

**Matthew 6, 18; Lord's Day 51**  
**PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS**

- I. The trespass and debt.
  - A. To know forgiveness we must truly understand the reality and depth of sin (appreciate health after being sick).
    - 1. Sin is any transgression of God's law (I John 3:4), i.e., any deviation from right, anything not to the glory of God.
    - 2. Sin, because it is against God, incurs "debt" (guilt), which makes the sinner justly worthy of punishment.
  - B. To ask to be forgiven is to confess, to admit that we did wrong and owe the greatest debt.
- II. We seek forgiveness from the One against whom all sin is committed.
  - A. To forgive consists of two things:
    - 1. To wipe out the debt or to be loosed from it, so it is as if they had never been committed (Psalm 51:1).
    - 2. And it includes the positive blessing of righteousness.
  - B. The only way God can forgive is if the debt is really paid (He cannot just forget sin).
    - 1. Forgiveness is only by atonement.
    - 2. Only the Son of God could bear God's eternal and infinite wrath (II Cor. 5: 19), and earn perfect righteousness for elect.
    - 3. The gospel is the good news and glad tidings that our sins are paid for in full.
  - C. This petition is also asking for the assurance of forgiveness.
- III. The experience.
  - A. While salvation rests solely on divine grace (and not human accomplishments) those who receive it are active: believe!
    - 1. Included in faith is the ability and the will to forgive.
    - 2. Unless we forgive men, we will not be shown we are forgiven (Matt. 6:14,15).
  - B. Our forgiving is the on-going striving, for God's sake, not to hold it against them with the goal of forgetting it.
    - 1. It is to cast from our minds all anger and desires for revenge and the promise not to think about the sin.
    - 2. Transactional forgiveness (telling them) takes place when they confess.
  - C. Our desire to forgive is evidence of our having been forgiven, of the real change God has made in us.
    - 1. To want to forgive is unnatural - we have to know divine forgiveness to do it.
    - 2. God forgives for His own sake (Isaiah 43:25) and we forgive for God's (Christ's) sake.
  - D. Jesus shows the need for every child of the heavenly Father to be striving to forgive.