

LUKE 23:34 – Father, forgive them for they know not what they do

7/30/16 Sat Morn Prayer

Context/Biblical Background – We’ve now come to Golgotha! To Calvary, the place where the Lord will be crucified! Here we will see Jesus do something so astonishing, so amazing! – **Asking the Father for forgiveness for those who are crucifying Him!**

Forgive/forgiveness is mentioned about 100 times in the Bible. Jesus taught much about it.

Mat 5:44-45 *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, [45] that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Mat 6:12, 14-15 *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. [14] "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [15] But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Mat 18:21-22 *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" [22] Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

Joh 20:23 *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

Forgiveness on Calvary! -

The first of seven remarkable words that Christ spoke after He was nailed to the cross. .

1. "Father, forgive them" (Luk 23:34). 2. "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luk 23:43). 3. "Woman, behold thy son" (Joh 19:25-27). [Three hours of darkness; Jesus is silent] 4. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mat 27:46) 5. "I thirst" (Joh 19:28). 6. "It is finished!" (Joh 19:30) 7. "Father, into Thy hands" (Luk 23:46).

We may learn from this prayer:

- The duty of praying for our enemies, even when they are endeavoring most to injure us.
- The thing for which we should pray for them is that "God" would pardon them and give them better minds.
- The power and excellence of the Christian religion. No other religion "teaches" people to pray for the forgiveness of enemies; no other "disposes" them to do it. Men of the world seek for "revenge;" the Christian bears reproaches and persecutions with patience, and prays that God would pardon those who injure them, and save them from their sins.
- The greatest sinners, through the intercession of Jesus, may obtain pardon.

Father, forgive them

- While they were nailing Him to the cross, He repeatedly prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luk 23:34). Not only was He practicing what He taught (Luk 6:27-28), but He was fulfilling prophecy and making "intercession for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12).
- We must not infer from His prayer that ignorance is a basis for forgiveness, or that those who sinned against Jesus were automatically forgiven because He prayed. Certainly both the Jews and the Romans were ignorant of the enormity of their sin, but that could not absolve them.
- Our Lord's intercession postponed God's judgment on the nation, giving them additional opportunities to be saved (Act 3:17-19).
- The Lord asked His Father to forgive the crowd for crucifying Him. If He had not done this, the crowd would have been guilty of committing the unpardonable sin of putting to death the Son of God. (McGee)
- **Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do:** The love of Jesus never fails. On the cross, He prayed even for His executioners, asking God the Father to not hold this sin against them.
- **Jesus probably prayed in this manner for His enemies all through His ministry.** This prayer was heard and noted because He had no quiet place to pray.
- In this Jesus fulfilled His own command to *love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good for those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you* (Matthew 5:44).
- "Father, forgive them, not only these, but all that shall repent, and believe the gospel;" and He did not intend that these should be forgiven upon any other terms.
- "Father, that which I am now suffering and dying for is in order to this, that poor sinners may be pardoned."

- The great thing which Christ died to purchase and procure for us is the forgiveness of sin.
- This is that for which Christ intercedes for all that repent and believe in the virtue of his satisfaction; **His blood speaks this: Father, forgive them.**
- The greatest sinners may, through Christ, upon their repentance, hope to find mercy. Though they were His persecutors and murderers, He prayed, Father, forgive them.

for they know not what they do

- *For they do not know what they do:* In this, **Jesus recognized the blindness of His enemies in His prayer.** This **did not excuse the guilt of those** who put Jesus on the cross; **but Jesus set His enemies in the best possible light in His prayer** to the Father. **We must pray with the same heart, after the same pattern.**
- This should/could be added to His prayer - Joh 17:20 *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;"*
- There is a kind of ignorance that does in part excuse sin: ignorance through want of the means of knowledge or of a capacity to receive instruction, through the infelicities of education, or inadvertency. The crucifiers of Christ were kept in ignorance by their rulers, and had prejudices against him instilled into them, so that in what they did against Christ and his doctrine they thought they did God service, Joh 16:2. **Such as to be pitied and prayed for.**
- This prayer of Christ was answered not long after, **when many of those that had a hand in his death were converted by Peter's preaching.** This is **written also for example to us.**

Summary:

- We must in prayer call God *Father*, come to Him with reverence and confidence.
- The great thing we must beg of God, both for ourselves and others, is the forgiveness of sins.
- We must pray for our enemies, and those that hate and persecute us, must excuse their offences, and not aggravate them as we must our own; and we must be earnest with God in prayer for the forgiveness of their sins, their sins against us.
- This is Christ's example to His own rule (Mat 5:44, Mat 5:45, Love your enemies); and it very much strengthens the rule, for, if Christ loved and prayed for such enemies, what enemies can we have that we are not obliged to love and pray for?

Today please pray for: (Name persons, name things, and take direct aim at the objective of your supplications)

Our Church, Nationally and locally

Our Nation:

Our leaders; for kings and those in authority

Our Current Pres/VP Candidates: Donald Trump; Hillary Clinton; Mike Pence; Tim Kaine

Supreme Court Justices: John Roberts, Samuel Alito, Stephen Breyer, Ruth Ginsburg, Elena Kagan, Anthony Kennedy, Sonia Sotomayor, Clarence Thomas – pray for the next judge/s to be appointed

Police officers/military & all those upholding law & order

When in small groups - Personal Prayers:

"Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior – Frances J. Crosby – Joslin Grove Choral

1. *Pass me not, O gentle Savior, Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*
 - *Refrain:
Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry, While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*
2. *Thou the spring of all my comfort, More than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside Thee, Whom in Heav'n but Thee. (Refrain – 2X)*

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