

The Father's Unforgivable Sin

Matthew 6:9-15

The Living Law (no. 13 in the series)

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This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!

Prayer

Thank you for that, Father. And now we ask that you would help us to preach your Word, our Lord Jesus, who died and will be satisfied to the power of your Spirit that moves in our hearts, and moves throughout all of creation, and flows back to your throne as praise. In His name, we pray, Father. Amen.

Message

Matthew 6:9, picking up where we left off last week...

Jesus is talking to a crowd of unbaptized, non-Christian, Gentiles and Jews...

Matthew 6:9 · "Pray then like this: 'Our Father, Our Abba, Our Dad.'"

Last week I asked you: "*Would Jesus, the Truth, command you to lie about God to God?*"

And we figured "No." Which means, God is your Father, and you are His child.

And I asked you: "*Would Jesus, the Truth, command you to lie about God to God in regard to your neighbor?*"

And we figured, "No, probably not." Which means Our Daddy is our neighbor's Daddy, which changes absolutely everything about absolutely everyone.

All of Christian ethics can be summed up with these three words: "Pray, 'Our Father.'"

I'm an "*our father.*" I mean I have four children who each call me "*Dad.*" And what I've learned in that role doesn't just explain Christian ethics; it systematizes theology in such a way that the whole Bible makes sense.

So, Jesus says, "Pray... 'Our Father.'"ⁱ

You know, a mother has an instant bond with the baby of her womb.

One day my wife, Susan, came across a terrible accident. A man's dead body was lying in the street—impatient commuters were honking their horns. A woman jumped from her car, ran to the body, and covered it with a blanket. Then she turned around and began screaming at all the commuters waiting to pass: *"He was somebody's baby! He was somebody's baby!"*

A mother knows that, for the baby grows in her womb. A father discovers that, for the baby says *"Abba, Da Da, Daddy."*

When Jon was born, I remember thinking, *"OK, that thing that just came out of there is my son... so, weird... Shouldn't I feel something...?"*

But over the next year, I would hold him and speak my word to him in the hope it would return to me. *"Say, 'Abba,' Say, 'Abba...'"* And as it did, he utterly captured my heart... and I felt everything. I knew what Susan had always known—that in this bundle of earth, there was an unspeakable treasure. You could call it spirit, soul, consciousness, personhood, life, or even Breath of God—but it had the power to love and be loved. And it needed to do nothing; it was already worth everything. And in its presence, I was not alone.

One day sitting on the couch with my infant daughter, Elizabeth, standing on my lap, I was feeding her crackers—slime, boogers, saliva, and goo. She stopped, looked at me, reached into her little mouth, pulled out a ball of goo, put it in my mouth and smiled. ...And it took my breath away in wonder.

It didn't make her good; it revealed that she was good, even though she didn't have knowledge of the Good. She wasn't trying to be good; she just was good. She was good for nothing, just Good.

Every baby is good for nothing, just Good... but as every baby gains knowledge of the Good, and tries to make themselves good, we tend to forget that under all that success and failure, flesh and striving is somebody's baby. But you see, it's much harder for a mother or a Father to forget.

And that's why the woman screamed, *"He was somebody's baby! He was somebody's baby!"* And I think that's why Jesus tells us: *"Pray, 'Our Abba...'"*

Everybody is somebody's baby. And God is Father of all.

One time when she was little, I took Elizabeth to the park. She stood on top of the slide and said, *"See me, see me, see me!"* And I did. I clapped as she slid down the slide.

A woman arrived with her toddler who also slid down the slide...and I was unimpressed.

Then, Elizabeth stood on top of the slide and said to that woman, *"See me. See me. See me."* And the woman wouldn't even look.

