

The prayer Jesus taught us

Lesson 7 - Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

1 Introduction

Fifth Petition: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
As a fallen people, humanity requires more than just physical sustenance to survive; they require forgiveness. This petition, following on the heels of giving, is about forgiving. As Tertullian said, "It is fitting that after contemplating the liberality of God we should likewise address his clemency."

Mr. Storage's Closet; *A Brief Exegetical Study of the Lord's Prayer*

[This is] the one instance of a prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray that they did not suppose he needed to pray himself. The well-known scene of John the Baptist's initial objection to baptizing Jesus (Matt. 3:14-15) and the very early tradition of Jesus' personal sinlessness (cf. John 7:18; 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22) bear witness to the great divide at this point between Jesus and his followers. They needed to repent and seek God's forgiveness, but he did not.

This exception, however, clearly proves the rule that the Lord's Prayer was intended by Jesus to bind his followers closely to the agenda of his whole ministry. Forgiveness, which is offered freely and without recourse to the temple system, was another hallmark of Jesus' work — indeed, so much so that it was the cause of scandal (as, e.g., in Mark 2:5-12). Furthermore, there is good reason to think that Jesus regarded this free offer of forgiveness as a central part of his inauguration of the new covenant, and that he saw the corresponding obligation to mutual forgiveness as a necessary badge of membership (see my *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 268-74). This prayer for forgiveness, therefore, though not aligning itself with anything in Jesus' own spirituality, belongs very closely with the total picture of Jesus' public ministry, as his ministry is set out in the Gospel narratives. N.T. Wright, *The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer* (Originally published in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*, ed. R.L. Longenecker. 2001, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 132-54. Reproduced by permission of the author.)

2 A Christian prayer

We would not even be able to address God as Father if we had not first been *given* the Father through Jesus and then authorized to ask the Father for the several gifts of this prayer. Only the Father's forgiveness mediated here though his Son makes it possible to pray the Lord's Prayer at all.

Frederik Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12* (Eerdmans 1987) pp. 308-311

For that this prayer belongs to believers, is taught us both by the laws of the church, and by the beginning of the prayer. For the uninitiated could not call God Father. If then the prayer belongs to believers, and they pray, entreating that sins may be forgiven them, it is

clear that not even after the laver is the profit of repentance taken away. Since, had He not meant to signify this, He would not have made a law that we should so pray. Now He who both brings sins to remembrance, and bids us ask forgiveness, and teaches how we may obtain remission and so makes the way easy; it is perfectly clear that He introduced this rule of supplication, as knowing, and signifying, that it is possible even after the font to wash ourselves from our offenses; by reminding us of our sins, persuading us to be modest; by the command to forgive others, setting us free from all revengeful passion; while by promising in return for this to pardon us also, He holds out good hopes, and instructs us to have high views concerning the unspeakable mercy of God toward man. Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 19.5*

3 Trespasses

There have been many translations of the word *debts*. The original Greek word ὀφειλή/ατα (*opheilema*) is rarely used in the Bible. It has a wide range of meanings, centred on the common concept of *something owed* or *something due*. The common use of the term *trespasses* can be attributed to its appearance in The Book of Common Prayer. However, a more proper translation is *debts*. In Luke 11:4, the petition is translated, "and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us." The terms *sins* and *indebted* are used in place of *debts* and *debtors* from the Matthew 6 translation. As Jesus originally gave this prayer in Aramaic, he most likely used the word *choba'*. Interpreted literally, *choba'* would mean *debt*, but it is also the most common rabbinic word for *sin*. The Gospel writers approached this word from different contexts. Matthew, being characteristically Jewish, chose the Greek word for *debts*, *opheilema*, because *debt* is the rabbinic word for *sin*. Luke, being characteristically Greek, chose a more general Greek word for *sin*, *hamartia*.

