

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

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From Now On – The Lord's Prayer

Mark Batterson

Audio: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Pastor Mark: I was 16 years old, I just got my driver's license and I was on my way to a basketball game for which I was just a little late. Now to give a little bit of context I was pulled over 13 times in high school. I only got three tickets which is not a bad batting average but I was not, shall we say, a defensive driver, think fast and furious. So on my way to the basketball game and I decide to take a 45-degree left-hand turn and I cut a car off in the process, a car that happens to say police on the side of it. And so I get pulled over, I get my very first ticket and I have a decision to make. Am I going to tell my parents or not? Now I care deeply about my parents so much I didn't want them to have to worry about what I had done wrong and so I decided as a good son that I would carry this secret. The problem was I just turned 16 and I didn't have a job and I didn't know how I was going to pay for this ticket. And so, I carried that guilty secret around for a two weeks but there's one little thing I didn't really take into account, the fact that the police station might send a copy of that ticket to your home address. Why? Because there might be other wonderful teenagers like me who didn't want to worry their parents either. And so my mom gets the mail one day, she sees the ticket, she tells my dad but neither of them tell me. Well, one night a few weeks later we're playing our cross-town rivals in basketball, it is the conference championship in their gym and we win the game, I wouldn't be telling you if we didn't. We won the game and our crowd went crazy and chaos ensued. In fact, there was a student from the cross-town rival, he didn't play basketball he played football but when our cheerleaders brought our conference championship banner on to their court he went down onto the court and ripped the banner in half. Who would do that? Ask our Gainesville campus pastor, that's who! Yeah, I married his sister. Well, that's when my dad comes down onto the court, congratulates me and totally catches me off guard when he says Mark, we're going to pay for the ticket. I will never forget that moment. Because two feelings; first the feeling of guilt because in that moment I knew that he knew that I had gotten a ticket and hadn't told him but it was immediately replaced by this flash flood of relief because again I didn't know how I was going to pay for it. Here's the deal; I didn't have to hide my guilty secret any longer and it was paid for. That's the Gospel, you don't have to hide your guilty secret any longer and it's paid for.

Now this weekend we come to that point in the Lord's Prayer we're about halfway there and this is the turning point, this is the tipping point, listen to me this is when we come clean, this is when we get right with God, this is where the healing begins. We've already prayed, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. But now we come to that part of the prayer that's a little bit tougher to pray, forgive us our trespasses. And then it gets even tougher; as we forgive those who trespass against us. It's a two-sided coin, right. Heads, forgive us our trespasses. Tales, as

we forgive those who trespass against us. Let me talk about heads and then we'll flip the coin and I'll talk about tails.

There two words repeated twice in this part of the prayer the first word is the word forgive. It means to cancel a debt, to pardon an offense, it means to let go, it also means to send away. And I want to scroll the mouse right here because if you were a Jewish person hearing this prayer there would have been a pop-up window, you would immediately flash back to Leviticus 16 and you would have envisioned this Old Testament ritual that's performed by the high priest on the day of atonement. It's going to sound a little strange but the high priest would lay his hands on a goat, on a goat, and he would confess the sins of Israel and somehow those sins would be transferred onto the head of that goat called the scapegoat. And that scapegoat would be sent into the desert carrying the sins of Israel. Its a four-thousand-year-old picture of forgiveness. It's also a foreshadowing of what Christ would do on the cross. I John 2:2 says, he is the atoning, atoning sacrifice for our sins; atoning, atonement same thing. If you want to understand that word I think you have to put two hyphens in it, atonement is at-one-ment with God, that's what he wants. Our creator, our redeemer wants right relationship with you and that's what Christ accomplished on the cross. II Corinthians 5:21 says it this way, "God made him who had no sin to become sin for so that we might become the righteousness of Christ."

I'm going to give you the Gospel in the nutshell. Have you ever been in a settlement? Ever bought home or sold home? Imagine being a settlement and God presents the Gospel, the deal that he's putting on the table and here's what he says. Here's what we're going to do, I'm going to transfer your sin to my account everything you've done wrong and I'm going to pay it in full. Now that's an amazing offer but that's only half the deal, that's only half the Gospel. Then God says then I'm going to transfer my righteousness everything I've done right to your account and then we're going to call it even. Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? I mean this is too good to be true. But it is true; it's why we call it the Gospel which means good news. And it starts with forgiveness, we pray this prayer; 'forgive us our trespasses'. That's how we get into right relationship with God which is the very definition of righteousness. Now it may sound transactional but please hear me it's relational. This is about a God who will move heaven and earth, this is about a God who will go to hell and back to make atonement so that we can be at-one-ment with him. And it's why we pray this prayer; because he's already paid the price because he is the atoning sacrifice for our sin.