I told you once how I just felt this tremendous wrath, and how as I pictured myself whacking her in the head with a board, I heard the Lord whisper: *"Peter, that woman is my little girl, my baby, and you don't see her."*

I remember one time standing in line at the grocery store. Jonathan was standing on his tip toes, showing the teenage clerk his Mickey Mouse PEZ dispenser, and yelling to the clerk: *"Look at Mickey Mouse! Look at Mickey Mouse!"*

And finally, this kid at the cash register said, *"Yeah kid, I see Mickey Mouse..."*

I remember grabbing the railing behind me so that I wouldn't jump the counter, grab the kid by the collar, and scream, *"Look at Mickey Mouse, damnit—And by that, I mean 'Look at the amazing miracle, that is my son!'"*

I think I heard it then, too: *"Peter, this boy at the registe, is my son... He is my baby, and you don't see him."*

George Floyd, the black man so senselessly killed by Derek Chauvin, the white police officer in Minnesota, is somebody's baby. But Derek Chauvin is also somebody's baby, and both of them are children of God. It's easy to forget when you're hurt, scared and angry.

But Somebody won't forget.ⁱⁱ And yet, you do have an adversary that constantly tempts you to forget.

Jesus said to some Jews who "had believed in him": "You are of your father the devil... He is... the father of lies."ⁱⁱⁱ You see, the devil cannot father people, but he does father lies about people... false selves that we construct in fear, pride, lust, and shame.

We each construct a false self with knowledge of Good and evil, taken at first in ignorance, and then, taken in shame. We each construct a self that we present to the world, a self that may impress for a time, but a self that will eventually self-destruct and rot and die. Yet under that false self, there is something true and something eternal—even the breath of God... somebody's baby.

And that Somebody cannot love you any more or any less than he already does. For that Somebody is God, and he loves you with all that He has and all that He is. Not because you deserve it... but because He deserves you... and He deserves your neighbor. So, Jesus says, "Pray, 'Our Abba.'"

What does the Good Abba do when his children don't see each other?

Life was pretty wonderful, until one day Jonathan said, "I'm happy."

And Elizabeth said, "No... I'm happy!"

And Jon said, "No... I'm happy!!"

They would actually argue like this, even: "I love you, Daddy..."

"No, I love daddy..."

"No! I love Daddy!"

And even, "Daddy loves me, *not* you."

They never said that out loud, they knew it was anathema. But all of us think it every time we compete: "I win, because you lose."

And what do we all want to win? The Good, who is God, who is Love, who is our Father. So, we compete for Love, and crucify Love in the process.

I will never forget the night I knelt by the bed of one of my sons, as in agony he broke down in trembling sobs telling me of this fear that I might love another of my children more than him. I don't

know that any words could adequately describe the aching, longing in my heart in that moment to find a way to show my son, my baby: *"I see you, and I love you with all that I am and all that I have..."*

The longing wasn't simply mine; it was my Abba's longing in me for my son—this longing that he might even wound me, that I might bleed for him, that I might prove to him that this Love was unconditional.

Our Father does not love each of us just the same, for each of us is different. But our Father loves each of us the same amount, and that's with all that He is and all that He has. He "lets," *aphiemi* in Greek, *lets* each of us do our worst, so that he can reveal his best. He arranges for each of us to take his life, so that we can watch him give his life...to each of us in a garden on a tree.

So Jesus says, "Pray... 'Our Abba...'"

"Our Father in heaven,..."

You may have had a horrid father on earth, but you have another Father in heaven, and Jesus has been telling us that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.

**"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name..."**

My children have the power to hallow my name, for I have given them that power—they have the power to reach into my chest and squeeze my heart.^{iv}

**"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

A spoiled child prays, *"My kingdom come, my will be done."* And then that child wonders why earth doesn't feel like heaven.

A spoiled child gets what they want and can no longer want what they get, for they've killed it. Every child wants their father's heart.



["Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)]^v

Imagine that this is the heart of your Father, from the bosom of your Father, hanging on a tree in a garden—imagine that this is the Good and the Life. This is the substance of everything you want.

How will you get it?

- You could take it, like the spoiled child takes the life of the Father.
- You could take it, the way the Pharisees took the life of Jesus on the tree in the Garden of Calvary.
- You could take the King of the Kingdom, but then His Kingdom couldn't come, for you just crucified the King of the Kingdom.

Spoiled children want "the Good" but don't know who or what The Good is. So, they take the Good, and so kill the Good, and discover they are slaves of evil.

[image: same artwork of "Mystery of the Fall and redemption of Man" shown above]

How will you get it... the heart of the Father? You could take it and consume it... or perhaps you could receive it, for it has been given, or rather, fore-given: body broken and blood shed.

The kingdom is at hand, for the Heart of the King is at hand and hanging on a tree in a garden. A Garden in the Sanctuary of the Temple that is your own soul... and in the Temple of your brother's soul, your sister's soul...

So, pray:

**"Our Abba in heaven,
hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread."**

He can't "give you" your daily bread if in your mind you think you've already *earned* your daily bread, deserved your daily bread, and therefore taken your own daily bread.^{vi}

So, what does he mean by "daily bread?"

Well, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life.^{vii}" I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

As Israel wandered in the Wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, Our Father provided daily bread from heaven, called "manna," which means "What is it?"^{viii}

And now we know what it is: It's Jesus from the bosom of the Father, the Life of the Father, the Good in everything that's anything.

Each day, those that gathered little had no lack, and those that gathered much had nothing left over. And if they tried to hoard it or even store it until the following day, it spoiled.

You see, that is not a capitalist economy, where some can get rich while others go hungry. And that is not a socialist economy, wherein everyone is just the same. That is the economy of a family, governed by a Father who knows that each child is unique, but each child is equally valuable, and that the party doesn't start until all the children know it's true.^{ix}

So, **"Pray... 'Our Abba... Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us...'"**

You might notice that Jesus said, "*Give us our and forgive us our,*" not "*Give me my and forgive me my.*"

"Abba.. forgive us our debts..."

So, what do we owe to God, our Father?

How about existence?

His name is *Yahweh, I Am that I Am*. He is being-ness. He is existence.

Haven't you ever wondered:

- *Why do I exist?*^x
- *What is existence?*
- *How can I be conscious of my own existence?*
- *What is the "I" that observes "Me"?*
- *What am I, or what is "I Am"?*

The way Americans talk about "my rights" and "my freedom" indicates that most folks assume that they are their own Uncreated Creator. But maybe we owe existence itself to our Father... We owe, at least until we acknowledge that everything is Grace. For reality itself has been given, even fore-given, to each of us.

We owe our Father gratitude for existence and Life itself—or rather “Himself.”

[image: same artwork of “Mystery of the Fall and redemption of Man” shown above]

Where did you get your life? Did you take it or receive it?

Jesus said, *“I am the Life.”*

Jesus said, *“I am the Life.”* And for thousands of years, the Father taught us that: *The Life is in the blood; my Breath, my Spirit, is in the blood.*

“And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning,” says the Lord.

That’s Genesis 9:5, and the beginning of the sacrificial system.

Like spoiled children, we all take the Life in arrogance...until we learn to surrender the Life in worship. And then God delights in giving it back to us as a river that never stops—the river of Life. It’s the Father’s Life that’s in the Blood, and it’s his Spirit in us, his breath in us, that cries: *“Abba, Father.”*

You see, even the ability to trust the Father’s Grace is the gift of his Spirit, fore-given to you on the tree... Faith is the gift of Grace.

God fore-gives himself to you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And God forgives your very self to you—your true self liberated from your false self—the lie that you must create yourself. You yourself are a debt that you think you must pay, until you discover that you yourself are the gift that has already been purchased... with blood.

So... have you been “forgiven much”?

**“Abba...
...forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation (into testing).”**

- Why would the father lead us into temptation?
- Why would the father put us in a garden with a snake and a terrible tree?
- Why would the father test us?

Well, not so that he could learn something about us,...but maybe so that we would learn something about him.

(We’ll talk more about why God would lead us into temptation, and why he would tell us to ask him to *not* lead us into temptation next time...)