Mr. Storage's Closet; A Brief Exegetical Study of the Lord's Prayer

The Presbyterian and other Reformed churches tend to use "debts ... debtors". Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists are more likely to say "trespasses ... those who trespass against us". The "debts" form appears in the first English translation of the Bible, by John Wycliffe in 1395 (Wycliffe spelling "dettis"). The "trespasses" version appears in the 1526 translation by William Tyndale (Tyndale spelling "treaspases"). In 1549 the first Book of Common Prayer in English used a version of the prayer with "trespasses". This became the "official" version used in Anglican congregations.

After the request for bread, Matthew and Luke diverge slightly. Matthew continues with a request for debts to be forgiven in the same manner as people have forgiven those who have debts against them. Luke, on the other hand, makes a similar request about sins being forgiven in the manner of debts being forgiven between people. The word "debts" (ὀφειλήματα) does not necessarily mean financial obligations, as shown by the use of the verbal form of the same word (ὀφείλετε) in passages such as Romans 13:8. The Aramaic word ḥôbâ can mean "debt" or "sin". This difference between Luke's and Matthew's wording could be explained by the original form of the prayer having been in Aramaic. The generally accepted interpretation is thus that the request is for forgiveness of

sin, not of supposed loans granted by God. Asking for forgiveness from God was a staple of Jewish prayers. It was also considered proper for individuals to be forgiving of others, so the sentiment expressed in the prayer would have been a common one of the time.

Anthony C. Deane, Canon of Worcester Cathedral, suggests that the choice of the word "ὀφειλήματα" (debts), rather than "ἁμαρτίας" (sins), indicates a reference to failures to use opportunities of doing good. He links this with the parable of the sheep and the goats (also in Matthew's Gospel), in which the grounds for condemnation are not wrongdoing in the ordinary sense but failure to do right, missing opportunities for showing love to others. (Mat 25.31-46).

"As we forgive...". Divergence between Matthew's "debts" and Luke's "sins" is relatively trivial compared to the impact of the second half of this statement. The verses immediately following the Lord's Prayer (Mat 6:14-15) show Jesus teaching that the forgiveness of our sin/debt (by God) is contingent on how we forgive others. Later, Matthew elaborates with Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant (Mat 18.23-35). In this parable, forgiveness from the king (God) is conditional on the servant's forgiveness of a small debt owed to him.

Lord's Prayer - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The New Testament uses five different words for sin.

(i) The commonest word is *hamartia*. This was originally a shooting word and means a missing of the target. To fail to hit the target was hamartia. Therefore sin is the failure to be what we might have been and could have been.[...]

(ii) The second word for sin is *parabasis*, which literally means a stepping across. Sin is the stepping across the line which is drawn between right and wrong.[...]

(iii) The third word for sin is *paraptoma*, which means a slipping across. It is the kind of slip which a man might make on a slippery or an icy road. It is not so deliberate as parabasis. [...]

(iv) The fourth word for sin is *anomia*, which means lawlessness. Anomia is the sin of the man who knows the right, and who yet does the wrong; the sin of the man who knows the law, and who yet breaks the law. [...]

(v) The fifth word for sin is the word *opheilema* which is the word used in the body of the Lord's Prayer; and *opheilema* means a debt. It means a failure to pay that which is due, a failure in duty. [...]

So, then, when we come to see what sin really is, we come to see that it is a universal disease in which every man is involved. Outward respectability in the sight of man, and inward sinfulness in the sight of God may well go hand in hand. This, in fact, is a petition of the Lord's Prayer which every man needs to pray.

William Barclay, Matthew, pp. 219-224

In rabbinic thought every sin created a deposit of debt before God, the accumulation of which formed a separating wall between the person and God. On the other hand, every righteous deed contributed to the believer's accumulation of assets before God and so created a kind of bridge to God. Sins were demerits that separated, righteous deeds merits that connected. The corporate name for these separating demerits was "debts."

Jesus takes this well-known word and the set of ideas connected with it and tells us that we can ask the Father to *wipe out our debts!* [...]

