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STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 4.28.24

SUMMARY

Jesus continued the prayer he had taught his disciples, calling them to ask God to forgive their sins. Interestingly, he categorizes this action as a forgiveness of *debt*. Jesus' thought is that we, as sinners, can never adequately atone for our sins—he must remove them from the ledger, and until they are, we operate at a deficit when held up against the perfect holiness of God. However, we no longer operate “in debt” after the Lord forgives us of our past, present, and future sins, as Jesus' payment was sufficient to cover the entirety of our debt. If this is the case, why do we continue asking for forgiveness? The answer lies in making the distinction between God as our *Judge* and as our *Father*—between being justified *sinners* and adopted *sons and daughters*. As adopted children, we address our Father, and though our daily failures do not cancel out our justification (or his love for us), we are at odds with him until we acknowledge our shortcomings. And blessedly, he is always faithful and just to forgive our sins (1 John 1:9). Therefore, the sincere Christian labors “by the Spirit” to “put to death the deeds of the body” all his days (Romans 8:13). With this in mind, those who live by God's forgiveness must also imitate it. If we fail to forgive others, we should question ourselves to see if we truly have a sense of the enormous debt that the Father has forgiven us (Luke 7:47). Jesus said so himself: only those who forgive will receive forgiveness (Matthew 6:14). So, while it is true that forgiveness is by faith in Christ alone—not as a result of works—repentance and forgiveness are the evidence of a sincere faith.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Matthew 6:12 and Luke 7:36–50.

Do you find yourself less inclined to ask God to forgive you, knowing he's already forgiven you? Or does knowing that he's forgiven you drive you to ask for forgiveness all the more?

Why do we find it difficult to forgive others when the Father has forgiven us so much? What steps can we take to be less reluctant to forgive?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.