**“Our Abba...
...forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil [literally “the evil” or “the evil one.”]**

In some of the later ancient manuscripts, another line is added at this point—a line we say when we recite the prayer—it’s a perfectly good line. But it’s important to realize that Jesus probably didn’t

say it... at least not here. Instead, he went from this line about the evil one directly into his most ardent warning in all of Scripture. I believe that it's a warning that the Institutional Church has been teaching the children of God to basically ignore for the last 1500 years. It's a warning against committing the unforgivable sin. Jesus says:

**13... lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil [the evil one].**

**14 For if you forgive others [anthropoi: people] their trespasses, your heavenly
Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

That should get your attention. I think he just said:

"If you don't forgive, you're going to hell—where sons of the kingdom weep and gnash their teeth in outer darkness."

In Mathew 12, Jesus says, "... I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people."
That's huge! Just let that sink in...

"...I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people [*anthropoi*], but ...whoever [or "whatever"] blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

Of course, people freak out, asking: "Have I committed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? What is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?"

Just about every answer I've read seems woefully insufficient.

1. Some say, "*Christians can't commit blasphemy against the Spirit...*"
2. Some say, it's *suicide*, or some such sin, that they've picked...
3. Some say, it's *rejecting Grace*. But don't we all do that every day?
4. Some say it's this *unknown point, wherein a person says "no" to the Holy Spirit just one too many times...*
5. Some say, it's *calling the good work of the Spirit, the bad work of the Devil*, which is what the Pharisees just did... and what we surely do just about every time we judge another person.

There are a lot of silly answers, and one obvious answer; Jesus just told us. One sin won't be forgiven, and thereby render all other sins unforgiven, and that sin is: "not forgiving others their trespasses." Jesus just said it!

The Pharisees were offended that "Our Father" forgives... And so they blasphemed against, (spoke against), the Holy Spirit, His Breath.

- The Spirit being blasphemed is *the Breath* that's in the blood that circulates through the body of *ha Adam*, humanity.
- The Spirit being blasphemed is "*the Spirit of Grace*,"^{xvi} which is the Life of Love, who is God our Father.
- The Spirit being blasphemed is the one that cries, "*Abba Father*," from the depths of the Sanctuary within every child of God.

And the thing that blasphemes that Spirit is your ego: the product of the lie that you are not a little child of God, for you have justified yourself. It must die, that you might live. And the thing that kills it is forgiveness.

Forgiveness destroys the “old man” and liberates the “new man,” the eternal man.

Well you see, once we cry, “Our Abba,” “Our Daddy in Heaven,” “My and my enemy’s Daddy...,” once you say, “Abba,” forgiveness becomes the obvious choice... for your enemy is your Abba’s baby—your brother, your sister.

There is one sin that the Good Father will not forgive, and that is unforgiveness.

And now you may say, *“Holy Crap. I think I committed the unforgiveable sin...”* Yep! That would not surprise me in the least. To forgive, (*aphiemi* in Greek), means “to let,” or “to allow.” It doesn’t mean that what a person did is right, but that you will release that person from the debt incurred to you by their wrong.

A few years ago my son Coleman totaled my little blue truck at the intersection of 6th Avenue and Highway 93 coming home from school in Boulder... because he was tailgating a guy who was drunk, who all at once decided to make a U-turn, such that Coleman didn’t have time to stop.

Coleman owed me a truck, and I forgave him that truck. It means, he no longer owes me a truck. I took a debt and turned it into a gift.

If I hadn’t forgiven him the truck, it wouldn’t mean that I would then proceed to torture him with infinite pain for all eternity. It would mean that he’d need to buy me a truck.

There were times in Coleman’s life when I might have made him buy me the truck—but not because I hated him—but because I loved him and had decided to discipline him.

But as it was, I forgave him the truck. And let this be our little secret, (I don’t want it to get back to Coleman...), but I was glad that Coleman crashed my truck, because I wanted to show my son that I love him more than a truck—I will always love him with all that I am and with everything I have. I loved forgiving Coleman.

But, if Coleman were to come to me and say, “Dad, I hate Jon, and I will never forgive Jon for the things he’s done to me and you. I will not forgive my brother.”

