

FORGIVING OTHERS

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.102

SEE ENOS.

Repentance requires forgiving others. The pleading sinner, desiring to make restitution for his acts, must also forgive others of all offenses committed against him. The Lord will not forgive us unless our hearts are fully purged of all hate, bitterness, and accusation against our fellowmen. (MF 200)

The Lord's Prayer given in the Book of Mormon preserves the correct business terminology of Matthew 6:12: "Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors" (routinely softened to read "trespasses"). It is a literal cancellation of debt which is required by the Mosiac Law before we can have the kingdom of God on earth.

As I said, the word kpr is very interesting, "to atone for." The word is kpr, kippur. We have had this before, of course. It's cognate with our word cover, it's pronounced kfr. So we have cover, but that is just the beginning of this very interesting word. ~~It's the same in Aramaic; it's "to cover over your sins."~~ This is the way Jastrow's big two-volume lexicon explains it: It means "to arch over; to bend over; to cover; to pass over with the hand, especially the palm of the hand." The word for palm of the hand in all Semitic languages is kap. It means "to cover, hence to grasp by the hand; to wipe over, hence to cleanse, to expiate, to forgive, to renounce, to deny, to be found, to encircle." All these in this one word.

"Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life [it's between Alma and the Lord]; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep [then in the next verse he says, whoever is acceptable to me should be acceptable to you]. And he that will hear my voice shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive. For behold, this is my church [we're here all working together; if [p.179] anyone wants to come back, he says the door is always open]; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive." If I forgive him, you must forgive him. So the door is always open here.

But if a person has committed a sin, "if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also. Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me [this is the good news of the gospel—it is the gospel of repentance; we are repenting perpetually here; if you are not repenting, you are not improving]. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses [he forgives you too, and you must take his word for it]; for verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation." If he says he has repented, but he hasn't really repented, do you

Mosiah 26:37

refuse to forgive him? No, that's not for you to judge. He has condemned himself then. You know he's a hypocrite and has made trouble for a long time. He says, "Oh, I'm repenting all right" because he wants to get back into the church and have some influence. You forgive him his trespasses. The Lord says, "Forgive him." He has condemned himself if he says he has repented and hasn't; you must take his word for it.

Now here are these great lines about life as a preparation: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God." That's why we don't have all the answers here. There are only two things we can do, as we said before. You can repent and you can forgive. "Yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors." This is a kiros, as the New Testament says. That's a special block of time set aside for some special purpose or activity. "I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end." *OR FORGIVING -*

① As Irenaeus tells us, there are only two things in which men can excel. They are, of course, in forgiving—that's grace, isn't it? You forgive others. But I shouldn't forgive him—he did this or he did that, or it wouldn't do me this good. No, you don't ask that at all. The Arabs have a saying: "The brave man never asks the odds; the generous man never asks the price; the good man never asks questions." You just forgive. If you forgive, that is grace. *And you repent.* To repent is honest thinking. It's close, critical analysis of your own behavior. Intelligence, you see, is problem-solving ability. That's the way it's defined by William James and others. That has been the standard definition of intelligence by the psychologists—problem-solving ability.

Thy kingdom come [which he says later] means "thy will be done on earth." When his will is done that's where his kingdom is. [We pray] thy kingdom come to earth here so that his will is done on earth just as it is there. This will be Zion then. Notice he says, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." It's usually rendered, "Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." But actually the oldest texts of the New Testament all have the word debts; they use the economic word. Forgive our debts as we forgive those who owe us debts—only to that extent. If we forgive others the Lord will forgive us. The Lord has a great deal to say about that, you notice—about the cruel master of the house, who the Lord leaves in charge. We are to be judged by the way we treat others.

Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, p.343

Verse 14: "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you." *Moses 3*
The way you can serve him is to serve them. If you want to give him something, you give something to his children. He doesn't need it. What can you give me? he says. The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. You can't give me anything. But you can help my children. That's what you are being tested in, to do that. I want you to [p.344] behave as I would behave in every circumstance [he says]. So if you forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will forgive you. But the hypocrites just appear to be doing these thing; they appear to be fasting. When you fast do it in secret because it is between you and the Father.

What is Hypocritical Forgiveness

And he uses the word debts. Notice, they like to slide over that in the King James [translation] and say "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," but the word actually is the business, commercial word debts. The one thing that keeps us from being united and keeps the kingdom of God from being here is that men are subject to each other. They're in debt to each other. It's debt that enslaves us and holds us down. We can't be free and equal in the kingdom of God [with that situation]. Remember, in Zion they had all things in common. "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses

7:18.) That's necessary here, so he's talking about debts. And you see what the great obstacle is to everything now if you mention drugs, or war, or anything else. What's the big problem in Russia? Economy everywhere you go, and you're not going to straighten it out by appealing to the Dow Jones.

