

## THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

### Lesson 20, Chapter 6 Continued

We'll continue in Matthew chapter 6 directing our focus upon the Lord's Prayer of verses 9 - 13. Leading up to this prayer example that Christ presented to those listening to His Sermon on the Mount, He gave His listeners a couple of do's and don'ts concerning prayer in general. First: don't pray in a manner that is designed and intended to draw attention to yourself. Self aggrandizement and making oneself out to be especially pious is the issue. This mindset is a perversion of what prayer is to be and it is what the pagans do. Second: instead pray privately. That is, prayer is to be something personal and intimate between you and the Lord. Prayer is a means and a privilege to honor God and to communicate with Him. And third: don't babble on and on using fabricated mantras and ritualistic phrases that you say and repeat almost unconsciously. One also doesn't have to explain to God what you are asking of Him in extreme detail that results in lengthy prayers in hopes that the longer the prayer goes the more God will hear you. Prayer (and God) simply don't work like that. Yeshua concludes with why eloquence and wordiness are not needed. Verse 8 says it's:"....because your Father knows what you need before you ask Him".

Here is a statement of God's immutable and universal omniscience. As humans we can observe things as they happen and draw conclusions. But only the Lord knows our every thought, and also knows our every need usually before we do. That is both a comfort and a warning.

Therefore, to start verse 9 Jesus says: instead "...pray like this". Please notice that He didn't say to "Pray THIS". When He says to pray LIKE this, He means similarly. He is not giving us a formula to be mechanically repeated but rather a pattern or a template to follow. Some people when they pray, pray only the Lord's

Prayer as though this is a divinely mandated Christian mantra. There is certainly nothing wrong with praying it, and especially when one is with a group of Believers nearly everyone knows this prayer by heart so it is wonderful for everyone to pray it together out loud. So let's read the Lord's Prayer and then we'll discuss its pattern and what we're being shown by it.

### **READ MATTHEW 6:9 - 13**

I would like to briefly review and then supplement what I said last week about the opening words of the Lord's Prayer. Those words are "Our Father". Not "Our God". Not "Our Lord". "Our Father" has a specific meaning biblically and to the Jewish people. First, the use of the term "Our Father" is to put forth the concept of sonship. That is, only a true son has the right to call the one in authority over him "Father". When a person is a son versus a servant or a follower, the relationship changes. That person's status is elevated and his or her position becomes greatly enhanced. For one thing inheritance that comes from what the Father owns and rules over becomes a possibility. In the divine heavenly sphere the term "Our Father" is used to denote the spiritual Father of all things that exist, seen and unseen (the Creator, Yehoveh). In the physical earthly sphere "Our Father" is used to denote the human ancestral/biological father of the Hebrew people: Abraham. It is actually a term used rather rarely in the Old Testament; ironically it is used much more in the New Testament. The Gospels record 65 instances in which Jesus uses the term "Father" to refer to God. John uses it over 100 times. Clearly in the context of prayer, no Jew prayed to Abraham so the "Our Father" is of course directed to God in Heaven. Just as logically and rationally we can know that when Jesus refers to The Father, He cannot be referring to Himself in any way, shape or form. Jesus is never referred to as the Father of anything. Rather, Yeshua's spiritual and physical identity is The Son in relation to the Father. Who is the Father? He is El Shaddai, Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh, Yehoveh, more often called Yahweh, or in English Jehovah. Yehoveh is NOT Yeshua.

The question is: are we also praying to Jesus when we pray to "Our Father"? And clearly Christ instructs that it is The Father is to whom we should pray. Never does He, nor any of His disciples, nor any writer of the New Testament suggest that we should switch from praying to the Father to praying to Christ. Even so, this matter is actually the basis of quite the ongoing theological debate. The side of the debate that says "yes" we are also praying to Jesus when we pray to God in Heaven, or that because Christians should pray directly to Jesus, admits that

there is no direct scriptural quote to back-up such a notion. Rather it is a Church doctrine that has been derived from yet another Church doctrine called the Trinity Doctrine, which among many mainstream denominations says that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are co-equal and unified in such a way as to be indistinguishable. I don't wish to explain the mysterious nature of the unity of God much further other than to say this: despite what you might think you hear me say, I firmly believe and advocate that while Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are all divine attributes of who God is in His totality, it is undeniable that they are spoken of in the Bible as identifiable, separately named entities, possessing different attributes and purposes; they not depicted as, or said to be, co-equal in authority or knowledge. There is a definite hierarchy of authority of the Godhead in the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, and the Father is always at the top of that hierarchy. He directs the Son and the Holy Spirit.

One of the things that is so hard for all us to deal with is the choice of words and human concepts to use when trying to assign them to the essence and substance of God. God gave us language and the ability to speak in order to better understand Him and to form relationships with one another that go way beyond mere animalistic instinct. Thus we must always take human terms like Father and Son only so far when using them to describe God's features and attributes. However by using those terms, which by their very nature are dependent upon the culture that they spring from, we can get a better idea of how to discern who God is, how He operates, and His instructions to us. So as the centuries pass and as new cultures rise, evolve, and then disappear we must always remember to keep these terms and relationships we read of in the Bible embedded in the cultural thought, and in the historical era, from which they came. It's when we remove the cultural and historical elements from God's Word that the mistakes and misunderstandings occur such that false doctrines are the result.