Well, I would say to Coleman, *“That’s a debt that I will not forgive... You did not have to pay for the truck, but you will have to pay for your unforgiveness with forgiveness, or you cannot eat at my table.”*

“You will forgive Jon... but I will not forgive your ego; it must die.”

“It’s not who you are; I know who you are—you are my son, and I am your Father who loves you and your brother.”

You may remember that Jesus told a story just like that—about a Father who had two sons, and the younger son broke his heart and took his things. When he returned with a scheme to save his tail and take even more from his father, this father ran to him, and showered him with mercy.

At that, the boy repented, and at that, the Father began to party. And at that, the older brother refused to party. He was unwilling to forgive his brother and unwilling to forgive his Father for all

of his forgiveness. He refused to party, but left the party, and stood in outer darkness weeping and gnashing his teeth.

Was he cast out by Grace, or did he cast himself out with resentment?

I don't know, but this I do know: the Father cast himself out with his son—the Father went out to his son, now lost in darkness and gnashing his teeth. And there in the darkness, He said to his boy, *"Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. Your brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found—your little brother."*

But you see, the older brother that wouldn't forgive is now lost. And now, the Father had chosen to stand with him... just as Jesus, the Word of the Father, now stands with these Pharisees, telling this story, and issuing this warning.

The unforgiveable sin is unforgiveness...

So, you might wonder, *"If God does not forgive our unforgiveness, does he commit the unforgiveable sin or remain unforgiven?"*

Well, I don't think he commits sin, but he certainly suffers the sin. He descends into the outer darkness with every arrogant brother, and there suffers the pain of all our unforgiveness... our hell.

Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to him—even if, especially if—the least of these is your self. In the end, you must forgive yourself, which is to die to your false self, and liberate your true self, made in the image and likeness of your Father.

You must forgive, for unforgiveness is the unforgiveable sin. And eternal life is the commandment of the Father.^{xii}

The Father suffers the pain of unforgiveness, until all his children surrender to his Spirit and forgive.

You see, the Father can't enjoy the banquet if his children don't enjoy each other; Grace is what's for dinner; and as always, the Father pays the tab. Roast lamb is on the menu, broken bread, and the best wine—red wine.

"On this mountain, the Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine," prophesies Isaiah. *"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces... It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God... let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"*^{xiii}

About twenty years ago, I began to say:

"You know, I think our Dad might actually mean that... And I think he may have actually done that, in Jesus—the lamb of God, the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the World, the judgment of the Father, our older brother who chooses to forgive...who lifted his head on a tree in a garden, prayed, "Father forgive," and opened the door to the Seventh Day—our Father's rest, the banquet without end, for it is the End."

I had thought that my fellow pastors had hoped that God would save all... But after months of trying to show through Scripture that our Father will save all...and after their apparent fear that he would

save all...in horror, I began to realize that maybe we really don't want our Father to save all—that, in the words of David Bentley Hart:^{xiv}

Our secret treasure is:

- The hope that some can never be forgiven.
- The hope of being proved right when others are wrong.
- The hope of being admired when others are despised.
- The hope of being envied by those who gnash their teeth in outer darkness.

That's terrifying, for, "Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."^{xv}

Thirteen years ago, they put us on trial; they told me that I had to publicly confess that God "took pleasure in choosing to never forgive some." I could not confess my faith in unforgiveness, for it is not the End of the story...Jesus is the End. And I would not confess my faith in unforgiveness, for I was terrified of committing the unforgiveable sin... And I was terrified of teaching you, and teaching others to commit it.

To cherish unforgiveness is to cherish a place in the outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth.

- It's not that the Father won't go to that place with you, and plead with you, until the end of the ages.
- It's not that God won't ultimately destroy your arrogant flesh, and free you from the bondage of your ego with his consuming fire.
- It's not that you won't ever be saved...

It's that I want us to be saved *now*.

I want us to be free *now*.

I want us to see the work of the devil destroyed *now*...

And I don't want any of us to go to "hell" at all.