The petition is audacious on the face of it. It is shameless for a debtor to approach a creditor and ask for remittance. Yet Jesus teaches us to approach God in this “shameless” way! [...] To be able to ask God the Father to remit debt and overlook sins is breathtaking. Jesus teaches us to come to the Father with *this* prayer. Is that not gospel? [...]

In Luke’s version [...] we ask that our sins be forgiven (Luke 11:4). We can say [...] that in Luke’s word “sins” (or “trespasses”) the focus is on our acts of *commission* and that in Matthew [...], the focus is on our acts of *ommission*.

Frederik Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12* (Eerdmans 1987) pp. 308-311

4 Urgency of the prayer

[This] petition for forgiveness gives the lie to the Pelagian confidence in human nature: the church “justly appealed to this prayer in proof that the general sinfulness still continues to be shared *even by believers.*” [Says Luther:] “we must remark how [...] our miserable life is indicated: we are in the land of debts, we are up to the ears in sin.”

Frederik Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12* (Eerdmans 1987) pp. 308-311

Before a man can honestly pray this petition of the Lord's Prayer he must realize that he needs to pray it. That is to say, before a man can pray this petition he must have a sense of sin. Sin is not nowadays a popular word. Men and women rather resent being called, or treated as, hell-deserving sinners.

The trouble is that most people have a wrong conception of sin. They would readily agree that the burglar, the drunkard, the murderer, the adulterer, the foul-mouthed person is a sinner. But they are guilty of none of these sins; they live decent, ordinary, respectable lives, and have never even been in danger of appearing in court, or going to prison, or getting some notoriety in the newspapers. They therefore feel that sin has nothing to do with them.

William Barclay, *Matthew*, pp. 219-224

And how necessarily, how providently and salutarily, are we admonished that we are sinners, since we are compelled to entreat for our sins, and while pardon is asked for from God, the soul recalls its own consciousness of *sin!* Lest any one should flatter himself that he is innocent, and by exalting himself should more deeply perish, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, in that he is bidden to entreat daily for his sins. Thus, moreover, John also in his epistle warns us, and says, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*” In his epistle he has combined both, that we should entreat for our sins, and that we should obtain pardon when we ask. Therefore he said that the Lord was faithful to forgive sins, keeping the faith of His promise; because He who taught us to pray for our debts and sins, has promised that His fatherly mercy and pardon shall follow.

Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 19.5*

We find ourselves in the condition of the merciless servant whose debt amounted to 10,000 talents, and who not being capable of restituting it, was sold away together with his family and his possessions (Mt 18, 23-25). The acknowledgement of this impossibility to repay the debt forces us to turn with humble faith towards God's merciful love which overlooks all; so that he forgives our sins which we ourselves can never expiate.
The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

5 The Exodus motif

The story of the manna, however, was also the story of Israel's sin and lack of faith. The prayer for forgiveness, therefore, is quite appropriate in this context, and not merely another item in a shopping-list of spiritual needs and wants. In the light of Jeremiah 31 and Jesus' offer of forgiveness as the central blessing of the new covenant — that is, the great return that was happening through his work — forgiveness is raised to a new height. If the Egypt from which the New Exodus is freeing God's people is the Egypt of sin and all that it produces, then the prayer "forgive us our sins" becomes precisely the prayer of those still in Egypt: "Deliver us from Pharaoh!"

Matthew and the *Didache*, of course, present Jesus as speaking of the forgiveness of debts (as in Matthew) or debt (as in the *Didache*). I have elsewhere agreed with those who see in this a sign of the Jubilee, and of Jesus' intention being that his followers should celebrate it amongst themselves (see my *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 294-95). The Jubilee provisions, of course, look back to the fact that Israel had been enslaved in Egypt and that God had rescued and delivered her (cf. Lev. 25:38, 42, 55). They were part of the Exodus theology. In the same way, Jesus' demand that his followers should forgive one another belongs precisely within the same logic. Redeemed slaves must themselves live as redemption people. The inner connection between forgiving others and being forgiven oneself, which is so strongly emphasized in Matt.6:14-15 and 18:21-35 (cf. *Sirach* 28:1-7), grows directly out of this Exodus motif.

