

FORGIVE US FATHER

I. Believers Acknowledge Serious Problems with Sin

A. No one is free from sin. “What then? *are we better than they?* No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all under sin*; As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one*: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*” (Romans 3:9-12)

B. The Bible removes any excuses; everyone sins. “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*” (Romans 3:19)

C. If God had not provided a solution for sin, the situation would be impossible. “*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” (Psalm 130:3-4)

D. Believers pray because they cannot meet their own needs and they know that through Christ needs are met. “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way*; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

II. The Appeal for Forgiveness Expresses Faith in Grace

A. Grace is an unmerited act on God’s part. “*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*” (Romans 3:24-26)

B. A believer must understand that the blood atonement is the price of the prayer for forgiveness. “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and *without shedding of blood is no remission.*” (Hebrews 9:22)

C. God the Father’s love of Jesus is the transforming power which enables the effective prayer for forgiveness. “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein *he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” (Ephesians 1:6-7)

D. Expect the impossible because God has promised it to His people. “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them *beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*; that they might be called *trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*” (Isaiah 61:3)

III. Appeal Cautiously

A. Believers need to be certain what they are asking when they seek forgiveness. “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you *through the knowledge of God*, and of Jesus our Lord,” (2 Peter 1:2)

B. Meditate before raising specific matters with God. “*Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.*” (Hosea 14:2)

C. Be entirely open and honest, holding back nothing. “O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, *do thou it for thy name’s sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.*” (Jeremiah 14:7)

D. Keep the focus on God’s faithfulness rather than human failure. “*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*” (Psalm 51:7-12)

E. Demonstrate the pattern of grace in personal dealings; the forgiven forgive. “And *forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.* And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.” (Luke 11:4)

F. Do not let personal example argue against prayer; the judge knows the facts in the case. “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But *if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*” (Matthew 6:14-15)

G. God knows the level of a petitioner’s sincerity. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, *if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*” (Matthew 18:35)

+ Dr. Edwin P. Elliott, Jr.