>>>>>>> Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 11 <<<<<<<

1) Susan asked the question regarding the word difference – debts/debtors in verse 12 as opposed to trespasses in verse 14/15.

2) The three verses 12, and 14/15 as I read them in the ESV say:

12 and forgive us our **debts**,
as we also have forgiven our **debtors**.

14 For if you forgive others their **trespasses**, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others their **trespasses**, neither will your Father forgive your **trespasses**.

   a) The short answer is yes; the Greek is different.

   b) The word in verse 12 is ὀφείλημα (opheilēma) –

      i) BDAG defines it as an **obligation in a moral sense**, *debt*=sin.[15]

      ii) This noun form is only used here in verse 12 – nowhere else in the NT.

   c) In verse 14/15, the word for trespasses is παράπτωμα (paraptōma) –

      i) BDAG defines it as **Offenses against humans. a violation of moral standards, offense, wrongdoing, sin**[15]

      ii) Used 23 times, 21 as offense, wrongdoing, transgression. Used 2 times to mean sin.

   d) Matthew does not use the word ἁμαρτία, (hamartia), which is the common word for sin in any of these verses.

      i) However, the parallel of verse 12 in Luke's version uses two words.

Luke 11:4 (NASB 2020)

4 'And forgive us our sins, (ἁμαρτία)
For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted (ὀφείλω) to us.
And do not lead us into temptation.' "

      ii) Luke does not have a parallel to verses 14/15.

3) Another thing from last time.

   a) Thinking back on my comments about verses 12, and 14/15, the key here is that this is pertaining to intentional unforgiveness.

   b) When we look at this, if it were not intentional unforgiveness, that is the point then grace would have no effect.

   c) To say this perhaps more clearly, if I choose not to forgive someone for a wrong which they have or I perceive they have done to me then I am saying I will not try to forgive – I want to commit this sin of holding a grudge.

"God, I don't care what you want me to do I am not going to forgive this person!"

   d) I think this is what Paul is saying in Romans 6:1-2

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[15] [16] William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 770.

Romans 6:1–2 (ESV)
Dead to Sin, Alive to God

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

e) However, if I am sincerely struggling to forgive someone for a wrong which was done to me and I keep failing then grace would cover me.

f) Simply put, if we intentionally rebel against what God is saying then grace will not cover us and as long as we stay in that state of rebellion we are not covered by grace.

g) Truth is, it really does not matter what the sin – if it is intentional and we are rebelling against God then I think this applies.

"Sabbath Is More Than Self-Care" by Megan Hill

https://www.crossway.org/articles/sabbath-is-more-than-self-care/?utm_source=Crossway+Marketing&utm_campaign=4a057a559a-20260220+General-SabbathIsMoreThanSelfCare&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-4a057a559a-528930153&mc_cid=4a057a559a&mc_eid=ca5d9b5ef8

4) Ok, let's talk a little about How to Use the Model Prayer.

a) First, to be clear, the first-person plural pronouns indicate that the believers can pray this prayer corporately.

b) Second, and perhaps most importantly, the pattern of praise, intercession, and request helps believers understand the nature and purpose of their personal prayers in their relationship with the Father.

Do our prayers have to include every part of the model in every prayer?

c) Short answer – NO.

d) In what we have recorded in the New Testament, Jesus did not pray these words nor did he himself pray this exact prayer every time he prayed.

i) He did say, "Pray, then, in this way."

e) Based on that, I think perhaps we are to use it as we have been discussing, as a model.

f) Using the parts of the model to pray in our words and from our heart as we are moved and have need!

What are things that should be parts of all our prayers?

g) We do need to praise God and address Him with reverence.

i) How we do it I am not sure is as critical as where it comes from – the heart.

h) The only other part of the structure that I have feelings about is the ending which is not covered in the prayer as we have discussed.

i) This is based on the scriptures we have discussed that we should ask in the name of our Lord.

(1) I am NOT saying that if we don't our prayer will not be heard – all I am saying is that Jesus told us to ask in His name so that's what we should do.

5) To wrap this up, we could probably all recite this prayer and not miss a single word.
6) But what I hope is that now if not before, we each see the value of the prayer as not only a model but also that we have learned more of how Jesus wants us to live by the manner in which we must pray.

1) Ok, moving on to verses 16-18, we have another of those "religious righteousness" situations.

Matthew 6:16–18 (NASB 2020)
Fasting; The True Treasure; Wealth

16 "Now whenever you fast, do not make a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do,* for they distort their faces so that they will be noticed by people when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **17** But as for you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, **18** so that your fasting will not be noticed by people but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

2) Most translations use wording that in essence says, "do not look the part."
   a) Truth is, Jesus is saying that the hypocrites do disfigure their faces so they will be noticed.
   b) However, the word that many translate "look gloomy" in this passage can also mean "become gloomy."
   c) Though "look gloomy" is absolutely correct, I think there is something to be said for the "become gloomy" aspect as well.
      i) The indication if we use the word "become" is not necessarily that they just look that way that they actually are gloomy because of fasting.
3) Jesus says that they disfigure their faces to be noticed by people.
   a) But he may also be saying that they have a WRONG attitude toward fasting.
4) **So, at this point, we should answer a few questions.**
      (1) What are reasons or motivations for fasting – i.e. why should we fast?
      (2) What should our attitude be as we fast?
      (3) How long must we fast?
      (4) Are we "required to" fast?

