

BOLD to SAY

LEARNING & LIVING
THE LORD'S PRAYER

Week 4

**"Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us"**

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Scripture Focus: *Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21–35; Luke 4:16–21*

Key Themes:

- Forgiveness is the most radical and difficult petition of the Lord's Prayer.
- God's forgiveness is always linked to our forgiveness of others.
- Forgiveness is both personal and social—it reshapes relationships, economies, and communities.
- To forgive is not to forget, but to remember truthfully and refuse vengeance.
- God's economy is an economy of grace, not scarcity.

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Opening Prayer and Review

Focus 1: The Difficulty of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not natural to us. We prefer to hold grudges, cultivate grievances, and claim victimhood. Yet Jesus insists that forgiveness is at the center of prayer. Stories like the Amish after Nickel Mines or the families of Mother Emanuel AME in Charleston remind us what radical forgiveness looks like when lived in faith.

Reflection Question 1: What story of forgiveness from the news or your life experience has inspired you?

Focus 2: The Economy of Forgiveness

Jesus ties forgiveness to economics. The Greek word for forgiveness—*aphesis*—is the same word used for Jubilee, the release of debts (Luke 4). Forgiveness is about living in God's economy, where we recognize our spiritual bankruptcy and rely wholly on grace.

Reflection Question 2: How does God's economy differ from our earthly economy?

Focus 3: The Unmerciful Servant

Jesus' parable of the servant (Matthew 18) shows the absurdity of receiving grace but refusing to extend it. Our forgiveness of others is bound up with God's forgiveness of us. We cannot claim the gift of grace without being shaped into forgivers ourselves.

Reflection Question 3: What is Jesus trying to teach us in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant?

Focus 4: Remembering and Reconciling

Forgiveness is not forgetting but remembering truthfully. Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminds us that real healing comes only through honest confrontation with injury and reconciliation rooted in truth. Forgiveness is risky—but it is the only way to freedom.

Reflection Question 4: Why is remembering a crucial part of forgiveness? Why can't we just "let bygones be bygones"?

Focus 5: The Cost of Withholding Forgiveness

Anger, resentment, and bitterness corrode us from the inside. As Mark Twain said, "Anger is the acid that does more damage to the vessel in which it is stored than on anything it is poured." Forgiveness releases us from bondage to our enemies.

Reflection Question 5: In what ways does withholding forgiveness add more harm to the injured?

Focus 6: Forgiveness and Community

Forgiveness is not just individual—it is communal. Nations and communities need truth-telling, reconciliation, and the healing of past injustices. The church must lead the way in practicing forgiveness as a social act.

Reflection Question 6: What would it look like for our nation to have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission? What are other ways for deep healing and reconciliation to occur between people of different races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, or political beliefs?

Closing Prayer

Pray together: *"Father, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."*

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Notes:
