

## Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

March 7, 2010 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

**“Father, Forgive Us As We Forgive...”**

(Text: Matthew 6:12-15)

**Context:** As we read the Gospel of Matthew, we find Jesus’ teaching on how to pray couched in the center of a long section in which Jesus is teaching in His “Sermon on the Mount.” In our red letter Bibles, Matthew 6:12 falls right in the middle of an all-red-letter section of Scripture that runs from Matthew 5:3 to 7:27. In the middle of His teaching the multitudes assembled, Jesus taught His listeners how to go about praying (talking) to God. ‘Do not pray in front of others to be observed by them, but pray in the privacy of your own rooms,’ Jesus instructed. He goes on to say, ‘Address God as “Our Father,” (a revolutionary thought for that day). Pray that His name be made holy among you and that His will be done and that His kingdom come. Ask for your daily bread,’ Jesus taught. He added, ...”if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (vv. 14-15). In Jesus’ view, this issue of forgiving others is very, very important.

- I. **Common sinners (like all of us) busy themselves in justifying their own behavior and in skipping over the importance of forgiveness.**
  - A. Focusing upon how other people see them, sinful people put much energy into defending themselves before others and even placing blame elsewhere.
    1. Forgiving others is not an activity of priority with most people.
  - B. The damage that non-forgiveness does to relationships is ignored by most.
    1. Until someone retaliates for a wrong done to them. (What’s that for?)
  - C. Grudges and resentments are common among people.
    1. These feelings, and the actions that go along with them, are evidence of the unhealthy consequences of withholding forgiveness (or of ignoring the need of forgiveness). \*See Proverbs 28:13.
  - D. If people do forgive others, they tend to put conditions on their offering to forgive.  
\*Have you placed conditions on your forgiveness to others?
  - E. If people do forgive others, they often imply that they are being magnanimous in doing so. (Such as, “I forgive you for those horrible, awful things that you did.”)  
\*Have you acted as if you were being generous because you forgave someone?
  - F. Jesus directs our attention to the forgiveness that has been lavished upon us and ties this forgiveness to the Father’s command for the “forgiven ones” to forgive!
    1. “So great are our debts to God that we can never hope to pay them, and our only help is that God will remit them gratis, by way of gift, for Christ’s sake” (p. 269, Lenski). \*See Psalm 130:3.
- II. **Due to Christ’s Sacrifice, Real And Thorough Forgiveness Washes Away Sins!**
  - A. The ugliest and worst of our sins have been forgiven (dismissed, thrown away) because of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary. (See Isaiah 1:18.)
  - B. Others, who happen to injure us with their sinful behavior, have need of forgiveness, also. (The saying is true – ‘The hurting ones hurt others.’)
  - C. We can and ought to forgive those who hurt us with their sins of thought, word, and deed. (The ultimate example: “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.” - Luke 23:34.)
  - D. This petition of the Lord’s Prayer is a **contract** and **promise** with and from Our Father in Heaven. \*Mt. 6:14-“...if you forgive...your Father will...forgive you”
  - E. The damaging consequences of sinful behavior can be wiped away and the healing of relationships can take place.
    1. Forgiveness puts an end to resentment and holding on to grudges.
    2. Forgiveness ushers in peace of mind and heart.
    3. Forgiveness liberates humans for the activity of loving others.