

Bible e-Study /Pennies from Heaven #2

3 Coins in the Fountain - 3 things from Lord's Prayer
Your 2 Cents Worth - Praying for Others - intercessory prayer.

¹⁴ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Mt 6:14-15

NUGGET – “What’s your two-cents worth?” We oftentimes use this phrase with friends and family to lightheartedly express our interest in their opinions. This week we are following a bit on the heels of last week when we spoke about the relational aspects of prayer.

Our focus was on the relationship of God to us, individually last week, this week it’s on our relationship with others. What God has done for us through Christ on cross affects those relationships. And it changes our view of others to the point that our prayers are impacted.

It would seem from what Jesus says today that our human-to-human relationships are important, important enough that when we pray we do well to keep those relationships in mind. These verses come right after Jesus has given the Lord’s Prayer to His friends for the first time. Remember what Dr. Buls said last week when we were looking in Luke 11...

- Evidently, Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer often but did not always use the same form. The Lord's Prayer was spoken by Jesus one year earlier at Mt. 6:9-13. That was in Galilee. This second time in Lk. 11 occurred very likely in Judea. This is a shorter form of the Lord's Prayer. *Prayer is not rigid and mechanical.*

Today’s verses come after the first time its recorded Jesus taught this prayer. And these verses follow it *immediately*. The nugget to take from this is that our *human* relationships are very important to God when we pray.

The words of Jesus remind me of a mirror. A mirror reflects whatever is in front of it. It duplicates, without variation, what is there. What you see is what you get. Jesus is telling us that our human relationships mirror our heavenly relationship. (And how often do we even think of how we treat God in our actions and speech? How many of our friends would put up with us if we treated them like we treat God?) How you treat others is a reflection of both how you wish to treat God and to be treated *by* God.

And this isn’t the only place you see Jesus teaching that. The Golden Rule in [Matthew 7:12](#) and [Luke 6:31](#) also tell us this. If we are going to come to God with our needs, we are reminded that coming to God with the needs of others also is important. Our friends and families see in us, and our actions toward them, what we claim to see in how God treats us. We want to be an accurate reflection of that love, reconciliation and peace. And that happens through forgiveness.

Jesus teaches us in these verses and in the Lord’s Prayer that forgiveness is the cornerstone of the relationship between God and His creation and between God’s created people.

APPLICATION –

1. Jesus is clear about the importance of forgiveness. He is equally clear about our being forgiven for the sake of His blood shed in our place. How easy is to forgive others?
2. Now how easy is it to forgive yourself? How does the ability to receive God’s forgiveness for yourself apply to your relationship with others?

PRAY – Prayer is also about you and others. It reflects, in some ways, how you see God, others and yourself. Take at least one occasion this week to pray the Lord’s Prayer aloud and slowly including others in your thoughts as you do so.

Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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GOING DEEPER

This week the focus is on how our relationship with God involves our earthly relationships as well. God doesn't punish anyone according to what our sins deserve; Christ has taken all of that, the entire just wrath of God against sin, on the cross. Jesus went there, by the love of God, with that purpose and accomplished the payment due for our sins in our place. The lesson for us to learn is to treat our family and our friends (and yes, even ourselves), as God has first treated us, with compassion. What are some of the ways we let our relationship with God make itself known in our relationships with family and friends?

From Luther's Small Catechism: *WHY DO WE INCLUDE A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS IN THESE PETITIONS TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?*

We are not worthy of the things for which we pray and have not deserved them. We therefore need God's forgiveness so that we may pray to Him confidently and in good conscience. "Where the heart is not right with God ... it will never dare to pray.... A confident and joyful heart can come only from the knowledge that our sins are forgiven" (Large Catechism III, 92).

What can the phrase "*We are not worthy of the things for which we pray and have not deserved them*" teach us regarding what to pray for for others?

Take a look now at [John 17:8-9, 20-21](#). In these two sections of the 'High-priestly Prayer' of Jesus that He spoke in the upper room before going to the cross, He prays for His friends. He prays for those disciples around Him that He had spent three years with and He prays for others, for strangers, like us, who would learn to believe in Jesus as the Son of God because of those disciples. Jesus prays with the idea of benefiting His close friends and strangers alike by having God the Father do things for them. Jesus *intercedes* for them and us with God.

If you look up [intercede](#) in Webster's the definition you get is:

- *to intervene between parties with a view to reconciling differences*

What a thing to do – seek to reconcile two parties, two people who are estranged by their differences. And essentially that is what intercessory prayer is about. It is asking God to benefit those who need what He offers even though they 'have differences' with God. We come between God and our friends and others that we pray for; we come between them because: first that is what Christ has done for us in going to the cross and dying and rising again for our reconciliation with God. And second that is what Christ has charged us with doing.

In verse 21 above notice that He prays that we, '**May... also be in us so that the world may believe that you sent me.**' When we pray we are praying above all that God reveal Himself to our family and friends so that they know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, sent to deliver and declare the mercy of God to His creation.

Again from the Small Catechism.

WHAT DOES IT SHOW WHEN WE FORGIVE OTHERS?

It shows that we truly believe that God has forgiven us.

"Inasmuch as we sin greatly against God every day and yet He forgives it all through grace, we must always forgive our neighbor who does us harm, violence, and injustice [and] bears malice toward us.... If you do not forgive, do not think that God forgives you" (Large Catechism III:94-95).

Notice what Luther points out in his comment from the Large Catechism. That's a pretty harsh assessment of a gospel truth. How does the gospel help you to understand what is being said by Jesus in the Matthew passage and Luther?

We have been the recipients of God's mercy and that mercy teaches us how to live with those around us – with that same mercy. Praying the Lord's Prayer and keeping thoughts of God's mercy toward us and all people in mind as we pray from the heart, allow us to learn that in demonstrating and displaying the love, compassion and care of God to others we become more Christ-like. What can we learn both from those relationships that help us to understand more of God and what does our relationship with God teach us about our earthly relationships?

In the compassion of Christ, PR