

Last week we discussed **Matthew 6:11** – **“Give us today our daily bread.”** Gregory of Nyssa says: “It is as if the Divine Word cries aloud to his listeners all but the following: Stop, O people, from pouring your desires into vain things. Stop adding to the causes of suffering on your own selves.” What is Gregory saying? Have you thought of this this week and how to change your “bread” outlook?

Matthew 6:12 – **“And forgive us our debts...”**



M. Scott Peck (1936-2005) was an American psychiatrist and self-help author. He wrote the book **The Road Less Traveled**, published in 1978.

“Unpleasant though it may be, the sense of personal sin is precisely that which keeps our sin from getting out of hand. It is quite painful at times, but it is a very great blessing because it is our one and only effective safeguard against our own proclivity for evil.” What is **Peck** saying about sin? How should we react as Christians?

Genesis 4:6-7 – “Then the Lord said to Cain, **“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”**

What is God telling us about sin? What is our goal as a Christian and follower of God?

The Hebrew word for “crouching”, (rabas) is the same as an ancient Babylonian word referring to an evil demon crouching at the door of a building to threaten the people inside. While these words only appear once in Scripture, this idea of sin standing at the door of your heart is not a foreign concept throughout the Bible. How is sin able to come into our lives?

Peck goes on to say: “It is a basic Christian doctrine that we are all sinners. By “all” we do not mean everyone other than ourselves; we mean everyone, but primarily ourselves. The major prerequisite for membership in the true Christian Club is the self-acknowledgement of sin.” What is **Peck** saying about how the Christian should consider sin? Why is this?

Peck says; “It is possible to acknowledge sin without contrition (feeling remorseful and penitent). But if we are genuinely repentant, then our sins are completely forgotten by God. It is as if they never existed. The slate is wiped completely clean. Every day can be a totally new one.” Have you ever considered each day being a new sin free day for you? What does this say about God’s forgiveness?

Psalms 103:2-3 – “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits – who forgives all your sins ...”

Luke 7: 49 – “The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

Job 11:6 – ...”Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.” What does all of this scripture tell us about sin?

According to **Peck**, what is the key to God’s forgiveness and forgetting of our sin?

Isa 30:15 – “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, ...”.

What does God mean when He says “repentance”? Why “rest”?



Philip Graham Ryken (1966 -) is an Evangelical author, American theologian, Presbyterian minister, and academic administrator. He is the eighth president of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. He has written dozens of books including:

The Doctrines of Grace, King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power, Art for God’s Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts, Christian Worldview, When Trouble Comes, and What Happens After I Die?

“Jesus once told a story about a young man who fell into debt. He was sick of home, tired of living under the authority of his father, and he decided to ask for his share of the inheritance before the old man died. Then he took the money and ran away from home.” According to the story, what did the young man do with the money?

Luke 15:17-20 – **“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ So he got up and went to his father.”** What is the mindset of the son at this point in the story? How is he expecting his father to react? Why?

Luke 15:20 – **“But while he was still a long way off,”** What does this tell us about our relationship with God?

his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

What do you think the son is thinking at this point? Why does he have this mentality?

“The son said to him, ‘Father I have sinned against heaven (True) and against you (True). I am no longer worthy to be called your son (False).’ At what point does the son show repentance? Why does he get the last statement wrong?

Peck goes on: “This is precisely what we ask God to do in the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer. We ask our Father to forgive our debts.” Have you ever connected the story of the wayward son who got into debt with the Lord’s prayer asking for debt forgiveness?

“When we go to Him, weighed down with the debt of all our guilt and sin, he does not sit down with us to work out a payment plan. Instead, he offers forgiveness full and free.” Are you working out a payment plan with God or willing to accept His gift?



Frederica Mathewes-Green (1952-) is an American author and speaker, chiefly on topics related to Eastern Orthodox belief and practice. She has written 16 books including:

Welcome to the Orthodox Church, The Illuminated Heart, The Lost Gospel of Mary, and Facing East.

“When we continue to be distraught over a forgiven sin in the past, it’s linked to our pride.”

What is **Mathewes-Green** saying here? How can sin be linked to pride if it’s already forgiven?

“It’s that we can’t believe we would ever do such a thing. ...Yet it stares back at us steadily, reminding us that we did do it.” What is it about sin that sticks to us, our memory, our conscience, while we forget other things?

“Speaking very precisely, God is never disappointed in us. He’s never disappointed. That’s because his expectations weren’t that high to begin with. We’re the ones with an artificially-inflated idea of our innate goodness, and groundless certainty about the things we’d never do.” What is **Mathewes-Green** saying here about how we think of ourselves and how God thinks of us?

“Deep repentance can do that for you (Make you a stronger Christian). But first you have to accept that you really did do the things you want God to forgive.” Like the wayward son, can you swallow your pride and go to the Father and repent? Can you?