Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

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**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #105 vs. 1-2

Do know why we are here to worship God? BECAUSE ***Our Help is in the name of the Lord our God, …*** ***May*** Grace, Mercy, Peace and Love ***be yours*** from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

We are the children of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so let us praise Him using, PSALM **#9 *“Wholehearted thanksgiving” Vs 1,4,5,6***

***We will profess our faith using HC questions #26 & 28 Page 815*** *Please be seated*

 *Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 51 page 848*

***Congregational prayer.***

*Let’s seek the Lord’s grace as we worship Him now by singing a portion of Psalm* **#51 *Vs 1- 4***

**Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:15-35**

Let us respond to God’s grace and mercy in Christ, ***by generously and cheerfully*** giving to support God’s kingdom work thru His tithes & our additional Free-will offerings! ***( Deacons)***

*Let’s cont. to worship as we sing* **Our Song of Prep: #511 “Our Father, clothed with majesty” *Vs 1,4,5,6***

***Sermon Text:* Matthew 6:9-15 *Sermon Title: “Don’t forgive me if I don’t forgive others!”***

***Let us now sing a* song of Response Dwelling*–*#454 “Forgive our sins as we forgive”**

***May God the Father*** *bless you & keep you,* ***May God the Son*** *turn His face toward you & be gracious to you,* ***May the Holy Spirit*** *lift up his countenance upon you & give you peace!* ***Amen***

***Doxology*: #150 “Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!”**



# Evening Sermon: “Don’t forgive me, if I don’t forgive”

Text: Matthew 6:9-15 Reading: LD51, Matthew 18:15-35

**Introduction:** Children, Have you ever gotten in trouble because you refused to forgive one of your brothers/sisters? Maybe they hit you with a toy and said it was an “accident”, but you “knew” that they meant to do it! And when they said they were sorry, you didn’t think that they meant it! And so, you refused to accept their apology – or give them a hug – whatever your parents told you to do.

Now, I would think most of us (if not all of us) have done that at one point or another, **and hopefully you didn’t get away with it!** Now, I understand the frustration, here… you might have done nothing wrong, you got hit, and then you get in trouble with your parents because you refuse to forgive (when the one who hit you didn’t get punished!). That seems so unfair, doesn’t it?! ***But what you don’t see or easily understand, is that forgiveness is SUPER Important!***

In fact, it is so important, that God planned the Lord’s Prayer in such a way, that we would ask God to forgive us, as we forgive those who have sinned against us! Which means that if we are NOT forgiving others, then God won’t be forgiving us! *Now, that needs a lot of explanation, and that is what I hope to explain as we look at this 5th request!*

 (**Review**) **Last time**, we saw that we ASK God for our Daily Bread – for our necessities… WE have no right to demand anything from God. **However, what God commands us to pray for, He promises to provide**. Which means that God has promised to meet our needs according to His perfect will, and that doesn’t mean that you will get bread every day – but that you will get what God has determined is best for you for the sake of His name, His Glory, His Kingdom and His Will! And that is okay, because man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. We rest in God’s provision for our daily needs, because without his blessing, our work, worry and even His gifts will do us no good. You DON’T live because you eat, drink and have proper shelter. ***You only live each day because God has decreed it to be so.***

 ***Jesus then turns from this emphasis on God’s provision for the body to God’s provision for the soul.* Here in the 5th request, we learn*:*** *That* ***Forgiveness received*** *from God* ***MUST result in Forgiveness given*** *to others****!***

*We will divide this request into two parts:*

1. **The Debt paid by Forgiveness**
2. **The Forgiveness of God’s Family**

*We begin by first looking at:*

# The Debt paid by Forgiveness (REPEAT)

* 1. *Now:* **Why do we use the term debt?** *How is sin a debt?*

Well, Think of the definition for a debt… We most commonly think of debt as something owed, but it can also be an obligation which must be fulfilled. There are two senses in which a person can have a debt. (1) When we have a debt of money – you have to pay money to someone, because you owe it to them.

(2) When a criminal has to pay his debt to society, it may be money, but most likely that is referring to time in prison or some penalty for his crimes.

**Now**, when we speak of debts regarding God, we have to think about both aspects of the term ***BECAUSE*** we owe God 2 different things: Since mankind was created perfect by God in the Garden of Eden, We owe God *the debt/obligation of* perfect obedience (the positive payment of righteousness as His creatures). ***But we aren’t perfect***. Instead, we actually sin against God’s law, which means we also owe God the debt/penalty for our sin and disobedience. We deserve God’s justice and wrath for breaking God’s Law.

