

Mark 11:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Analysis

Jesus immediately connects answered prayer (v. 24) with forgiving others, revealing that communion with God and reconciliation with others are inseparable. The phrase "when ye stand praying" (*hēnika stēkete proseuchomenoi, ἡνίκα στήκετε προσευχόμενοι*) reflects Jewish prayer posture—standing with hands raised—but the principle applies regardless of physical position. The condition "if ye have ought against any" (*ei echete ti kata tinos, εἰ ἔχετε τι κατά τινος*) encompasses any grievance, offense, or bitterness toward anyone. Jesus commands *aphiete* (ἀφίετε, "forgive"), the same verb used of God forgiving our sins—to release, let go, cancel the debt. The purpose clause "that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" reveals the connection: those who've received God's forgiveness must extend forgiveness to others. This isn't earning God's forgiveness through forgiving others; rather, forgiving others evidences that we've genuinely received and understood God's forgiveness (Matthew 18:23-35). Unforgiveness indicates a hard heart that hasn't grasped the magnitude of sin God has forgiven in Christ.

Historical Context

Jesus taught this principle repeatedly (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Luke 6:37), emphasizing that the vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationships with people are interconnected. Jewish prayer tradition included confession and reconciliation—Leviticus 6:2-7 required restitution before offering sacrifices, and

rabbinical teaching emphasized making peace before Yom Kippur. Jesus intensified this teaching: forgiveness must precede acceptable worship and prayer. The early church maintained strict discipline regarding interpersonal conflicts. Paul commanded immediate reconciliation (Ephesians 4:26-27, 32), and the Lord's Supper required self-examination regarding relationships (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). Church discipline procedures (Matthew 18:15-17) aimed at restoration and reconciliation, demonstrating that Christian community requires mutual forgiveness flowing from God's forgiveness in Christ.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Who do you need to forgive before your prayers can be offered with a clear conscience before God?
2. How does reflecting on the magnitude of sin God has forgiven you in Christ enable you to forgive those who've wronged you?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ὅταν στήκητε προσευχόμενοι ἀφῇ εἴ τινος ἔχετε
And when ye stand praying forgive G1487 any ye have
G2532 G3752 G4739 G4336 G863 G5100 G2192

κατά τινος ἵνα καὶ τὰ πατήρ ὑμῶν τὰ ἐν τὰ
against any that And which Father your which is in which
G2596 G5100 G2443 G2532 G3588 G3962 G5216 G3588 G1722 G3588

οὐρανοῖς ἀφῇ ὑμῖν τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν
heaven forgive you which trespasses your
G3772 G863 G5213 G3588 G3900 G5216

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 3:13 (Parallel theme): Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Ephesians 4:32 (Parallel theme): And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Luke 6:37 (Parallel theme): 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 (Parallel theme): And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 5:23 (Parallel theme): Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

James 2:13 (Parallel theme): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Matthew 6:5 (Prayer): And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Luke 18:11 (Prayer): The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org