This weekend at all of our campuses we're going to celebrate communion. And when we do what we're celebrating is a God who loves us when we least expect it and least deserve it. Listen there is a false perception that we somehow have to get our act together before we come to God or even come to church. Are you kidding? That's like having to get well before you go to the hospital, that makes no sense at all. No, we come to God because God is the one who then puts us back together again. We pray to a forgiving heavenly Father and that's why we pray forgive.

The second word that's repeated twice is trespass, forgive us our trespasses. Now that word translated trespass is the Greek word hamartia. Its etymology goes all the way back to Aristotle and de Poética. Aristotle used it to refer to a protagonist tragic flaw or Achilles heel or it was the error in judgment that led to bad fortune. Jesus takes this word and employs it right here in the Lord's Prayer, in other words, forgive us our tragic flaws, forgive us our Achilles heels, forgive

us our errors in judgment. Let me dig a little deeper when you go to seminary you take lots of theologies; Eschatology, Pneumatology, Soteriology; fancy words tough to spell. One of my favorites was Hamartiology, it's the theology of sin. And that may sound a little bit morbid but I bet we've got doctors probably at most of our campuses and I bet you studied pathology. Pathology is the study of the cause and effect of disease with the goal of finding a cure. Hamartiology is the cause and effect of sin. The good news is we already know the cure and it is the finished work of Christ. Let me give a quick course in Hamartiology the English word sin has a lot of baggage and so I think it's helpful to go back to the original language and understand it. Hamartia is an archery term it simply means to miss the mark. In other words, you're not Robin Hood that you are not Katniss Everdeen. You do not hit the bull's eye every single time, no one bats a thousand, no one makes every shot, no one gets every answer right and that's why it's so easy for me to say I'm a sinner in need of a Savior cause I get it.

Now, how do we miss the mark? I think there are two ways one is a sin of commission is doing something that you should not have done, and then there is a sin of omission it's not doing something that you should have done. James 5:17 says it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. I think we fixate on sins of commission, don't do this, don't do that and you're okay. The problem with that is that you can do nothing wrong and still do nothing right. Goodness is not the absence of badness, this is righteousness by subtraction and it's not Biblical in fact it's an attempt at self-righteousness. What we believe in is righteousness by addition, it's the righteousness of Christ credited to our account by faith. The bottom line is this I've got a sin problem commission and omission and so I find myself praying all the time forgive me my trespasses. And the good news is I John 1:8 & 9, 'if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us but if we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us from all unrighteousness.' Praise God!

Let me put a little skin on it. Last weekend I spoke at a man's conference in Orlando. After I spoke interviewed Brian "Head" Welch, he's a Grammy award-winning guitarist for the heavy metal band KoRn. We talked for about twenty-five minutes and I then asked him one last question. Now Brian is pretty tatted up, he's running out of real estate there's not much room left and so I was curious I figured that these tattoos had a story to tell. Now some of them were BC before Christ some of them were AD and so I said Brian tell us about some of your tattoos and he said well the most painful tattoos are the ones to my eyelids. Shocking, yeah I believe it. And so he kind of closed his eyes showed him off and said a one says Shekinah and the other one says Hijab, two Hebrew words meaning 'the glory of God'. And then he talked about a verse that was tattooed on his neck and he pointed to it, Matthew 11:28. But let me go back in 2005 Brian bottomed out millions of dollars. As much success as you can experience in the music industry and as depressed as he could be turned to the usual suspect's alcohol, drugs but he was running on empty. And then one morning at four o'clock, four o'clock in the morning gets an email from his realtor. And his realtor says I just felt prompted to send you a verse of scripture. Can you guess what it was? Matthew 11:28 Jesus says Come to me, come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.' And that's what Brian did. He prayed this part of the Lord's Prayer forgive us our trespasses and God didn't just forgive him God changed him. And 13 years later he is a very different person; you can't talk to Brian for five minutes and not sense the peace that passes understanding that is guarding his heart and his mind in Christ Jesus. The forgiveness of God is tattooed on his heart; the love of God is tattooed on his soul and the glory

of God it's still tattooed on his eyelids. Why because he had the courage to pray this prayer, he had the courage to come clean and he found rest for his soul he found at-one-ment through Jesus Christ.

