own sinful predisposition.

This next word for "sin" that we find here in Psalm 32 is similar to the first, but at the same time very different. It is the word in verse 2, "iniquity". Iniquity is a form of sinfulness that has a "nature" to it, a "nature of perversity", a perversity that is continually off-course with God's righteousness, a nature that while not "absolutely depraved", is "totally depraved".

That is why men and women are said to have a "sin nature", a nature that, left unchanged by God's grace, is ever and always contrary to the righteousness of God.

The next word, "transgression" or "trespass" in verse 1, speaks about the actual "deeds of sin", acts that we both "omit" and that we also "commit", as we go throughout our day, acts and behaviors that are generally self-centered in

nature, benefiting ourselves and hurting others. And they are many and unfortunately, they are often.

The next word that speaks about sin is here in verse 2, the word "guile". Guile is a form of craftiness and deceitfulness that was used by the "master of all deception", satan himself, as he tempted Eve to reject God's Lordship over her and to fall into transgression. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, it is said that "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety."

Guile is an especially deceitful sin, cleverly hiding itself within our souls, occupying our thoughts and very subtly, not only provoking our own soul to sin, it also cleverly reaches into other's lives around us causing them to sin.

All the many forms and conditions of sin are powerful and it's their constant purpose to corrupt our souls. And none of us are exempt. Sin is resident within each of us from the first moment of birth. And left unchanged, a person will live out all the days of their lives in one form of perversity and beguiling sin or another, constantly doing things that are contrary to the righteousness of God.

And to make matters worse, because our condition is one of "total depravity", if we do not have God's Spirit within us to help us, there is nothing else within our natural self to help us be aware that we are even doing anything wrong.

Let me hasten to say at this point that some bible scholars do argue differently. Some argue that every person has within them an "innate sense" of right and wrong. And yes, because we were created in the image of God, some of that "image" still does remain within our souls, leaving us with our human consciences.

That's why, when people care to listen to the twinges of their human conscience, they do refrain from doing some of the worst of sinful behaviors.

But folks, please understand that simply abstaining from sinful conduct is not the same as being righteous. The two are completely different.

So then, yes, most people do have an innate sense of right and wrong, some even with excellent behavior and lifestyles, and that is a good thing. It's part of the "common grace" that God spreads among men to provide opportunity for times of harmony on the earth. But excellent behavior and lifestyle is only

profitable to a person while they live here on the earth. It is not true righteousness and it will not gain a person eternal life and entrance into heaven.

Now let me say this again to us . . . in His teaching about prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our sins". And here in Psalm 32, we are told about the exact sins that He will forgive us for. Listen to these words again.

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Psalm 32:1-2)

This is the ultimate necessity for men's souls, to be "blessed" in this way, else we will surely suffer an eternity of a living death in hell, completely and utterly separated from God and from His loving blessings and protections.

But beyond that, these blessings begin now, today, during our living years. It's as we are told here in these words, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "Blessed" is the person who has surrendered his or her life to Christ and has had their transgressions forgiven and their sins "covered".

Again, as I mentioned a few moments ago, our small minds can't conceive of the many and wonderful things that take place on our behalf in the deep and mysterious realms of God, of what it actually takes for our transgressions to be truly forgiven and our sins to be truly covered over.

Our small minds most often look upon our sins with a triviality that would be appalling to God . . . if He could be appalled.

Our usual handling of our transgressions and sins, if they even come to our minds at all, is to quickly conduct court about the matters. And invariably, as we consider all of the extenuating circumstances and conditions that led to our transgression, as our own judge, we quickly find reason to pronounce ourselves innocent, or at least justifiable in our conduct.

But folks, our court and its proceedings do not count. We are corrupt, utterly corrupt and unfit to judge ourselves or anyone else. We have no authority and no position to be a judge and to hold court concerning our sins, or anyone else's.

We are not the one who has created the law by which sin is judged. And we have not been appointed judge to decide the merits or failures regarding the law.

And we are not qualified to be either the prosecutor or the defender. In fact, we have no standing or position within the court, except that of being the accused.

We, each of us, every person born on this earth have inherent within us, the natures and failures spoken about here. We are inherently sinful and we continually busy ourselves with the commission of sinful acts.

And left unchanged, we deserve to go straight into eternal suffering in hell.

But God, in His great mercy and grace has found a way to remove all of the penalty and the punishment for our sinful condition, and to replace it with righteousness that is beyond our comprehension.

He has given us Jesus. And through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, He has given us the special "blessedness" that is spoken about here in Psalm 32.

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Psalm 32:1-2)

In Christ, our transgressions, those many and awful acts and behaviors and conducts that we commit each day that so corrupt our lives and corrupt the lives of those around us, are forgiven.

And through the precious shed blood of Christ, our sins are not only "covered" over, they have been wiped away completely "justified", "just as if they had never taken place". And God the Father will no longer hold us accountable for them.

Because of what Christ did for us on the cross, our iniquity, our continually sinful nature has lost its control over us and no longer can make us sin.

And the deceitful guile that once thrived within us has been cast out and has been replaced by the Spirit of Christ. The precious Spirit of God who once left

Adam and Eve, now lives and abides within each of us who believe and have received Christ as our Savior. What a special blessedness that is!

Here in the Lord's prayer, the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our sins". And the words of Psalm 32 tell us just how blessed it is to have our sins forgiven.

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. <sup>2</sup>

Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Psalm 32:1-2)

Let's pray.