N.T. Wright, *The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer* (Originally published in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*, ed. R.L. Longenecker. 2001, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 132-54. Reproduced by permission of the author.)

6 The precondition

One gets the impression that the petitioner has just come from a conversation of reconciliation with a "debtor", with a formerly alienated person, and that this experience of friendship, enabled by God, encourages the request for a renewal of God's friendship. Frederik Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12* (Eerdmans 1987) pp. 308-311

This petition consists of two parts, a request for forgiveness, and the forgiveness of others. The first part asks God to forgive *all* our sins, since the brevity of the prayer precludes a comprehensive listing. It is an all embracing plea for forgiveness. The second clause addresses our forgiveness of the sins of others. The connection between our forgiveness and forgiving others is laid out in Luke 6:37, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." Following

his instructions in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus re-emphasizes the importance of this petition in Matthew 6:14-15, stating, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Mr. Storage's Closet; A Brief Exegetical Study of the Lord's Prayer

He has clearly joined herewith and added the law, and has bound us by a certain condition and engagement, that we should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors, knowing that that which we seek for our sins cannot be obtained unless we ourselves have acted in a similar way in respect of our debtors.

Therefore also He says in another place, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." And the servant who, after having had all his debt forgiven him by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant, is cast back into prison; because he would not forgive his fellow-servant, he lost the indulgence that had been shown to himself by his lord. And these things Christ still more urgently sets forth in His precepts with yet greater power of His rebuke. "When you stand praying," says He, "forgive if you have anything against any, that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." There remains no ground of excuse in the day of judgment, when you will be judged according to your own sentence; and whatever you have done, that you also will suffer. For God commands us to be peacemakers, and in agreement, and of one mind in His house; and such as He makes us by a second birth, such He wishes us when new-born to continue, that we who have begun to be sons of God may abide in God's peace, and that, having one spirit, we should also have one heart and one mind. Thus God does not receive the sacrifice of a person who is in disagreement, but commands him to go back from the altar and first be reconciled to his brother, that so God also may be appeased by the prayers of a peace-maker. Our peace and brotherly agreement is the greater sacrifice to God—and a people united in one in the unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

St Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 23

It is certainly a bargain to be reckoned with when we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We can be sure that we have violated that rule if we do not forgive those who ask our pardon, since we too want to be forgiven by our most generous Father with respect to those who seek pardon from us. Now, as to that commandment by which we are ordered to pray for our enemies, we are not ordered to pray for those who seek forgiveness. For such persons are not enemies. In no way, however, can someone really say that he is praying for a person he does not know. Therefore it must be said that we should forgive all wrongs committed against us if we want the Father to forgive what we have committed.

Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, 2.8.29

Many people who are unwilling to forgive those who sin against them, avoid saying this prayer. They are ill-advised, first, because the one who does not pray as Christ taught is not Christ's disciple. Second, because the Father does not graciously hear a prayer that

the Son has not recommended. For the Father knows the words and meaning of his Son, and he does not accept what the human mind has devised but what the wisdom of Christ has expressed. Therefore you may indeed say a prayer, but you may not outsmart and deceive God. And you will not receive forgiveness unless you yourself have first forgiven.
St Augustine, On the Lord's Prayer

"*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*" This is an important conditional statement, one of many Jesus will make about our own interdependence, in a sense -- about the reciprocal nature of our choices. We ask God to forgive us, but our forgiveness is conditional upon our own choices for forgiveness. My study bible says that "by using the plural, Jesus directs each of us to pray for the Father's forgiveness of all, and for all of us to forgive one another." These "debts" are spiritual debts, in the sense that when we sin we "owe" restitution. And what is forgiveness? In the Greek, this word is a letting go, a releasing. It implies a freedom: we live in freedom, we allow others to do so as well. We seek, instead, the will of God in our acts and our conduct in the world -- not a "worldly" sense of retribution, determined by others.

