

FORGIVE AS WE FORGIVE

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Matthew 18:21-35

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matthew 6:12



Right after teaching the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, you Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15). Does this mean we earn God's forgiveness by how well we forgive others? No, but it does mean forgiveness is a package deal. By faith we accept forgiveness both as God's policy toward us and as our policy toward others. We cannot expect forgiveness as God's policy toward us if we refuse to make it our policy toward others and insist on judgment and payback instead. If we refuse to live in a kingdom where all is forgiven, the only alternative is a place where nothing is forgiveness. That is hell.

When we go to Jesus for the first time and come under God's policy of forgiveness, all our guilt and all our grudges go on the garbage dump at Jesus' cross. This defining moment of forgiveness is then lived out afresh each day through prayer. As we journey through life, we still commit sins and suffer from the sins of others. In prayer we bring these things to God and place them under his grace, trusting that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9), and recommitting ourselves to forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave us (Ephesians 4:32).

PRAYER--Father, forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Through Jesus' blood, forgive our sins, even as your grace moves us to forgive those who sin against us. Amen.