

Matthew 6:14-15—The Necessity of Forgiveness

- I. **Context: *Forgive us our debts...***
 - a. The only clause in the Lord's Prayer that has commentary.
 - b. Emphasizes the importance of this act.

- II. **Forgiveness is a direct reflection of our relationship with God.**
 - a. Not saying that we are saved because we forgive (*Eph. 2:8*)
 - b. The unforgiving are blind to the extent of their own sins and need for forgiveness.
 - c. The unforgiving have flatly denied God's greater plans for their lives.
 - i. *2 Corinthians 5:18-21*—we are to be ministers of reconciliation; forgiveness is a vital element to this.
 - d. If you are refusing to forgive someone, you need to take a serious look at your faith in Christ.

- III. **Lack of forgiveness is destructive.**
 - a. The unforgiving hurt the witness of the church.
 - b. The unforgiving hurt those around them (brother not forgiving bro hurt mom)
 - c. The unforgiving hurt themselves.
 - i. The hurt they refuse to let go of becomes an albatross.
 - ii. They become controlled by the offender.
 - iii. In vengeance they often escalate the problems

- IV. **True Forgiveness**
 - a. Does not mean the offense is forgotten.
 - b. Does not mean the pain is gone.
 - c. Does not always mean that there won't be some sort of earthly justice.
 - d. It means you acknowledge the hurt and what it has done to you, but you refuse to hold onto it; you give it into the hands of God.
 - e. Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a decision.
 - f. Forgiveness (especially of major offenses) must begin with God; if you are struggling to forgive, turn to God, ask Him for the strength to forgive.

- V. **Forgiveness begins with God forgiving us.**
 - a. Have you recognized your need for God's forgiveness?
 - i. Do you recognize your sinfulness and that it's a barrier between you and Holy God? God has forgiven your sins and Jesus took the consequences upon himself on the cross
 - b. Have you repented and asked the God of the universe to forgive your sins and come into your life?
 - c. Who is the most difficult person (or group) for you to forgive? Why? What do you learn about yourself in that? How can that drive you closer to God and his gospel rather than further?