

The Ministry of Prayer XIII

*“This then is how you should pray...
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”*

Why does Jesus use the word “debt”? Shouldn’t we be asking for him to forgive our sins? Yes we should. 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins that he (Jesus) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It is important to ask for forgiveness of sin! Paul says in Acts 13:38, “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.” We need to preach forgiveness of sin. It is what the gospel is all about.

There is another thing that we must remember in preaching this good news. Our sins are our debts. There is a debt that we owe our Creator every time we disobey him. When you and I sin we must pay the penalty of that sin. We are in default to the will of God. We have willingly gone in a different direction from where God was leading us. As followers of Christ, we fail to listen to his voice and follow his command. Therefore there is a debt to pay. We are liable in the courts of heaven to be punished for transgressing the Law of the Lord. Ouch, ouch, ouch. This is what Jesus wants us to remember. Our prayer to the Father is to pardon that debt. Why? Because his Son paid the debt for us, he took our punishment.

The price for our freedom from the penalty of sin did not come cheaply. It would be good for us to remember this. I think that is why Jesus emphasizes the debt that sin causes in this prayer. For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to be a sin offering for us. We become real thankful when we remember that we have escaped the penalty of sin. The obligation of punishment was canceled so that we don’t experience condemnation. Instead we receive the comfort of the Holy Spirit to help us in our time of need. Is God too good or what??? Our greatest plea is not to bargain with God but to rely on the blood of Jesus that satisfies the justice of God. Remember, “Jesus paid it all, and all to him I owe.”