



Fr. Joseph Samaan's Outline for the 11th Sunday of Matthew

Matthew 18:23-35 - Sunday 8/31/2008

“You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? And his master was angry, and delivered him to the tortures until he should pay all that was due to him.” (Matthew 18:32-34)

Where else do the scriptures talk about forgiveness?

- There are ample passages that address the theme of forgiveness of sins in the Holy Scriptures.
- This wealth of verses about forgiveness indicates the importance of this element in our life.

Jesus has the power to forgive our sins

- Jesus, unlike any other prophet or man of God, has the power to forgive our sins because, as the Son of man, He is also the Son of God.
- ““But so that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins,’ then he said to the paralytic, ‘Get up, take your mat and go home.’ And the man got up and went home.” (Matthew 9:6-7)

Jesus brings to the world forgiveness of sins

- Sin has taken over every single human being, and all have fallen prey to sin.
- The only way toward liberation from sin comes through God. There is no other way.
- This is why Jesus has come to the world:
 - “He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’” (Luke 24:46-47)
 - “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-24)
 - “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.” (Ephesians 1:7-8)

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The State of Blessedness

- The state of blessedness is the state where man is granted forgiveness of sins by God.
- “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” (Romans 4:7-8; see also Psalm 32:1, 2)

How is forgiveness granted to us from God?

1. Jesus through our **FAITH** in Him and **BAPTISM** brings us -freely- forgiveness of sins.
 - “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.’” (Mark 16:15-16)
2. Jesus has given the Church the power of forgiveness of sins. This privilege is exercised in many different ways. One of them is the sacrament of Holy Confession.
 - “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.’ And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (John 20:21-23)
3. Partaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion worthily brings us forgiveness of sins.
 - “Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My Blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:27-28)

What are the criteria for obtaining forgiveness from God?

- **Forgiveness is conditional.** After initial forgiveness of sins granted to us by God, forgiveness is contingent upon us forgiving others their sins against us: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15).
- **Our prayer is not pure if it is not accompanied by forgiveness of sins** toward those who hurt us: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matthew 6:12).
- **Our pattern of behavior** toward others sets the criteria of our own judgment: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

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Conclusions

The ability to forgive the sins of others is a sign of a healthy prayer life and healthy relationship with God, through which man is enabled to forgive others their wrongdoings against him: “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25).

The inability to forgive the sins of others is a sign of an ailing relationship with God, poor prayer life, and sure indication of being victim to the tricks of the devil; therefore, the person is not able to forgive others their wrongdoings against him/her or what he/she perceives to be wrong that was committed against him/her: “And what I have forgiven...I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Prayer

O Lord, You have forgiven us our sins through Your sacrifice upon the cross. Enable us, through Your divine grace, to bear with each other and to forgive whatever grievances we have against each other. We are willing to obey Your will, O Lord, but we are weak. Show us the way, O Lord, of how to taste the joy of forgiving those who sin against us. Amen.

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