The Plea

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Thank you so much for sharing. I have just so enjoyed our testimonies we have heard this semester already.

I'm just so blessed by them. If you've got your Bible, open with me to Matthew chapter 6. Emphasizing Matthew because apparently I said Mark two weeks ago and I'm still not living it down. So, Matthew chapter 6. Just as a way of reminder, we are looking here at our Lord's model prayer with two headings.
First, seeking the glory of God. And second, seeking the help of God. Under each of those two categories, there are three specific requests.
First, under seeking the glory of God, he mentions our prayer request for His name to be honored, His kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.
[1:15] Under the category of seeking the help of God, we've looked already at give us this day our daily bread. We look today at the next part, the next request, which is found in verse 12.

And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. You've noticed, I'm sure, that it is tempting to always think that if we have done wrong, that forgiveness should be the norm.
But if someone has hurt or harmed us, forgiveness is all of a sudden much more difficult. The truth is, every relationship needs forgiveness to abound if it is going to be a relationship that is strong. So let's look at this fifth out of the sixth request here. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.
We'll look at it with just these two simple headings. What God gives us and what we give others. What God gives us and what we give others.
[2:26] What God gives us is that He forgives us our debts. And make note of two things. First, that we have an insurmountable need. We have an insurmountable need.

Think about what our debt is before God. God is holy. We are not. God is perfect. We are not. We are unable to pay off our sin debt that we have.
The debt is our sin. And here's the problem. Every single time you commit any sin of any kind, that sin by itself is something alone you could never, ever repay.
You could never pay it off. Every single sin that you commit is a trampling of the eternal glory of the eternal God. And so if you were to commit just simply one sin at any point in your life, one sin by itself would give you more debt than you could ever pay.
And of course we don't have just one sin. We have committed more sin than we could ever even think of.
[3:45] Not to even mention all the sin that we've committed that didn't even stop us in our track to make us aware of it. Not to mention the times we've done the right thing but with the wrong motives.

Or even perhaps we've done it with the right motives and then when someone was grateful for us, we acted as though we were the sole cause of that success.
Whatever it may be, the things that we have done or the things that we have failed to do that we should or the attitude that we should have had. Or the failure to simply be grateful or to give God the glory that he deserves.
If just one sin were to be committed, you would have a debt so insurmountable you could never pay it off. Can you possibly imagine how much sin over a lifetime what that debt would store up for us? It's insurmountable. It is a larger number than we could ever consider. And when we say, God, forgive us of our debts, we have to first stop and recognize that we are sinners in desperate need of having our sin debt forgiven.

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[4:59] The problem for so many people is they look at their sin from a very earthly perspective. We comfort ourselves by saying things like, well, yes, maybe I do this, but everybody else does that too.

Or my sin is not as bad as somebody else's. Or surely this sin is not really that big of a thing. But we have to look at sin from God's perspective, not ours.
And when we look at sin from God's perspective, we realize that our debt from one single sin is an insurmountable debt.
And yet, the text makes it clear that we are instructed to come before the Lord and ask for his forgiveness. We are supposed to come and ask the Lord to pardon our sin.
Now, some in our world today will say that it is an insult for a believer to ask for forgiveness of God.
[6:08] Because once we have been forgiven, that we should never ask for our sin to be forgiven. That may sound foreign to you, but just literally this past week, I saw an extended online debate between a couple of different scholars.

One, taking the side that it would be an affront to God for a believer to ask for forgiveness of sin once we are saved. That's not what Jesus teaches us.
He teaches us that not that we get saved over and over again, of course, but that part of our relationship with the Lord should be that we often and regularly come before him asking for our sin to be forgiven.
And it's important because, as I think Kevin DeYoung helpfully points out with this, when we think about our sin before the Lord, we have to recognize that while God is our judge, he is also our heavenly Father.
So think of it in the light of this model prayer. In verse 9, we begin by saying, Our Father in heaven. So think of your sin in this way.
[7:19] Even as a believer, what pleases or displeases your Father? With an earthly father, if a child disobeys, that child doesn't cease to be his son or his daughter.

It's not the loss of relationship, but when the Father in earthly sense is disobeyed, the Father is not pleased and it impacts the relationship. As Christians, when we sin, we fear no condemnation. Romans 8.1 makes that clear. But we do seek forgiveness because we love our Father and we desire to please him.
When we say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, we are saying, God, I want your name to be revered in my life.
And how can the name of God be revered in our life if we are harboring unconfessed sin? It's not because we're afraid of losing our salvation.
[8:22] It's because we want to please our Father. It's because we know that he loves us and that what he wants is for our good. Now, others may tend to struggle here and think, what right do I have to come before the God of the universe and ask him to forgive me?

