

Talk -1

Read Lord's Prayer up to – Forgive us our sins – Good news chapter 6

1. Sum up last talk on Lord's Prayer
2. Daily bread – briefly
3. Forgiveness – God's and ours to others

Last time spoke about LP – mentioned how we acknowledge God as our loving heavenly Father, how he is the number 1 – above everyone else – special – and that we should follow him and do his will – follow his way – his commands – in other words his kingdom should come in us as individuals – in our church – in the systems and people in our City – indeed in the whole world. To pray – for God's ways to be our ways implies we are very serious – it will mean radical change in our thoughts attitudes behaviour and our whole lives!

It's significant that Jesus tells us to ask for our daily bread next – we have just asked for a revolutionary change in our lives – but the next thing is asking for our daily practical needs – It's about him – then straightaway he thinks of us!

Daily bread – is more than bread – drinks water – food warmth shelter sleep health to name some – all human needs. It's easy to think that these needs are not part of our spirituality – we separate spiritual from daily basic needs – I reckon that all these gifts are God given – so we can view our whole lives as spiritual – Jesus gives priority here to our daily practical needs. These include our physical emotional and psychological wellbeing – It's all part of God's big

Shalom for our lives. We can really thank God and celebrate that he takes care of us in this day to day way. God is real with us – he knows we are alive – and

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need to be kept alive – these needs are fundamental to our existence and our emotional and psychological stability – It must be emphasised of course, as Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones says, that all we pray for must be absolute necessities – we are not promised luxuries or superabundance – abundant life is more about the quality of our ability to give – to love and our relationships – the quality of life! So God cares for us so much – and Jesus tells us that – Not one sparrow is forgotten by God – and even the hairs on your head have **all** been counted! God cares about all the details of our lives.

However now I think we can agree again with Martyn Lloyd Jones who says , ‘ I am alive and I must be kept alive – but then I realise also that I am conscious of guilt and unworthiness before God – and feel the need to be cleansed of that. – Let’s move on and think about – Forgive us our sins as we forgive as we forgive those who sin against us - Message Bible version

keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

‘If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves – and there is no truth in us. But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all are wrongdoing.’

So it is right and proper to keep asking God’s forgiveness on a daily basis and owning up to the things we get wrong – otherwise they will build up – we need to keep a short account and keep fresh, know the freedom from the guilt of our wrongdoings and have a clear conscience – this is the way for us – God’s will for us.

It's not a matter of becoming a Christian again and again – it's being continually cleansed of the sins we continue to do. Let's remember John was writing to were people who were already believers

I recently had a look at some of Paul's letters in the NT and noted that they are not included in chronological order. I also read a snippet in a book – can't remember which one – but the author pointed out the changing attitude and ideas of Paul – as he got older – with regard to his position with God – and his level of humility and dependence on God – so in some ways it seems ironic – the longer we continues as Christians, the more aware of our own frailty/sin we become – and, thankfully, the more aware of how great and encompassing is the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ.

The dates that Paul's letters were written cannot be absolutely proven but there is common agreement within a few years when they were written.

Chronologically they show a change in Paul:

Gal 1 :1 Ad 48 – says 'Paul, an apostle, not sent from men but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead' - apostle asserting authority.

Later 1 Cor15:9 AD 55 - least of the apostles

Romans – AD 57 – slave of Christ

Phillipians AD 60 – bond servant of Christ

Ephesians early AD 60's – least of the saints (church member)

And in AD 64/65 to Timothy – leaves us in no doubt how he views himself

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As the chief of sinners – graphically put in the Message Bible 1 Tim 1 v 15+16

‘Here’s a word you can take to heart and depend on. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I’ m proof – Public Sinner – Number One – someone who could never have made it apart from sheer mercy – And now he shows me off – evidence of his endless patience – to those who are right on the edge of trusting him forever!’

So we should not be surprised when we become ever more aware of our own frailty/sin, the longer and deeper we know God. This is not to say – as Paul says at the beginning of Romans 6:

‘What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase – May it never be!’

In other words we don’t set out to sin more in order to demonstrate God’s grace – we find anyway that we can sin quite easily without trying too hard!

It’s good right and proper that we think about God’s immense grace, mercy and forgiveness given to us. We need a thorough grasp of this – and I believe when we grasp this by the help of the Holy Spirit, we will then want and be able to forgive others around us in the same way God has forgiven us. In other words God will have helped us to develop humility and a true picture of our own standing before him – a chief number one sinner – but a massively forgiven sinner!