The second thing that I've noticed that comes up in Jesus' prayers (and this is also present in 3 Nephi) is that he asks for forgiveness. Now, we ask for a lot of things, but the thing that Jesus asks for consistently in his prayers is forgiveness. That's a lot different than asking for that new house or for that diploma. Forgiveness. He says it on the cross in a prayer, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." And he tells us right in the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer that we will be forgiven our debts as we forgive others. We should ask, petition, for forgiveness. I think that is item number one; if you're putting a checklist together of those things that we should pray for.

Alma

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44, p.312

Joseph remarked that all was well between him and the heavens; that he had no enmity against any one; and as the prayer of Jesus, or his pattern, so prayed Joseph—Father, forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me, for I freely forgive all men. If we would secure and cultivate the love of others, we must love others, even our enemies as well as friends.

Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, p.339

We need mercy; then let us be merciful. We need charity; let us be charitable. We need forgiveness; let us forgive. Let us do unto others what we would that they should do unto us. Let us welcome the new year and dedicate to it our best efforts, our loyal service, our love and fellowship, and our supplication for the welfare and happiness of all mankind.—Juvenile Instructor, Vol. 46, January, 1911, p. 16.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.86

A pleading sinner must also forgive all people of all offenses committed against himself. The Lord is under no obligation to forgive us unless our hearts are fully purged of all hate, bitterness, and accusations against all others.

Although there are many ecclesiastical officers in the Church whose positions entitle and require them to be judges, the authority of those positions does not necessarily qualify them to forgive or remit sins. Those who can do that are extremely few in this world.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.101

The bishop, and others in comparable positions, can forgive in the sense of waiving the penalties. In our loose connotation we sometimes call this forgiveness, but it is not forgiveness in the sense of "wiping out" or absolution.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.101

Let it be said in emphasis that even the First Presidency and the apostles do not make a practice of absolving sins. It is the Lord however, who forgives sins. (MF 332-33)

Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.238

Can we gain forgiveness from the Lord without granting it to our fellowmen? The answer is a thunderous, No! Jesus condensed the divine law into these six words: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." (Luke 6:37.) On one occasion Jesus taught his disciples to pray by saying: "Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive

every one that is indebted to us." (Luke 11:4.) On another occasion his saints were counseled to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Why? Because, he said, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:12-15.) Forgiveness of others is a condition precedent to the receipt of forgiveness for ourselves.

Luke 6:37

37 ¶ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Matthew 6:12

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 6:13

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Matthew 6:14

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Matthew 6:15

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, Ch.5, p.110 - p.111

2. The Sinner Must be Willing to Forgive Others, if he hopes to obtain forgiveness. A man's repentance is but superficial if his heart be not softened to the degree of tolerance for the weaknesses of his fellows. In teaching His hearers how to pray, the Savior instructed them to supplicate the Father: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." He gave them no assurance of forgiveness if in their hearts they forgave not one another: "For," said He, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Forgiveness between man and man, to be acceptable before the Lord, must be unbounded. In answering Peter's question: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him -- till seven times?" the Master replied: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven"; clearly intending to teach that man must ever be ready to forgive. On another occasion He taught the disciples, saying: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, Ch.5, p.111

Illustrating further the divine purpose to mete unto men the measure they mete unto their fellows the Savior put forth a parable of a king to whom one of his subjects owed a large sum of money, ten thousand talents; but when the debtor humbled himself and pleaded for mercy, the compassionate heart of the king was moved and he forgave his servant the debt. But the same servant, going out from the presence of the king, met a fellow servant who was indebted to him in a small sum, and, forgetting the mercy so recently shown unto himself, he seized his fellow servant and cast him into prison till he would pay the debt. Then the king, hearing of this, sent for the wicked servant, and, denouncing him for his lack of gratitude and consideration, handed him over to the tormenters. The Lord has not promised to listen to petitions nor accept offerings from one who has bitterness in his heart toward others: "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In His revealed word to the saints in this day, the Lord has placed particular stress upon this necessary condition: "Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another, for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin"; and to remove all doubt as to the proper subjects for human forgiveness, it is added: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men."

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.2, LORD'S PRAYER

After setting a proper context for prayer, Christ makes his first request—for "daily bread." When regarded as a model for prayer, this phrase can be seen as supplication for both temporal necessities and spiritual food. Christ's second request, that God "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12 and 3 Ne. 13:11), appears in Luke as "forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us" (Luke 11:4). An important element in personal prayer is acknowledging and asking forgiveness for one's sins, but always in conjunction with forgiving the offenses of others (cf. D&C 64:10).

D&C 64:10

10 I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

D&C 82:1

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you.

Luke 17:3

3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Luke 17:4

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.