Who am I to ask God to forgive me? Some may have too low of a view of God, but others may have such a high view of God that they talk themselves into thinking that God would not forgive them or God would not listen to their prayer and God would not be quick to forgive their sin.
But remember who it is that's teaching us to pray like this. This is Christ himself. What authority do you have to come before the presence of God and ask him to forgive you of your sin?
Well, the authority you have is it's the very way that God the Son has instructed his people to pray. It is the Lord himself who said that we ought to pray like this.
Forgive us of our debts. And so while we do have an insurmountable need, we also have an inexhaustible hope.
[9:45] We have an inexhaustible hope. We have a hope that in the Lord will never run dry. Our hope is inexhaustible because our God is forever faithful.

And when we sin, he is a forgiving, gracious, heavenly Father. Yes, we have an insurmountable need on our own, but because of the Father's forgiveness, we have an inexhaustible hope, and we take great comfort in that reality.
That's what God gives us. He forgives our debts. But the second half of this request is what we give others. Forgive us our debts, second part, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
I want you to see that we have a proper expression to being forgiven. As Christians, when we have had our sin forgiven, there's a proper way that we should express the joy of that.

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There's a proper way that we express that we really have been forgiven from the Father. And the way that we do that is by being quick to grant forgiveness to those who have wronged us.
[11:04] We express our worship to the Lord by giving to others what the Lord has given to us. This is one of the things that should bring true assurance in the life of a believer.

Do you forgive as God has forgiven you? Now the opposite is also true. If you are unforgiving, if you store up bitterness and strife and hatred, if you will not forgive those who have wronged you, that would be evidence that you are not living as Christ instructed us to live.
And so it's no exaggeration to say that your forgiveness of others or lack of it is absolutely a gospel issue. Because those who have been forgiven so much should be quick to forgive others.
Those who refuse to forgive others and they have harmed are very likely giving the very evidence that they have never felt the relief of their own sin debt being lifted.
And so we forgive others. Not because forgiving somebody else earns us salvation. We forgive others because it's a way to express the grace that the Lord has given to us.
[12:27] But not only do we have a proper expression of our worship, there's also a proper expectation that we should have as believers. Just look at the wording again.

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. This is the expectation of believers that we would be a forgiving people. Our forgiving of others is not only an expression of worship, but is also an expectation for those who have been saved.
In other words, it's a given scriptural expectation that if God has forgiven you, that you're going to be a forgiving person. Because when we forgive other people, we are putting the gospel on display.
When somebody has wronged you and asked for your forgiveness, it can be hard to grant that. We've all been there.
And when we forgive somebody, we're not saying that they didn't hurt us. When we forgive somebody, we're not saying that they didn't do something wrong.
[13:40] What we are saying is that we are making a joyful choice to forgive somebody else because we know what it is to be forgiven and we want the gospel to be at work through our lives.

That's why we're forgiving others. What God gives to us is forgiving our sin. What we give to others is forgiving them when they have hurt us.
And the mindset would be that because God has forgiven me of so much, I want to pass on that grace to somebody else. Now let's be very clear in the text here.
This is not saying that God forgives us because we forgive somebody else. It's saying that we forgive others because God has forgiven us.
In other words, our forgiving others is not the condition of our salvation. It's the response to it. It is our expression of worship and it is the expectation of those who belong to Christ that we will do for others what God has done for us.
[14:55] And let's be clear about this. What God has done for us is a far greater work. When you forgive somebody else, it's a sinner forgiving a sinner.

It's a lateral move. What God has done for us is someone who is perfectly holy, perfectly pure, forgiving someone who has trampled on His glorious name.
To be sure, it can be hard to forgive somebody else, but you'll never forgive anyone else anywhere close to what God has freely forgiven you. We are forgiving people because it is a way that we show our worship unto the Lord.
Let's just look at a few questions, honest questions, real life questions about forgiving others. First, does forgiveness mean that no consequences can remain?
If you forgive somebody else, does it mean that there are no consequences that remain? Well, think of it this way. If you're driving down the road and you are speeding and you get pulled over, you may truly feel sorry, not just for the ticket, you may really feel sorry for what you were doing.
[16:15] You may feel sorry that you were putting someone else in danger. You may be sorry that you forced the policeman to have to pull you over. You may be sorry that you were reckless or careless.