* 1. *BUT:* **Why do we need to have this debt forgiven?** *Why can’t we just ask God to help us pay it?*

Because that is not possible… It is physically and spiritually impossible for us to repay either part of that debt we owe to God. And let me explain by using money as an example. In the example of the unmerciful servant, the first servant – (***Servant A***) owed the King 10,000 talents. Historians tell us that the talent was a weight of gold about 34kg or 75 pounds. Which means, that in today’s gold market, that debt would be 33 billion NZD. That **isn’t** the earning power/purchasing power in Jesus’ day – that ***is just the gold value equivalent*** as if we lifted that amount of gold from their day into ours… we explore the historical value a little later. But for now, consider owing a bank 33 billion NZD.

**There are two problems with such a HUGE debt.** One, you can’t pay it back in a lifetime of profitable labor! Even if you made 1 MILLION dollars a day, 365 days a year, it would take you over 90 years to pay that debt – and that is assuming that there is no interest and no penalties for not paying*! But you see, no one would ever allow a debt of that size to go without interest…* EVEN if it was only 1% interest… you would have to pay nearly a million a day *just for interest!*

***And when we look at your debt to God we see the same thing!*** You and I *and all mankind* owe God a debt of perfection – and yet (because of Adam’s sin) we are born in sin. FROM DAY 1, we are in the hole. And on that first day of life, even in our infant ignorance, we rebel and lash out in anger when we don’t get fed/cared for fast enough!

***We are born with sin debt, and every day we fail to pay the required obedience, and our sin results in an increased debt to God!*** And if that were not bad enough, even our best acts, our most righteous works are so tainted with sin that the Bible describes them as filthy menstrual rags and dung! Our best works, on their own merit, are actually crimes against God’s majesty. **And so we end up not having anything to pay God, and every day our best only makes matters worse.** So, we can’t pay this debt! ***It must be forgiven by God!***

* 1. *BUT:* **What does “forgiven” mean? What is forgiveness?** To put it simply: forgiveness is a 3-fold promise: I won’t bring your sin up to myself, to others or to you. When we are forgiven by God, He says: “I will never bring your sin-debt up to you again, nor will I hold it against you anymore!” ***Like in a business ledger, our sin-debt is not forgotten, but is stricken from the books.*** If you were to pull up the books of God, you would see your massive debt listed still, *but as Thomas Watson put it: there would be a line drawn through it in Christ’s blood – declaring that your debt has been paid, and your obligation removed!* That is what happens when put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation… We turn away from our sinful self-centered ways and turn instead to Christ – believing that He loved us and came to earth *to live the perfect life we could not live* and *to die the cursed Hellish death of God’s Wrath which we deserve*. ***THAT is Eternal forgiveness,*** *and it is that forgiveness which ushers us out of the courtroom of God and into HIS family room.* For through faith in Christ, we become the children of God. And from that point on, God deals with us as children, and not enemies! ***Which term describes you this evening? Enemy or Rebel against God? Or His child?*** There is ONLY one way to be adopted into God’s family, and that is to REPENT & BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have not yet done so – **DO SO NOW!** *Today is the day of salvation*… Turn & trust in Christ & you will be saved!

**If you have put your faith in Christ, then rejoice in the good news that you have been eternally forgiven by God!**

 *But let’s remember that we are working our way thru the Lord’s Prayer…* We already saw back in our sermon on LD46, that ONLY CHRISTIANS can pray the Lord’s prayer… Only God’s children can call Him “Our Father”!

***So, What is this forgiveness we need? What is this forgiveness for which we pray?! That leads us to our second point:***

# The Forgiveness of God’s Family (REPEAT)

* 1. **We are supposed to pray for PATERNAL Forgiveness -** *This is NOT the same as Eternal Forgiveness*

Eternal forgiveness is talking about your eternal salvation – the sinner in the courtroom of God the Judge. Once you are saved, you are brought into God’s family as His children and heirs of salvation. And yet, Jesus taught His disciples ***and us*** to pray: “Our Father – forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors…” and then in Matthew 6, immediately after the Lord’s prayer, Jesus explicitly goes one step further saying, **READ vs. 14-15**

 What does this mean? How can we be forgiven by God and yet not be forgiven by God our Father? We began to explore that concept in the introduction – ***when you have a child who refuses to forgive their brother or sister,* it doesn’t affect their place in the family*, but it does change the way the parents deal with that child!*** In fact, *refusing to forgive* is a sin which takes the child who was originally the **offended** and they become the **offender** as they refuse to forgive! And parents should/and often do correct their children for refusing to forgive – and they don’t stop correcting them until they do forgive – ***which means***, for the stubborn child (and his parents), that it might be a very difficult day!