We flipped the coin. Heads forgive us our trespasses but you have to flip the coin. Tales as we forgive those who trespass against us. The first part is asking for forgiveness, the second part is giving forgiveness. Let me be very blunt the reason some of you are stuck emotionally, relationally, spiritually is simply this; you have prayed the first part of this prayer but you have not prayed the second part. You have received the grace of God and I know this is hard but you have not offered the same grace. But you don't know what they did to me, they don't deserve it. I don't know what they did to you and they don't deserve it. By definition grace is something you cannot deserve and I know there's a spectrum here from minor offense, someone says something about the hurt your feelings to #metoo and everything in between. And I'm not saying this is easy, it might be the hardest thing you ever do but you have got to find a way to forgive. Not for them, for you, for you.

You know it's debated in medical communities, right, leaky gut syndrome I happen to think probably there's some credence to it. Its intestinal permeability simply put its undigested food particles that permeate the lining of the small intestine so that toxic waste and bacteria get into your bloodstream. It's a picture of what happens when we don't forgive. Unforgiveness always turns into bitterness and bitterness then goes to the lining of the heart, that gets into your bloodstream and it poisons your spirit. I want to ask you this weekend who do you need to forgive and what do you need to forgive them for? Life is too short; life is too sweet to allow bitterness to poison your spirit. This prayer will not right the wrong but it will set you free. It will not change the path but it will redefine your future. So Pastor Mark what do you know about that. Listen I'll be honest, not as much as some but more than others and more than you know, but I don't care who has hurt you, who has betrayed you. I come back to this place because I try to live my life, my goal is to be like Jesus and I see Jesus hanging on a cross and praying for the people who nailed him there. Father forgive them! There is no loophole to this part of the prayer, this prayer will not change what they've done it might not change who they are but it will change your heart. Forgiveness is the difference between bitter and better and you need to somehow try to do for them what God has done for you. Do not leave this weekend with unforgiveness in your heart. I am not saying it's one and done it's going to take time you might have to pray this a thousand times but you need to start praying it this weekend.

Let me close with this. There's a scene in The Greatest Showman where PT Barnum played by Hugh Jackman, hit bottom as his world falls apart. But isn't that often where we discover who we are, what we're about, what's really important? And in that moment he sings this song 'From Now On' and I can't show you the movie 'cause it's not out yet but I want to show you the rehearsal for the movie and I'll show it to you in a minute. If the Gospels were a musical and I was scoring the different scenes I know exactly where I would put this song. There's a parable about the prodigal son, he's run away from everything that he knows is right and he ends up in a pig pen which is rock bottom if you're a Kosher Jew and there's this moment where he says, it says he comes to his senses. I'll tell you what it is and some of you are feeling it this week, it's homesickness and he remembers his father and he remembers his family and he decides to go home again, home again, home again. He prepares his speech; I've sinned against both heaven

and you he wants to say to his dad but his dad beats him to the punch. He's sitting on the porch, wondering, he's watching and waiting for her son's return, praying for his son's return and he sees this distant figure. Now, I don't know was it the way he walked? It wasn't facial features but he recognized something. He gets up and it says filled with love and compassion he runs to his son, he embraces him, he kisses him, he puts a robe on his back, he puts a ring on his finger and he throws a party. And that's where I play this song. You know, I don't know how I found that this week but I watched it and I thought what a picture, I can hear the angels in heaven rehearsing because in that very same story right before it, it says that the angels are rejoicing over one sinner who repents. You know what I think they're saying? Home again, back home again. And I think there is a father in heaven who is saying from now on. Listen they're all these moments in the Gospels; a women caught in the act of adultery, the Pharisees are ready to stone her to death what is Jesus say? Go and sin no more! And from now on he just interrupted people's lives and said you don't have to live in the past, you can step into a new future.

You're here this weekend, you're homesick. Listen you came to the right place. There is a God in heaven who loves you, knows your name, knows the number of hairs on your head. He's been ordering your footsteps, he's preparing good works in advance, he has plans and purposes for your life This is where it starts forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

I want to invite our bands at all of our campuses to come as we prepare to celebrate communion. Let me tell you what communion is. Communion is a pilgrimage back to the foot of the cross, it's going back home. And when we take the bread and the cup what we're celebrating is the atoning sacrifice of Christ. When Jesus was on the cross he said, 'it is finished'. It's an accounting term it refers to the last payment on a debt, in other words he was saying you are forgiven and it is forgotten, in other words from now on you are not defined by what you have done wrong not if you are a follower of Christ, you are defined by what Christ has done right.

I want to lead us in a prayer this weekend as we prepare hearts and I want you to join me. Father, thank you for your grace, your amazing grace. Something that by definition we don't deserve but you love us that much. And so this weekend we receive your grace freely offered by faith. We pray, forgive us our trespasses and Lord we flip the coin. God, as we examine our hearts and prepare to celebrate communion may there be no unforgiveness left in our hearts but may we have the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us. Give us the strength, give us the courage, give us the grace in Jesus name. Amen.