And as a citizen, you could sincerely ask for forgiveness from the police officer just as person to person, citizen to citizen.
I'm sorry I broke the law. I'm sorry that I was dangerous. I'm sorry that I made you come and have this conversation pull me over when maybe there's something else you could have been doing to help protect someone else.

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And the police officer could truly, as a person, forgive you. And he could be very sincere and mean it. And you may very well still have a ticket to pay because you broke the law.
Someone forgiving you doesn't mean that there's no consequence that ever remain. There are consequences at times that do remain. If a child has disobeyed his parents, he may truly be repentant for breaking curfew.
[17:18] He may truly be repentant for disrespecting the authority of his parents. He may absolutely, sincerely ask for forgiveness and the parents can absolutely grant forgiveness and that relationship is renewed and restored.

But he still may have to turn in his car keys for a week as a consequence of what he's done. In the spiritual realm, think of the thief on the cross. When Jesus dies, you've got a thief on one side, one on the other, and the thief on the one side is arrogant and obnoxious and mocking to his last breath. But the other thief beside Jesus is repentant. In one of the most amazing displays of mercy, the thief on the cross on the other side is forgiven.
Just moments before he would meet his maker face to face. And Jesus says of him, because of his faith today, you will be with me in paradise.
He's forgiven, he's pardoned, and yet, the thief on the cross will still die a physical death for his sin. He cries out for mercy, and Jesus grants him mercy, but what Jesus does not do is tell him, you can take the nails out of your hands and out of your feet, and you can come down off the cross, and you are free of the consequence.
[18:52] There is still an earthly consequence to what is going on when someone was guilty of murder, insurrection, he's still put to death. Even if God has forgiven his sin, there is still a consequence that remains.

The thief on the cross still lost his life because of his actions. But because of his faith, he inherited eternal life.
Second question, what if somebody hurts us but does not ask for forgiveness? Have you ever had that? Someone has hurt you, someone has wounded you, maybe they talked in an unkind way towards you, maybe they disappointed and let you down, maybe they lied to you, maybe they took something from you, whatever it may be.
And you've wrestled a little bit with what would I say if they ever asked for my forgiveness? What would this person who was my friend, what would this person who was in my family, what would this person who was my neighbor, what would this person who I used to work with, what would I say because they've wounded me so deeply, what if they ever asked me to forgive them, could I do that?
Well, that's one issue. Let's back up even before that. What do you do if someone has hurt you and they never have asked for forgiveness? Can you forgive them without them even asking for forgiveness?
[20:21] Well, if I were speaking to someone who was in the wrong, I would tell them biblically they ought to go to that person and ask for forgiveness and try to make that right, but in the sense of what we're looking at in the text tonight, it's about us forgiving other people.

And I would just say this, as much as you can, it would be better for you to forgive someone in your heart even if they never had the maturity, kindness, or godliness to come and ask you to do so. Look, relationships are difficult and real life can get really messy and these aren't hypothetical things with as many people that are in a room.
There's all kinds of things that are real life there. It may take time for you to be able to get there, but I'm just going to say to you that, as Romans says, as much as depends on you live in peace with all people, again, consequences may remain, but it will be better for you, even the harmed party, if you are able to forgive someone who has hurt you.
And maybe it would be easier if they came to you and owned up to their mistake. Maybe if they came to you and said, look, I have sinned against you, I need you to forgive me, those may be very helpful words that would make it much more likely that you could forgive them.
[21:58] And I can't for a moment pretend that what someone else has done to you doesn't create very real, lasting pain.

It does. I'm just saying to you, your heart will never flourish with joy as long as you actively, purposefully keep an unforgiving spirit.

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I'm not suggesting that you can just in a moment's notice clean up everything someone has done to you as if there is no pain that remains.
That's not real life. That's not what it is to be a human being. What I am saying to you is that when a person harbors unforgiveness and bitterness and anger in their heart, is a self-destructing kind of thing.
And even if the person who has wronged you never, ever asks for your forgiveness, you will feel in your heart far more joy and far more satisfaction and spiritual contentment if you are able to come before the Lord and say, I choose before the Lord to forgive this one who has hurt and wronged me.
[23:27] And they may never even come to you and talk to you about it. But if you decide in your own mind that you are going to hold a hostile, aggressive, unforgiving spirit because someone has never come to ask you for your forgiveness, I just want you to understand that you don't make the one who has wronged you your standard of righteousness.