HOWEVER – this is where the rub comes – spiky thorny – probably uncomfortable bit of today’s talk – please do not think that I am having a go at

any of you personally – although God may wish to show us all – including me – that there are areas in our lives where we need to forgive others.

I'll now read us a few tough passages first and then finish off with a few examples of areas to change – some from my own life.

Matt 5 v 23

'So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has s'thing against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother and then come back and offer your gift to God.'

For us this would mean coming to church and worshipping – and the verse is talking about priorities and what God wants us to do in our relationships – can we really come and worship when we can't make peace with one another – we'd be like Paul says – clanging symbols without love – I am not saying we should stop coming to church – but let's have a good think about what is more important – falling out or being honest and at peace with each other.

Psalm 51 – David says

'Thou dost not delight in sacrifice otherwise I would give it – Thou art not pleased with burnt offering – The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit – a broken and contrite heart Thou wilt not despise'

Same principle – we aim for humility

Matt 5 43 – 48 – RSV and the message

My mum said some good things to me – and some bad things but I did love her I do love her – I mention this as I said I 'd give a few examples to hang our thoughts on – maybe make these ideas easier to grasp. So – one of my faults is sometimes I m a rubbish listener – I want to get my 2 pennyworth in – and I don t let people finish what they are saying – I 've done this a few times recently – I' m sorry to say with my wife, Anne – and I' m really sorry about it – it's that daily type forgiveness I have to ask for – so getting back to my mum – she would say – you're so sharp (quick) you ll cut yourself – I used to annoy a particular primary school teacher in this way – sorry Sir! – kinda like a dog with a bone – irritating u know – If I 've done that with any of you - I' m saying sorry now – not much use in some way – cos really it needs to be one to one.

My mum would also say s'times s'thing similar to the Apostle Paul when he was talking about if we don't have love we are clanging symbols – and this love and forgiveness for one another – is fundamental to our Christian faith + lives – it is love and forgiveness that will communicate to others of his love – it's a big priority – Anyway my mum would have said – If we can 't forgive one another – and we keep judging each other – we might as well ' pack up and go home' – that sounds pretty drastic – so don t take it that I 'm saying we are going to reach perfection in that area – but we should be aiming to forgive accept and lose our prejudices towards one another – because God is saying it's really really important – and remember we have just read in Matt that – if we speak only to our friends – have you done anything out of the ordinary – we are called to be different – our goodness needs to be more than scribes or Pharisees – what are the implications for us as individuals – Within our church

family here – let's get more familiar with one another – go out of our way to befriend love those who we find difficult – that's a transformed life – we'll only do it – the more we become childlike and trust our heavenly Father and his love! As you hear – I'm passionate about this – so I – with some help from a few others – am organising a church social night on sat 16th July – details later in next month's Vision – the only aim of the evening will be to have some fun together and enjoy one another's company – and provide a relaxed opportunity to get to know those we don't know.

It's also true – as in Eph 4 vs 15 that we need to learn how to speak the truth in a spirit of love – maybe we can explain our differences of opinion graciously – maybe we can learn how to honestly and gently say – what you said hurt me – it's when we know each other well – we can be sensitively honest – Anne and I do this – we know each other well – we should do by now! E.g. Adrian – lady I work with in the kitchen – not even gentle but done with trust and humour – without the fear of spoiling the relationship – the problem comes when we want to tell someone something that may be seen as a criticism – and we don't know them – and we may not even like the way they do things – let's be encouraged and get to know each other better – it's better than telling someone else about the problem. We really know that God is crystal clear that this is the wrong way – Again I'm not saying we should feel condemned and defeated about this – let's just go back to our heavenly Father – asking him for specific help with this.

To conclude –

1. We want his kingdom to come in all our lives – and those around us near and far – everyone
2. We pray for the provision of all our needs
3. We accept his forgiveness – remembering how deeply the Prodigal Son’s Father loved him – we forgive ourselves and – we look to keep forgiving others – and to go out of our way to love those who we don t like – those we find it hard to love – we develop deeper trusting relationships with each other – being honest and gently speaking the truth with love

And we may find that as we get closer to those people – some issues will be much smaller or even disappear – Amen!