So, in the name of Jesus, I forgive everyone, including all of us that cherish unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness is the unforgiveable sin, and it's high time that the Institutional Church stop teaching people to commit it.^{xvi}

We'll talk about that more next time, but now you may be thinking, "*Well Peter, for me, it's not a theological proposition, it's an existential nightmare... I was abandoned, I was raped, I was abused, I was tormented by those that should have loved me... I don't have the strength to forgive.*"

Well, in a way, you're right: for it wasn't just your life they took; it wasn't just your honor they defiled; it wasn't just your blood they shed. Do you see that all of that belonged to Jesus? ...And if you think it was simply yours, it shows you already took it from him just like everyone else. But with forgiveness, you gain it all back, lose it, and find it, as well as a kingdom and the King of the Kingdom.

They—the ones that have hurt you—incurred an absolutely tremendous debt... but Jesus bleeds enough blood to turn every debt into the gift that constitutes the Kingdom of God.

Corrie ten Boom was imprisoned at Ravensbruck concentration camp along with her sister, Betsie, who suffered an agonizing death at the hands of the Nazi guards.

Just a few years after the war, Corrie spoke in a church in Munich...about forgiveness. At the end of the message a man came forward. Immediately, she recognized him, though he didn't recognize her. He had been one of the most sadistic, one of the most cruel. She froze.

He said, *"I was a guard at Ravensbruck... and since then I have become a Christian. I know God has forgiven me, but could I hear it from you?"* And then, he held out his hand.

Frozen in hatred and horror...in her heart, she screamed, *Jesus, help me!* It was all she could do to lift her hand and touch his.

And then, she describes a miracle; something like electricity shot down her arm and into his, and then her whole being was flooded with warmth, like a body suddenly filled with blood.

She cried out: *"I forgive you, brother, with all my heart."*

She writes, *"I had never known God's love so intensely...I realized it was not my love. I had tried, and I did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit."*^{xvii}

She didn't blaspheme the Spirit; she surrendered to the Spirit.

The Spirit, the Breath of God—the Life is in the blood.

Communion

So, Jesus took the bread and broke it, saying, *"This is my body given to you; take and eat."* And in the same way, he took the cup saying, *"Drink of it all of you. This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins."*

This is you—an earthen vessel. (Peter holds up cup.) This is your neighbor that needs forgiveness—an empty earthen vessel.

You cannot forgive, until you *see that you're forgiven*. [Peter pours wine from pitcher into cup... then pours from one cup into another.]

But if you refuse to forgive, you cannot be forgiven... you will be unable to receive forgiveness. [Peter continuously pours wine from pitcher into full cup and back.]

You must forgive as you are forgiven.

Do you understand? The Life of God is an *Endless River* that flows from the throne through all these vessels, like blood flows through all the members of a body and back to the heart—the throne in the heart of the temple.

[Peter continues pouring wine between cups.]

Forgiveness is Life; Forgiveness is the Dance; Forgiveness is the Party; Forgiveness means, "to let..."

When you forgive, you "let" the river flow; you "let" the Kingdom of God "be."

You “let” your Father enjoy His banquet.

So say this with me, “In the name of Jesus, I forgive.” (Takes communion)

[Communion song: “Let It Be” by The Beatles]

Benediction

“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that is within them praising the one on the throne and the Lamb.” Would you ‘let it be?’ Maybe all of heaven is waiting for you to let it be...and I’m Mother Mary—I’m the Church. And if I was doing my job, I was speaking a word of wisdom, which is Jesus. And He’s the Word of the Father, and he says, “Please...let it be. I have bled more than enough blood for you to let it be. I know you’re hurting, but look how I hurt for you. Together, let’s ‘let it be.’

So, maybe you were thinking about someone:

Maybe you were thinking about all those people who make you wear masks, or those people who don’t wear masks, or those people who are throwing riots that don’t make any sense, or the policeman who kneeled on George Floyd, or your ex-wife, or your dad who abused you....

Just say it with me—In your heart, think of them. And then say, “In the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I forgive them. Amen.”

There’s an awful lot of fear right now—protests, riots, over 100,000 dead....everybody’s afraid.