Christ is. Now, I'm a real person. I've got real things in my life I've been through. I'm talking to real people. You've been through real things in your life. So, I'm not talking about some perfect world kind of a thing.
I'm talking about real life stuff. I'm just saying to you that if you say that this person hurt me and because of the way they're acting and treating me and because they've never asked me to forgive them, I won't even possibly consider granting them forgiveness, then the problem with that is you're making that person's actions your standard.
And you don't ever want to make another sinner's actions your standard. We want to be able to pray as Christ taught us to pray.
Father, forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. I encourage you to take that need if that's where you are.
[24:59] Take that unto the Lord over and over and over and pray for a forgiving heart not because the other person has done something to deserve your forgiveness per se, but because in your heart you would rather make Christ your standard of righteousness than the person who has wronged you.

Human consequences sometimes remain, it's true. but your Christian life will flourish best when you have a forgiving heart and it will be stifled if you allow bitterness to remain.
These are not easy things. They can be in fact quite complicated. But God has forgiven you and the expression of your salvation is that you would be a forgiver and the expectation of your salvation is that you would be a forgiver and the example of that is Christ himself.
So what I want to encourage you to do is with God's help and his grace ask him to grant you a forgiving heart.
and if for no other reason because you would rather the name of God be magnified in your life than anything else.
[26:39] Do you see the genius behind this prayer? This is actually quite a very difficult thing to pray. God I want to be a forgiving person.

That's a very difficult thing to do. Which is why Jesus teaches us before we even get there to say God hallowed be your name.
God make your name great in my life. God help me to live for your kingdom. God I want your will to be done in my life.
See there's a lot of time we need to spend in prayer getting our own heart right and submissive to the authority of God if we are ever going through the hard things namely in this text forgiving someone who has hurt us.
Of course this is not easy. There's people in this room that have been wounded deeply by people. Which is why we begin our prayers by saying God let me first focus on your name not mine.
[27:46] Let me first focus on your glory not my wants. God let me first focus on your kingdom purposes not first being consumed with myself.

And then third what if someone asks me to forgive them and I don't feel like it? we kind of smile at that one because we all know exactly what we would tell somebody else if they asked us that right? But what if it's you? It's like the old saying you know someone says I'm having surgery and you say is it a minor surgery? And the answer is no defense who's having it right?
It's not minor if it's you. There's never been a person in the world that they themselves said they were having minor surgery. It's only minor if it's somebody else. Well you would tell anybody else

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that how you feel about it should not be the way that you make your decisions but if it's you it's a very real thing.
I just want to remind you again this is in the context of the gospel. We're praying to our father. We're praying about his name. We're praying about his kingdom. We're praying about his will.
[29:13] We're recognizing verse 11 our daily needs. We're recognizing he has forgiven us of debt that was insurmountable. And I want to say to you tonight that we do not forgive based on our feelings.

We forgive as a response to our conversion. Please hear that clearly tonight. God in Christ.
obey as a response conversion. Ephesians 4 32 teaches us be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.
Somebody asked me last week, how long should I pray? My answer would be until you can live like that. You've got to pray for his name, his kingdom, his glory, and his will until it becomes the desire of your heart to forgive others, just as God in Christ has forgiven you.
And it may take you a long time to get there. And that's why Jesus said, pray then like this, seeking the glory of God, and then seeking the help of God.
[30:58] And when we pray like that, we will say, Father, forgive us our debts, just also as we forgive our debtors.

God, this is what you have given to me. As an expression of praise and of worship, this is what I will give to others, unto the glory of his name.
Lord, we thank you for your word. Lord, just the mere mention of forgiving others, I know, for many in this room, brings some very painful realities to the surface.
Everyone in this room has been hurt by others in ways probably more deep and profound than anyone else even knows. forgiveness. And forgiving those who hurt us demands that we would first love your name more than we love our rights.
We would love your kingdom more than we love our agenda. We would love your will more than we desire our own way.
[32:19] Lord, these things are not easy. And so we thank you that you have taught us to pray like this. You've taught us the theology of why.

And as an expression of our worship, we desire to forgive others. Because you and Christ have forgiven us. Help us to pray like that, that we would be able to live like that.
We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you, church. You're dismissed. You're God bless you, God bless you.
God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.
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