

Good Morning, Church! This is the day the Lord has made **AND I REJOICE** with those who said, let us go up to the house of the Lord.

Today we continue our series **BACK TO BASICS**, as we explore ***The Lord's Prayer***.

I profoundly believe that ***The Lord's Prayer*** is the best-known prayer around the world, at least within the Christian Community.

I also believe it is a very well “crafted” prayer through which Jesus set us up with areas that are vital in our spiritual and secular lives; for example *worship, adoration, trust, humility, exultation, acknowledgement, and some basic needs*.

***BUT**, before we go any further, **how about we ask the Holy Spirit for some help in prayer?**

Holy Spirit, thou art welcomed into this place.

Open our eyes to see. Open our ears to hear,

Our minds to understand,

And warm our hearts to believe.

Now, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts

be pleasing in your sight,

Oh Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. **AMEN.**

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I always say that there are **two** very difficult parts in the ***Lord's Prayer*** that Jesus made sure they were sandwiched between worship and glory: ***Thy will be done*** and ***Forgive us as we forgive***. *Our Father, which art in heaven, oh! Hallowed be thy name. You are holy. Thy*

kingdom come. --- Beautiful. Words through which we are lead to throw ourselves into the arms of our mighty Creator.

These are words that help us feel comfortable in prayer with our Amazing God.

Once we are comfortable, then we feel more comfortable saying, ***Thy will be done*** and ***Forgive us as we forgive.***

Did you notice how many times I used the word *Comfortable*? That is because *worship*, *adoration*, and *exultation* are easier than *trust* and *commitment*.

FORGIVENESS, which involves *commitment*, is NOT an easy thing. It is NOT easy because it is personal and intimate. It is NOT easy because it is about *vulnerability*.

It is NOT easy because every time we are confronted with the task, or at least most of the time, we seem to find a *reason*, a *motive*, or an *excuse* not to forgive to the point of altering Bible verses or Bible stories in order to make them fit into our narrative or situation.

Believe me. I know all about it.

However, ***FORGIVENESS*** is central to the Christian faith, **BUT** it takes a lot of strength and a HUGE determination to go through it.

What makes it so difficult? PRIDE. Remember? It is *PERSONAL* and it is *INTIMATE*. AND, when those are hurt or violated, a sense of ***vengeance*** arises.

Now, I am NOT saying it is justified. I am simply explaining the WHY.

Unforgiveness is difficult because we feel violated, and trespassed. It is a matter of boundaries and a boundary or more have been broken. A *sacred trust* have been broken.

It is then when we are wounded that a sense of vengeance begins to arise, EVEN IF we know it is wrong; EVEN IF we do not carry on with it.

CONFESSION TIME: Quite a few decades back, when I was in my early 20's, my college Math professor got between my boyfriend and I. AND I was not just mad. I was what we called pissed. So, I wanted vengeance. You know I did. I needed to find a way to get back at her.

A way that I knew would hurt her . . . at least a little bit.

She had recently gotten a new car and so . . . what did I do? I keyed her little white brand new cute car from front to back. OUCH is right. And NO, I didn't get caught, **BUT** it certainly did NOT help me feel better. My reasoning? Now we were even.

UNFORGIVENESS can produce, in my case, the desire for *vengeance* and harboring feelings of anger can take us down very ugly paths.

Fast forward, years later, we became friends, ended up confessing to each other, and made peace.

Unfortunately, once things are wronged, the only thing or way they can be made right is through *forgiveness*, because forgiveness seeks healing.

What does the Bible teach us about how to handle trespasses and un-forgiveness?

- Matthew 5:23-24/Mark 11:25 - *if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you . . . go; first be reconciled*
- Matthew 18:15 - *f your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.*
- Ephesians 4:31-32 - *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. . . . as God in Christ forgave you*
- Luke 17:3-4 - *Pay attention to yourselves! If your sibling sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent', you must forgive him*
- Isaiah 46:3-4 NIV, is a promise from God to God's people, *"I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."*

Why forgiving, even as difficult as it may be?

