

5.30.21
Forgiveness and the Holy Spirit
Matthew 6:12-15

As we move back into our study of Matthew, we find ourselves towards the end of the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6. This morning, I feel led to blend a couple of different things together. Some from the Lord's prayer and another passage.

Since it has been a couple of weeks since we have looked at Matthew and specifically the Lord's Prayer, let's begin as a reminder of what Jesus taught us concerning prayer.

Jesus said, pray then in this way.

Our Father who are in heaven, hallow be Thy name.

We begin our daily prayers by praising God for who He is. Creator, Savior, Provider, Protector and much more. By approaching our God in this way, we are giving Him the honor and respect He is due.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Here we are praying for God to be Lord and Master over all including our lives. We are coming and saying let Your will be done throughout the earth on this day. And we are praying let Your will be done in my life on this day. Not my will for today, but God, let Your will be done in my life.

Give us this day our daily bread. We find ourselves asking for the daily spiritual and physical needs we have not only for us but for others and for the body of Christ.

Now we come into the ending of the Lord's prayer but the teaching Jesus has for us continues beyond the Lord's prayer into the next couple of verses.

Matthew 6:12-13, “And forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Vs. 14-15, “For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Some tough teaching from Jesus concerning forgiveness. Let’s see if we can blend a couple of different teachings together to get at what Jesus is teaching us here.

Last week was Pentecost Sunday. If you are following the church calendar used by several different churches, you know there is a Sunday every year celebrating the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the first days of the church. As we set up where we are going let’s read the passage in Acts 2 about the first pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4, When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested in each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

Old Testament definition: Pentecost or Shavot, a Jewish day of celebration in the Old Testament, much like Thanksgiving is to us, giving God thanks for the harvest of grain.

As we look at this definition of Pentecost and when we read here that the day of Pentecost had come, the Jewish people were already celebrating the goodness of God providing for them. So when the pouring out of the Holy Spirit occurred, the first individuals who received Holy Spirit were

just experiencing a continuation of the goodness of God but on a whole new level.

In order for any one, including the first disciples of Jesus and you and I to receive the Holy Spirit every person must ask for the cleansing blood of Jesus in their lives. The vessel of our heart has to be purified, cleansed from all sin.

The God of the universe hears the prayers of a person when they confesses their sins. God is faithful and just to forgive their sins and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. He cleanses the heart that was impure by washing of the blood of Jesus.

There never has been and never will be a more powerful cleansing agent in the universe then the blood of Jesus. His blood is powerful enough to cleanse a heart and make it pure, pure enough to contain a the Spirit of God which is Holy.

As a person receives the Holy Spirit, the following occurs.

Ephesians 1:13, “In Him (Christ) you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of salvation – and having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...”

What occurred in your heart, the giving of the Holy Spirit, was sealed up. It is this inner holiness that will carry you to heaven. It is not your good works or how much you give, or the possibility of you living a sinless life. It is the fact that by faith, you asked for Jesus to take away your sins, which He did, and the receiving of the Spirit of Holiness in your heart. This inner work is then sealed up, contained and maintained by the power of God.

One of the great things that occurred when the Holy Spirit came to you was what He brought with Him. Look at Jesus said in these next verses.

John 14:27a, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you.”

John 15:11, “ These things (the teachings of Jesus including the promise of the Holy Spirit) I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

1. Jesus came to give salvation, peace and joy to the disciples and to us

As I thought about this I was thinking about what the attributes of the Holy Spirit are. The description of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians 6 begins with love, joy, peace. Think about this. The top three attributes include love and the promised joy and peace.

I think Jesus was thrilled about what He was giving us. He was filling us with all of His goodness, all of His love and the capacity to be at peace and full of joy.

Peace and joy and the ability to love not just some but everyone is harder and harder to come by it seems like today. Everything and just about everyone seems to try take our peace and steal our joy.

But Jesus didn't leave us without an answer. The same Holy Spirit that gave joy and peace also brought the following. Look with me at

John 16:8, “And He, (the Holy Spirit) when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

While I believe the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the world is for the conviction of sin and the need for a Savior, I also believe

2. The conviction of the Holy Spirit concerning sin is given to Jesus' followers

In some of our small group time and Sunday School we have identified what happens when sin comes into a believers life. We are still filled with the Holy Spirit but

3. When sin comes into our life then I believe there is blockage to the free flowing of the Holy Spirit in our life that occurs

Blockage which will keep a person from experiencing all the peace and joy that Jesus came to give them. In our passage from the Lord's prayer forgiveness is stated in this way.