Daily Exegesis/ Our Father in heaven - the Lord's Prayer/ Bible Commentary on Daily Readings

"As we also have forgiven" or "as we forgive" is an Immediate Past Aorist. This aorist indicative can be used with events that are rather recent. It can be understood with a passive or translation or a *just now* inserted. [...] The majority of the editorial committee of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament preferred [it] rendered here "as we have forgiven". [...] The forgiveness of fellow citizens of the kingdom is a profound message Jesus continually emphasizes. This relationship aspect among believers testifies to the forgiveness they have received for their treasonous acts against the King. Kingdom peace will be representative of the peace that exists between the citizen and their Savior King. This clause is the only clause that will receive commentary after the Lord's Prayer concludes. This is because Jesus wants to point out that this is an important aspect of corporate covenant worship.

Exegesis of The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6/9-13 « Nil Nisi Verum

He requires his disciples to be gentle and slow to anger, so that they may be able to say blamelessly in their prayers, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted unto us." [...] He first commands them to ask forgiveness of the sins they commit and then to confess that they entirely forgive others, If I may say so, they ask God to imitate the patience that they practice. The same gentleness that they show to their fellow servants, they pray that they may receive in equal measure from God, who gives justly and knows his to show mercy to everyone. [...]

"For we ourselves have forgiven every one who is indebted to us." This is fitting to say only for those who have chosen a virtuous life and are practising without carelessness the will of God, that is as Scripture says, "good and acceptable and perfect".

We must ask God for the forgiveness of sins that we have committed. First, we must have forgiven whoever has offended us in anything. This is if their sin is against us and not against the glory of the supreme God. We are not masters over such actions but only over those that have been committed against ourselves. By forgiving the brothers what they do

to us, we will then certainly find Christ, the Savior of all, gentle and ready to show us mercy.”

Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke, Homily 76*

Nothing makes us so like God as our readiness to forgive the wicked and wrongdoer. [...] for this same reason again in every one of the clauses Jesus commands us to make our prayers together in one voice, saying Our Father, and give us the bread, and forgive us our debts and lead us not into temptation, and deliver us. So everywhere he is teaching us to use this plural word that we may not retain so much as a vestige of resentment against our neighbor.

How great a reproof then must they deserve, who after all this, still do not forgive and even ask God's vengeance on their enemies. In doing so they diametrically transgress this command. Meanwhile Christ is seeking in every way possible to hinder our conflicts with one another. For since love is the root of all that is good, by removing from all quarters whatever damages it, he brings us together and cements us to each other.

Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 19.7*

Forgive us as we also forgive... If we default in this covenant, the whole petition is fruitless, for he says, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.”

Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount 2.11.39*

“For we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us.” Surely we all have authority to forgive sins against ourselves. This is clear from “as we forgive our debtors” and “for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us.”

The person inspired by Jesus and known by his fruits, as the apostles were, has received the Holy Spirit. He has become spiritual by being led by the Spirit to do everything by reason as a child of God. This person forgives whatever God forgives and retains sins that cannot be healed, serving God as the prophets by not speaking his own words but those of the divine will. He also serves God who alone has authority to forgive.”

Origen, *On Prayer 28.7-8*

He has clearly joined herewith and added the law, and has bound us by a certain condition and engagement, that we should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors, knowing that that which we seek for our sins cannot be obtained unless we ourselves have acted in a similar way in respect of our debtors.

Therefore also He says in another place, “*With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.*” And the servant who, after having had all his debt forgiven him by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant, is cast back into prison; because he would not forgive his fellow-servant, he lost the indulgence that had been shown to himself by his lord.

Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 19.5*

b)'As we forgive those...'