***But just a note of hope there…*** *All the hard work you put into training your children to forgive one another from their hearts, is training them to be responsible Christian adults who will be able to show grace/forgiveness as much or better than you do* ***– it is worth any amount of effort!***

We see the same concept in Matthew 18 in the parable of the unmerciful servant. For we have two servants of the King – two children of God. The first one has that unpayable debt of 10,000 talents, and in mercy he has been forgiven by the King. But then he comes out and strangles his fellow servant for a 100 denarii. *And in your margins they normally say the 10,000 talents is millions, and the 100 denarii was a few dollars.* And generally, that gives you the scale between these two debts. **But in Matthew 20,** we are told that the denarius was the average pay for a day’s labor! So, 100 denarii would be over a 1/3 of a year’s income for a servant. If the average laborer in New Zealand makes about $40-55,000 a year, than this debt isn’t that small – it is about $13-18,000. If someone hurt you to the tune of $15,000, and all you made was $45,000 a year, you would feel the pain! **(20/60k, 30k/90k)** *That is a painful debt, so the unmerciful servant has an understandable reaction in relation to the debt he has suffered*. That servant is called unmerciful, not because of their isolated reaction, but because of the fact that they had been forgiven SO MUCH More, and so since they were forgiven of SO much, they should have forgiven this RELATIVELY small offense.

**And this is where good ole historical math is useful.** For Jesus used 100 denarii to note a real offense on earth, but 10,000 talents to show our offense to God. A Talent was 6,000 times bigger than a denarius! 100 denarii was 1/3 Year’s labour, but 10,000 talents was 164 THOUSAND years labour!

So, if the earthly offense was about $15,000 NZD, then **Your Debt to God** would be about $9 BILLION NZD.

*Which means in God’s eyes, when you are comparing God’s mercy to you* **versus the mercy and forgiveness you owe to others** **Your debt to God is almost infinitely worse than anything I could do to you!** No matter what offense has been committed against you by a fellow servant of God, your debt of sin to God is so much WORSE… and so God is saying you need to forgive and have mercy, or else:

* 1. **You see:** In this parable, Jesus describes **The Danger of Not forgiving others -**

If you don’t forgive others, then your Heavenly Father will not forgive you**. And instead, as in the parable, He will hand you over to the torturers! Until you have paid for your debt! Now, *WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?!***

We know from the rest of Scripture that it DOESN’T mean you will lose your salvation. But for some, it may prove that you were never saved in the first place! So, what is God saying He will do if we don’t forgive? **To answer that, we need to ask:** What do parents do with a child who refuses to forgive? They should punish and correct them until they repent and forgive their brother/sister. And the longer the child refuses, the more consequences they will face. ***Likewise with God***, He disciplines those He loves, and if we refuse to forgive others, then He will discipline us. That is the “torture” mentioned in the parable – God will allow us to suffer under the consequences & anguish of our sin until we repent/forgive. ***That torture is our own bitterness, rage & malice which springs up when we refuse to forgive & show mercy!*** **One definition of bitterness is this: The poison you take, hoping the other person will die!**

And this is SO important that Jesus makes us pray it as a part of the Lord’s Prayer – Asking God our Father to forgive US, EVEN AS WE ALSO HAVE Forgiven (or implied, As we HAVE NOT forgiven) our debtors!

 Every time you have prayed the Lord’s prayer, you have been asking God to show you mercy even as you have ***or have not*** showed mercy to others! *Have you found the Christian life, nearly intolerable?* Have you struggled with bitterness, rage, malice, guilt and emotional pain? Then I challenge you to evaluate how you show mercy to others… **Could you be suffering as you are, because you are causing others to suffer thru your lack of forgiveness?** *THE SUBTLE thing is, you would naturally think you are the one who has been sinned against, so you are obviously the one in the right –* ***AND YET, as soon as you refuse to forgive, the tables are turned… And you are the one choking your fellow servants over their offenses!***Granted, some of those offenses were probably not small, (and so you may think they deserve to suffer a little) ***I mean*** 1/3 of a year’s earnings is not a small sum… But God forgave you a debt that was 600,000x bigger … (would you want Him to think like you? To tell you, suffer a little, then I will forgive?!) **NO! God Forbid!** *and that is why God calls you to forgive others, even as in Christ, God forgave you!*

Now, God isn’t calling you to forgive for your own mental/spiritual health – although there are mental and spiritual benefits to forgiveness… **Rather, God is calling you to forgive your brother from your heart!**

 He is calling you to consider the second servant, who is weighed down by the guilt of his debt, and who is asking for your mercy: *And God is warning you NOT to strangle or torture him over his sin!*

**And when you look at your brother in pity, and you have mercy on him and forgive him from your heart, THEN God promises that He will be *that merciful and gracious* TO YOU, *as your heavenly Father!***

You see… the moral of the story is NOT to stop praying this part of the Lord’s Prayer! The lesson is that you need to learn is that forgiveness is FAR more serious than we normally think it is! ***Which means that we need to plead with our Lord to help us understand* the depth *of* His love and grace*, that we might be enabled to show that same Gospel love and forgiveness to those who sin against us!*** And, good news: God loves to help His children show His love!

So, Pray… Trust Your Heavenly Father … & Lovingly forgive one another, *and God will bless it!* **Amen.**