It might help to remember that you were not born into this world to learn to save your life. You were born into this world to learn to *lose* your life. You were born into this world to learn to forgive.

Is it not obvious that class is in session? Jesus is your teacher. He even makes you His Body. So let it be.

In the name of Jesus—believe the Gospel. And live the Gospel. Amen.

Endnotes

ⁱ It's more than a bit sad that a thousand years after Paul warned Timothy that in the latter days some would "forbid marriage" (1 Timothy 4:3), that the church in the west started forbidding marriage for priests and pastors. And even though Jesus said, "Call no man your Father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9) Even though Jesus said, "Don't call them father," the Church in the West started commanding folks to call men "father," who were forbidden to have children... that's a bit odd, wouldn't you say?

I have the utmost respect for those, called by God, to celibacy, like Jesus. And I'm utterly impressed with Roman Catholic's like Pope Frances... I just find it disturbing that we've seemed to have diminished the wisdom gained from hearing a child say, "Daddy."

It's not something you can take credit for; it's not something you can learn by going to seminary—it's a revelation of Grace.

ⁱⁱ A pastor friend told me about a boy in his congregation that murdered his grandparents—his mother's parents—for drug money.

Everyday his mother brought him fresh home cooked meals for she knew he liked them more than the meals served in the prison... she still saw her baby.

ⁱⁱⁱ John 8:44

^{iv} You have the power to hallow it... and it is hallowed, it is Holy.

It is different for you Father is not part good and part bad.

Your Father in heaven is the Good; He is Love.

^v I could show you many different pictures, but I keep showing you this picture in many different sermons for I hope you would connect a whole bunch of dots.

^{vi} If a stranger came to your house, knocked on the door and said "Good News," I'm giving you this house... you might say "BS, I already own this house, paid for this house, cause I worked hard for this house."

Right. But who gave you, you... the desire to work, the will to work, and even the ability to enjoy the house—and if you're a believer, is it your house?

Is it your kingdom? Didn't you just ask for your Father's Kingdom?

^{vii} John 6:48,14:6

^{viii} When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.' " ¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. – Exodus 16:15-21

^{ix} Jesus says that in the wilderness, they ate and died—I suspect that's because they didn't know what it was: It was the Good and it was the Life.

They didn't know, but we know—it is the Good and the Life, fore-given us on a tree in a garden.

Every good and perfect gift, including life itself, is the heart of our Father.

Eat of that bread and you will live forever; you will know the good and experience the life—for you trust that it is all fore-given you.

^x You do understand that this is a question far more profound than whether or not clams evolved into Lobsters? People have asked it for thousands of years, but many stopped for they thought biologist had figured out how it was that clams turned into lobsters... that's just stupid.

^{xi} Zechariah 12:10, Hebrews 10:29

^{xii} John 12:50

xiii *On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." – Isaiah 25:5-9*

xiv An old monk on Mount Athos in Greece once told me that people rejoice in the thought of hell to the precise degree that they harbor hell within themselves. By which he meant, I believe, that heaven and hell alike are both within us all, in varying degrees, and that, for some, the idea of hell is the treasury of their most secret, most cherished hopes — the hope of being proved right when so many were wrong, of being admired when so many are despised, of being envied when so many have been scorned.

And as Jesus said (Matthew 6:21), "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
–David Bentley Hart, "Why Do People Believe in Hell?" New York Times, 1-10-2020

xv I basically wrote a book explaining that "them" forgiven, is all...
And that we are unforgiven, until we also forgive...
And that place where all are forgiven is called reality, eternity, the 7th day.
And I was worried that we were trapping ourselves in hell, which is the nightmare of our own sovereignty... but people didn't seem to *want* to read or listen.

xvi It may be infinitely worse to refuse to forgive than to murder, because the latter may be an impulse of a moment of heat, whereas the former is a cold and deliberate choice of the heart.
–George MacDonald in Johann Christoph Arnold, *Why Forgive?* (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 2000), p. 66

xvii *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul*, "Love Your Enemy," Corrie ten Boom, p. 2-5.