

“Forgive Us For...” Luke 11:1-4

Devotional notes for Prayer Meeting, 12/02/09

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Jesus said, *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28)*. As Jesus is our rest; as we find rest to our souls in Him and in Him alone, let’s also use the word “Rest” as an acronym to look at this aspect of prayer: *“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us” (Lk 11:4)*.

REQUESTED Mercy

EVIDENCED Mercy

SUSTAINING Mercy

TRANSFORMING Mercy

I. **MERCY REQUESTED.** First, let us be reminded that this is the model prayer that the Lord gave to His disciples. With the exception of Judas, these were true believers, desiring to exercise and embrace the grace of prayer. When asking for forgiveness here, it is not direction or instruction for unbelievers to petition the Lord with repentance unto salvation. This portion of the prayer is for those already saved; for those who have already acknowledged the relationship with the heavenly Father because of the Son; for those who have already acknowledging and believing in the holiness of God’s name; for those who desire to lay down their wills for the Father’s will and see His kingdom revealed daily in their lives, and ultimately when Christ comes; for those who desire nourishment in God’s Word, on Christ, and by the Holy Spirit.

This prayer recognizes that though we are saved, redeemed, and regenerated, we sin. We require forgiveness from God for every offense against God. *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive*

ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:8-9).

II. MERCY EVIDENCED. We have forgiveness from God because we have received forgiveness through Christ. We can petition the Lord, “*And forgive us our sins,*” because we have seen, experienced and realized the evidence of what we could otherwise not do apart from the regeneration of redemption: forgive others... “*for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*” Is this possible apart from Christ? Absolutely not. Will forgiving others happen in my life? If we have been saved, it MUST happen. **Jas 2:17-18**, “*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*” Will I forgive “EVERY ONE” as that scripture says, “*for we also forgive every one...*” There shall be struggles because of our flesh (& we will look at that in our message Sunday morning, **Rom 7:14-25**); however, this is also a petition of the redeemed in Christ: “Lord, Thou has forgiven me; shed abroad Thy love in my heart that I may forgive everyone that no man may be indebted to me, but unto Thee alone.”

III. SUSTAINING MERCY. Forgiveness is a grace, like the grace of repentance; it never stops until we either expire or the Lord comes for us. Forgiveness is not once but continually received and expressed. Do you remember when Peter was just beginning to understand the concept of forgiveness? [**Mt 18:21-22**]

It must be sustained in the life of the redeemed soul. It is vital for our own spiritual welfare. [**Mt 18:23-35**]. Now, we can look in a way that suggests that there was no real change in the life of that “servant” so he was never saved in the first place; & I wouldn’t argue with that view. Yet, because of the last verse, Jesus is speaking to His disciples. He presents the reality of a life of torment when unforgiveness continues in the lives of His disciples. How do is forgiveness sustained in the life of the believer? By keeping at the Cross and staying at that Cross of mercy that the truth of Christ’s forgiveness upon you, me, us, is that certain reality in all things whatsoever we do. “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*” (**Heb 4:16**). The Greek word for “we may obtain” means to take for one’s possession so that it may be used or utilized; it’s not merely receiving Christ’s mercy in prayer, it’s going there to be equipped to be more Christ-like.

IV. **TRANSFORMING MERCY.** As just mentioned, as we receive God's mercy in prayer, it equips us to be merciful; for that is how forgiveness flows. It flows from the throne of God through the child of God and to all those around us. **Mt 5:7**, "*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*"

"Shall obtain" in this verse is not like the "we may obtain" of **Heb 4:16**. This is rather a suffix attached to mercy that seems to make mercy, as the truth that Jesus speaks of, as that which embodies those who are merciful. IOW, when we forgive, as He forgave, we begin to actually embody the mercy that we have been equipped with to forgive others. Because Christ is MERCY, when we show mercy, it becomes more of Him and less of me. We begin conforming to the image of God's beloved Son. He does increase, and through mercy, by God's grace, we do decrease.