The generosity of God, to which we appeal, places only one condition on us in order to receive remission: that we forgive those who sin against us, that we pardon those who

have wronged us. And we can show mercy toward our brothers and sisters precisely because we can pass on this great treasure of mercy which God had first shown to us. It is clear that the contrary is also true: that our prayer will not be fulfilled if like the merciless servant (Mt 18, 23.25; cf 6,14-15) we refuse to pardon our brothers and sisters.

The fifth petition, like the sixth, is the result of the fact that sins defer the definitive coming of the glorious Christ and the Kingdom of the Father. 2Pet 3,9 says that the Lord is not slow to carry out his promises, as some believe; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everyone to be brought to change his ways.

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

"Forgive us...as we forgive...", which means that our forgiveness of others is the measure of our own state of forgiveness, "for with the measure you use it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

If we cling to resentment, bitterness, or a desire for revenge, we appeal to principles that alienate us from reconciliation with others. But if we intend to have God be the Judge of others, we appeal to Him to be our own Judge as well.

This petition functions as a mirror for our hearts: as we forgive others who have sinned against us, so we apprehend the forgiveness of the LORD. Or, to put it the other way, our experience of the forgiveness of the LORD is revealed in the way we treat others who have wronged us.

If we merely hear this truth but fail to practice it, we are like someone who looks at their face in a mirror but soon forgets what they saw, thereby exempting themselves from the truth of their own condition (James 1:22-24).

If we have an unforgiving spirit toward others, we will not be forgiven (Matthew 6:15); if we are judgmental toward them, we ourselves will be put on trial; if we are cruel and ungenerous toward them, we will experience life as hellish, miserable and mean.

This reciprocal principle of Kingdom life appears throughout Jesus' teaching. As you forgive, so you shall be forgiven (Matthew 6:14); as you judge, so you shall be judged (Matthew 7:2); as you show mercy, so you shall be shown mercy (Matthew 5:7); as you give unto others, so it shall be given unto you (Luke 6:38). Beloved let us love and forgive one another.

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 4

We are not conscientiously to seek God's friendship where we have not honestly sought our wounded brother's or sister's. This reality sequence is an expression of honest faith and it is not a difficult justification by works. The conscience that is able to ask for forgiveness without giving it is not a conscience living in faith. [...]

Forgiveness received and not passed on [...] is faithless forgiveness and unreal.

Chrysostom is right, "To ask forgiveness from God as a great benefit, and [then] to deny the same to others, is to mock God."

[...]

Schlatter, *Das Evangelium*, 95: "There is no serious prayer for forgiveness except on the lips of a forgiver; this is no contradiction of justification by faith: as if a revenge-seeking heart could be said to believe in God's forgiveness of sins!

[...]

If *without* forgiving someone (who is or could be repentant) we still pray “forgive us as we have forgiven”, do we realize what we are praying? We are praying a curse down on our heads. He asks eternal vengeance on himself, who offers this prayer with hatred in his heart.

Frederik Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1 The Christbook, Matthew 1-12* (Eerdmans 1987) pp. 308-311

For even in the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered, God looked not at their gifts, but at their hearts, so that he was acceptable in his gift who was acceptable in his heart. Abel, peaceable and righteous in sacrificing in innocence to God, taught others also, when they bring their gift to the altar, thus to come with the fear of God, with a simple heart, with the law of righteousness, with the peace of concord. With reason did he, who was such in respect of God's sacrifice, become subsequently himself a sacrifice to God; so that he who first set forth martyrdom, and initiated the Lord's passion by the glory of his blood, had both the Lord's righteousness and His peace. Finally, such are crowned by the Lord, such will be avenged with the Lord in the day of judgment; but the quarrelsome and disunited, and he who has not peace with his brethren, in accordance with what the blessed apostle and the Holy Scripture testifies, even if he have been slain for the name of Christ, shall not be able to escape the crime of fraternal dissension, because, as it is written, He who hates his brother is a murderer and no murderer attains to the kingdom of heaven, nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who had rather be an imitator of Judas than of Christ. How great is the sin which cannot even be washed away by a baptism of blood— how heinous the crime which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

St Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 24