Matthew 6:12, "And forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us."

As Jesus is teaching His followers to pray, He leads them into asking for forgiveness for the sins they have committed. Remember, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There are known sins, slip ups and what is called sins of omission.

For example, the Holy Spirit asks us to reach out to a person, to seek to help them in some way. We might feel inadequate or we reason we don't have time. In any case, we haven't been obedient to what the Holy Spirit asked us to do. Maybe the Holy Spirit is prompting us to be more obedient in our prayers or our Bible reading and we resist. These are called sins of omission.

But there are known sins that can easily slip into our lives and when we ask God to forgive us of our trespasses this is what we are asking forgiveness for. But Jesus doesn't stop there does He? He continues to say as we forgive those who trespass against us.

This is an interesting line when you think about it. Forgive us of our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. Do you

see the expectation Jesus has? That if we are seeking forgiveness for our sins and have the belief God's forgiveness is extended to us, then

4. Jesus believes we will extend the same forgiveness to those who trespass, who sin against us.

Paul says this in **Colossians 3:13**, “...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other...just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you (forgive).”

Jesus has the great expectation that His disciples will be like Him, walking in a constant state of forgiveness. Now, when we don't forgive Jesus has a warning for us.

Vs. 14-15, “For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Pretty strong words don't you agree. If we forgive, we are forgiven, if we don't forgive, we are not forgiven. Don't miss this strong message from the Lord. Let's ponder it together for a moment.

“For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Doesn't get much clearer than this does it but just what does Jesus mean, your Father will not forgive you your transgressions?

Here is what I believe it to mean. When Jesus says that we will not be forgiven of our sins I am confident He is not talking about a saving

issue. We have already claimed the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins in general. We have been given the seal of the Holy Spirit which will provides purity within us and this purity is what will carry us to heaven. But the unforgiveness I think Jesus is speaking of is a consequence issue.

5. There are **consequences** to living in a state of unforgiveness.

One of the first things I think that occurs when a person is operating in a state of unforgiveness is their peace and joy has been blocked, at least partially.

The gift of the Holy Spirit has been stifled in this person's life. An unforgiving heart blocks the flow of the Spirit and all the gifts He wants to share with us. Love, joy peace, patience and so on.

We all know the experience of having something happen to us at the hands of another and how difficult it is to process. I know I do. The peace and joy I once had is gone and in its place is anxiety and angst.

How many of you have woke up in the middle of the night thinking about what that person said or did and the possible motives behind it? You can easily get that jolt of angst, a real physical sensation that, in my experience, you might as well get up because there is not going back to sleep, at least for a little while.

I believe this is what Jesus is talking about. When we operate in a spirit of unforgiveness then the peace and joy that He died on the cross to give us is gone, at least for the moment and that is not what He wants for us.

Remember? I have come to give you peace. I have come to make My joy complete in you.

In this teaching from Jesus, embracing a spirit of forgiveness is the only path to experiencing the life of peace and joy God has for us. Jesus came

to set us free but the flow and fullness of freedom Jesus offers doesn't always automatically happen. It comes as we follow the teachings of Jesus, asking for His strength and direction in the different things we face in life like forgiveness.

When we are obedient to this command of forgiving others, then we release the free flow of the Spirit inside of us. We get to experience all the Spirit brought us, all that Jesus promised us. The capacity to love beyond our own ability and the great gift of peace and joy in our lives.

I have come to give you peace, I have come to give you joy.

But the following is true too. When we are free of the sin that can easily bind us up then we get to experience this great place of promise.

John 7:37-38, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture said, ‘From their innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

I remember when Michal and I were pastoring outside of Wichita. One of the congregants had a pasture and as I was hiking around the pasture I came upon a spring bubbling up out of some rocks on a hillside.

It was a stunning sight. Water flowing out of rocks, pooling then creating a stream. And as I walked along the stream there was all kinds of life. Rich, lush grasses and a few trees. I could tell that a lot of wildlife came here to drink and eat of the vegetation. I had to stop, sit down and enjoy the beauty of this place and wonder at it. Out of what looked like hard rock up sprang life giving water.

This is the life Jesus died for us to experience. Not only for ourselves but for others to see, ponder and experience.

You are a source of love, joy and peace, a spring of living water

until they come to this place with Jesus for themselves.

I believe Jesus is telling us, don't let unforgiveness in your heart hinder this great work.

Let's pray.