Something encouraging about forgiveness is that it is liberating. It bring healing.

It frees your heart and heals your spirit.

Will healing happen immediately? Not always.

Some times we may have to forgive over and over because the offense was too deep, too profound, BUT our determination brings us closer to healing each time.

Forgiveness is to free & heal the offended, not the transgressor.

The story we just read in Genesis 33:1-8 is much longer than that, BUT, not long ago I discovered something I had not seen before.

You know the story of Jacob and Esau, about how Esau sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for a bowl of red lentil stew and some bread.

Jacob, in combination with his mother Rebecca, stripped his brother Esau from his *blessing*.

Esau was SO angry that swore was going to killed his brother Jacob.

Rebecca, their mother was playing favorites and sent Jacob away to protect him. (*This is a very interesting family gossip. So, **HOMEWORK**, read the whole thing at home.*)

Esau was so angry that he left every thing behind and went to a foreign land to live a life away from everything that would remind him of the betrayal.

More than 20 years went by, and, YES, Jacob was blessed, **BUT** had a very hard and difficult life. Finally, Jacob came to his senses and decided to go after his brother Esau to make peace by coming with a humble attitude using these words,

***“Your servant Jacob says,
“I have sent to tell my lord, hoping to find favor in your eyes.”***

**⁶ Now, the men that carried the news returned to Jacob and said,
 “Your brother Esau is coming to meet you,
 and four hundred men are with him.”** (Gen.32:4-6)

Jacob was afraid because he knew he was guilty. He was afraid of vengeance, so he tried to device a way to save his family and his possessions. So, this happened,

Jacob [humbled himself] **bowed** to the ground seven times,
 until he came near his brother Esau.
⁴ But Esau ran to meet him and put his arms around him and kissed him.
 And they cried.
⁵ Then Esau said, ⁸ “What do you mean by all these gifts?”
 And Jacob said, “They are a gift so **I may find favor in the eyes of my lord.**”
⁹ **But Esau** said, “I have enough, my brother.
 Keep what you have for yourself.”
¹² Then Esau said, **“I will go with you.”**

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him,

It is important we learn to read between the lines and between events.

Jacob new making peace and find forgiveness was important. BUT what he didn't know was that Esau had made a resolution to forgive, to let go. He was at peace. He had a good life. He had been blessed. He never lost his blessing.

I would like to believe that it was through forgiveness that he regained his blessing.

Otherwise, he would have never agreed to meet with his trespasser, his brother Jacob.

NOW, I am not sure Jacob was ever able to forgive himself. WHY? Well this happened next.

Esau told Jacob, **Let us journey on our way, and I will go alongside you.**

But, Jacob said, “Why should my lord be so kind to me?”

Some times the transgressor has more difficulty to receive forgiveness that the one transgressed to grant it.

Forgiveness is NEVER easy, but it is doable.

And, it is NEVER too late to forgive.

Forgiveness can be granted even when it is not asked.

Jesus gave us the example even from the cross.

In Luke 23:34, we read,

***Father, forgive them, for they do not know
what they are doing."***

Another version leaves it at, ***Father, forgive them, for they do not know.***

What is interesting is that Jesus understood, I'd like to think, that in order to continue enduring the weight of the cross, he needed to free his heart. So he said,

***Father, let's take care of business.
1st things 1st.
Just forgive them,
because they simply don't have a clue.***

Forgive us our trespasses AS WE Forgive those who trespass against us.

We forgive because we have been forgiven.

In preparation for today, I came across with one clip that deeply moved me.

It is from the trial of Gary Leon Ridgway, also known as the ***Green River Killer***.

He is an American serial killer convicted in 2003 of murdering 49 women in in the states of Washington and Oregon during the 1980s and 1990s.

Let's watch it and listen to the three people who came to the stand,

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/sTZnCavJRKQ>

Forgiveness is LIFE.