Purpose	***Example Verse***	***Description***
Strengthen Prayer	Ezra 8:23	Intensifies prayer with urgency
Seek Guidance	Judges 20:26	Seeking God's direction
Express Grief	2 Samuel 1:12	Mourning and loss
Seek Deliverance/Protection	2 Chr. 20:3-4	Facing dangers or enemies
Repentance	1 Samuel 7:6	Returning to God
Humble Oneself	1 Kings 21:27	Submitting before God
Ministry to Others	Isaiah 58:6-7	Helping the oppressed, sharing with the needy
Overcome Temptation	Matthew 4:1-11	Spiritual preparation, resisting temptation
Worship	Luke 2:37	Expressing love and devotion to God

5) **Let's begin with reasons or motivations for fasting …**

6) Scripture gives no less than 9 different positive reasons to fast.

   (1) Strengthen Prayer
   (2) Seek Guidance
   (3) Express Grief
   (4) Seek Deliverance/Protection
   (5) Repentance
   (6) Humble Oneself
   (7) Ministry to Others
   (8) Overcome Temptation
   (9) Worship

Ezra 8:23 (ESV) Intensifies Prayer and urgency.

23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

Judges 20:26 (ESV) Seeking God's direction.

26 Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

2 Sa 1:12 (ESV) Mourning and loss.

12 And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

2 Ch 20:3–4 (ESV) Facing dangers or enemies.

3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **4** And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

1 Sa 7:6 (ESV) Returning to God.

6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

1 Ki 21:27 (ESV) Submitting before God.

27 And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly.

Is 58:6–7 (ESV) Helping the oppressed, sharing with the needy.

6 "Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,

and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
[8] Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Mt 4:1–2 (ESV) Spiritual preparation, resisting temptation.
The Temptation of Jesus

[1] Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
[2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Lk 2:37 (ESV) Expressing love and devotion to God.

[37] … and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

7) When we look at all these scriptures, what we find is that in each case, fasting is like taking one step beyond prayer.
   a) One commentator likens it to giving extra force to our pleading in the court of heaven.
   b) It is a way of showing God how serious we are and how much we really need Him in this situation.
   c) Perhaps a different way to say this is that it draws us and our prayers closer to God.

8) And the next of our questions is:

9) What should our attitude be as we fast?

In all these reasons to fast, should the fasting itself make you gloomy or cause you to disfigure your face?

a) The answer is, really NO!
   i) There are things that we fast for and about that are a source of saddness but it is NOT the fasting that makes us sad.
   ii) There is a physical component of fasting – being hungry and even perhaps like many folks getting a headache.
   iii) Even in the cases of mourning, the sadness is not because of the fasting – instead, the mourning is the reason for the fasting – BIG DIFFERENCE!

b) **We should make one further important point here.**
   i) We should not fast without a definite reason or purpose in mind.
   ii) If we do, the act of fasting may become much like the thoughtless repetition Jesus was talking about back in verse 7.

10) How long must we fast?

a) As to how long we should fast, I think it is a matter of what you feel is appropriate based on the purpose of your fasting.

i) Keeping in mind why you are fasting, it might be as little as one meal or as long as a week.

ii) There are dangers in fasting for long periods of time if your body is not ready for it; so a week or more should probably be approached carefully.

Before we get to our last question of the 4

Is food the only thing that qualifies as a true "fasting" item?

11) My personal thought is no.

a) Abstaining from anything that serves the purposes we have talked about – especially the focusing of our prayers that are associated with the fast should be good.

12) Now to the last question in our list of 4 – are we required to fast?

a) Scripture in Leviticus does command Israelites to fast on the Day of Atonement.

b) In the scripture we are discussing Jesus makes the comment "whenever you fast."

i) "Whenever" suggests a **pattern or a habit** so, I would think it is expected.

ii) This perhaps as in other places makes the right assumption that we should fast.

iii) However, no command to fast appears in Paul's, John's, or Peter's writings.

c) To supplement the scriptures which we read from the Old Testament a moment ago, in Acts 13:2 and 14:23 we see Christians fasting and praying before important decisions.

i) One source points out that these instances in Acts are part of ***a voluntary discipline NOT a ritual obligation.***

13) I will say that every time I get into this subject, I find a twinge of guilt hitting me upside the head!

a) I really think there are times I should fast but to be honest, I have not been.

So, to wrap this up.

What are some takeaways from all this that might help us to be more inclined to fast or fast more often?

1) Fasting needs a purpose.

a) Lots of purposes are available and should be almost no brainers.

2) Fasting does not have to be food.

3) Fasting does not have to be for long periods of time, even one meal or event can be effective.

4) Fasting is a method to draw us closer to God and enhance our prayers – especially in critical times.