

SUNDAY SERMON

SUNDAY 28th AUGUST 2022

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MATTHEW 6:9-13

What's the worst thing you've ever forgotten?

Maybe it's the lack of sleep but I am more and more walking into a room and saying to myself – why did I come in here again? What did I need? It's one of the weirdest bits about being a human being is that I am super forgetful. I pre-write all my sermons- it's all written down folks – otherwise I'll basically forget. Now most of the time – this is pretty easy stuff – I forgot my keys, I forgot to switch the light off or apple cores – I am the worst in my family for eating an apple putting it on the side and then just forgetting it entirely. Some stuff matters more though – forget your wedding anniversary...or to pick up the kids from school or that your boss doesn't want to let everyone know they secretly leave at 2...

We're returning in our series on the Lord's prayer – you've had a breather – now we are back. Last time we looked at prayer as a way of expressing our dependence on God – that prayer is not an extra bit we do – it is instead a reality check of how things really are – all that I am, all that I am I depend on God.

There is no breath that I breath that God has not given, no bread that I eat that does not depend on God. Prayer resituates the way I see the world to it's reality. You Lord – you Lord are my daily bread. I am dependent on God. This isn't an optional thing. It's the reality for all life, all creatures under the creator – when you became a Christian – you didn't make Christ Lord of your life – you recognised him as Lord. Give us this day our daily bread.

The reason I'm always banging on about prayer in a daily way - beyond Sunday is because I know how forgetful humans are.

'Forgive us our sins. As we forgive those who sin against us'.

Jesus doesn't say, if you sin, ask for forgiveness. It's just there. Normal – how do we pray Jesus – forgive us our sins. Jesus kind of presumes that we're going to need it. When I was a kid, I used to think what if...what if someone could go their whole lives without sin...like walking on the pavement and never

stepping on any cracks – tip toeing around – but that is a small vision of what sin is really like. In the bible, sin isn't just like mistakes which require rubbing out with an eraser – it effects everything. We see that back in Genesis – when the sin of Adam doesn't just get him and Eve upset instead their relationships, the ecology, the economy is all effected by their sin. This is the same way today – when I sin – I sin against something or someone. It has an effect on them – second half of the line – forgive those who sin against us. When I sin – I sin against someone – it's like those little Newton's cradles people had on their desks everything effecting everything else. Sometime we're like how can this thing happen to this good person? How can that poor little girl get shot in Liverpool? Terrible thing. But we know why really. Somebody did something horrid to someone else which escalated into violence which went to place nobody intended. Sinned against – terrible thing. Sin may have an 'I' in the middle but it always has an effect on you.

When Hubble came out people were amazed, books were produced, documentaries watched – we had never before seen the universe in this details. But...did you see the images from the James Webb telescope? Hubble was good; but Webb allow us to see more. In prayer, we hold ourselves before God and begin to see the world around us and ourselves more clearly. It's never going to be perfect image but – more clearly. Jesus is realistic about humanity – it does and will sin. Christians are not known for being perfect – we're known for being forgiven, we're known for forgiving. We're at a weird stage in culture where we pretend – you're perfect just the way you are – never change – never compromise – and I do not understand it. Never change? Really? We have to pretend all of the time? No, Jesus is really real with us. Have you ever wanted to confess something wrong. To say sorry and it's just eaten you up until you can. And when you do – confess – like oh and phew – what a relief, what a blessing to be open. By being forgiven – by forgiving, we are set free. We're getting onto the 'forgive us our sins as we forgive....'as we'...that's a big one.

But let's talk about that a moment because it's a big comment that Jesus makes at the end of the Lord's Prayer

v¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Wow wow now Jesus – this doesn't seem like the easy-peasy all you can eat buffet of forgiveness I was promised – I thought forgiveness meant a get out of jail free card for life – you know speeding tickets torn up nothing too bad – maybe the odd murder – that's a Father Ted quote BTW – what's all this about forgiving others? This is what I think is going on. God is always our judge. When we confess our sins, we acknowledge him – we say yes, I am not perfect – you are my judge and my salvation – I trust you and I trust that you will do what is right...But when we've don't forgive we do the opposite. What we're partly saying is 'I am the judge' – I am their judge. Now your judgement may be right – some of you have been sinned against – hurt – in ways I don't even want to imagine and it's right that you feel hurt, the pain that has been caused against you was not good, their actions were not justified. But ultimately, ultimately God is still their judge. And when you forgive, you're saying, God I trust you to do what is right with this person. I am not their judge – you are. You know how in so many psalms it's like – oh smite my enemies and stuff – yeah – God do your thing and I trust you to do it. And in the weird process of doing this we go free too, because we stop pretending to be God, we stop trying to hold a position in our hearts, a position that's actually idolatrous, to say no, I am their judge.

So this is why Jesus can say, unless you forgive, you can't be forgiven. Being forgiven is acknowledging your place before God, and forgiving others is also part of your worship – it's saying you are God – not me. Help me to see rightly, as things are.