The Scriptures were written by Hebrews and from a Hebrew cultural perspective. Thus when they employ the use of the term "The Son" it is because it is understood in Hebrew culture that a son (especially a firstborn or the only begotten son) holds a special elite place in relation to that son's father. That son has the right of inheritance not only of the father's possessions but also of his authority. While that father is still living, he can and often does name his son as his agent that speaks for him, and can be given a measure of authority as defined and presented to him by his father. It was and remains a Middle Eastern saying that when such "agent" status is given to a son, then when speaking to

the son you are speaking to the father. It is in a similar way that we must think of Yeshua in relation to His Father. It is lens through which we must interpret the New Testament passage that says "Whoever has seen Me (Jesus) has seen the Father". If we isolate and lift that well worn phrase from its Hebrew cultural context of the 1st century and try to place it directly into the Western gentile culture of the 21st century, then it sounds much like Yeshua is saying that He and the Father are identical twins. Or that they are one in the same, such that perhaps Yeshua is but a physical apparition of the invisible Father. Or that Yeshua is the newer and younger God replacing the older God, Yehoveh. But now let's hear it in its biblical context.

<sup>CJB</sup> **John 14:6-10** <sup>6</sup> *Yeshua said, "I AM the Way- and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> Because you have known me, you will also know my Father; from now on, you do know him- in fact, you have seen him." <sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it will be enough for us." <sup>9</sup> Yeshua replied to him, "Have I been with you so long without your knowing me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am united with the Father, and the Father united with me? What I am telling you, I am not saying on my own initiative; the Father living in me is doing his own works*

Embedded in this passage is the Jewish and Middle Eastern cultural concept of the relationship between a father and son. This is reflected in Yeshua replying to Phillip: "The Father living in me is doing His own works". Yeshua fits the mold to a T as His Father's agent who carries out His Father's works. He is the Father's right hand. He is the Father's only begotten son. The Son has completely adopted His Father's will. The Father, even though He is still living, has designated His Son, Yeshua, as His agent on earth and in doing so has given Him a defined measure of authority (thus it can be said that the Father is living and doing His works through His Son, Jesus Christ). But the Father is not the Son, and while the Son is said to carry all the authority of His Father to rule the Kingdom, this in no way is intended to say that the Son has replaced His Father, or that the Son has usurped His Father, or that the Father is out of the picture, or that the Father has given up ultimate authority over His Son. What I'm telling you is not doctrine; this is Bible.

Importantly, the thoughts and concepts of the Lord's Prayer were not new to Yeshua's listeners; they were already an ordinary part of Jewish religious society

in Christ's day. Many Jewish prayers began: **Avinu Sh'baShammayim** (Our Father in Heaven). This opening phrase further "outs" Matthew as a Jewish Believer. But the lack of this phrase in Luke's version of it also "outs" Luke as a Gentile Believer. Luke's much abbreviated version of something like the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2 opens merely with "Father". So it should not surprise us that the Jewish Jesus would use a rather standard opening for a Jewish prayer, and that the Jewish Matthew would of course record it that way; while that same standard opening would not have been so familiar or noticed by the gentile Luke.

David Stern points out that the next two lines of the Lord's Prayer are very similar to the opening words of the synagogue prayer called the **Kaddish**, which says: "Magnified and sanctified be His great name throughout the world, which He has created according to His will, and may He establish His Kingdom in your lifetime". Compare this to the Lord's Prayer: "May your name be kept holy (sanctified), and may your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth.... " So the Lord's Prayer and the **Kaddish** express nearly identical thoughts.

Yet as we go further into the prayer, we find another Christian theological debate develop from it. It concerns whether the nature of the prayer is expressing a future hope pointing to the End Times and beyond (scholars call this the eschatological view); or whether it is expressing a present hope with a view to the here and now. As nearly always, these theological differences demand an absolute and are discerned from the Western gentile mindset. That is, the Lord's Prayer is either a 100% future view or a 100% present view. This is not at all needed and not all what Yeshua had in mind. Rather we have here two simultaneous meanings that are not different in substance, but only different in timeframe. That is, both meanings are true at certain times in redemption history. Hebrew thought allows for such an approach.

When Christ says "May Your Kingdom come", this refers to both the present and the future because that is the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. And yet also notice whose Kingdom it is; it is "yours" meaning The Father's. Yeshua Our Savior may well rule over it; but it belongs to The Father, and whatever authority Yeshua has over it has been given to Him by The Father. The issue of the Kingdom coming we've discussed before. The Kingdom is both present and it is future. The Kingdom of Heaven (synonymous with the Kingdom of God) had a definite beginning point.

**CJB Matthew 11:11-13 <sup>11</sup> Yes! I tell you that among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than Yochanan the Immerser! Yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he! <sup>12</sup> From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the Torah prophesied until Yochanan.**

So when John the Baptist began His mission to declare the coming of the Lord, that was the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In the Gospel of Luke we see the Kingdom of Heaven addressed slightly differently.

**CJB Luke 17:20-21 <sup>20</sup> The P'rushim asked Yeshua when the Kingdom of God would come. "The Kingdom of God," he answered, "does not come with visible signs; <sup>21</sup> nor will people be able to say, 'Look! Here it is!' or, 'Over there!' Because, you see, the Kingdom of God is among you."**

While I'm not in total agreement with that translation, I am as far it regards the tenses. That is, the Kingdom of God IS among you. It is present right now. So in the Lord's Prayer, the coming of the Kingdom doesn't mean it hasn't come yet. Rather, it is like the Lord's parable of the mustard seed.

**CJB Matthew 13:31-32 <sup>31</sup> Yeshua put before them another parable. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man takes and sows in his field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up it is larger than any garden plant and becomes a tree, so that the birds flying about come and nest in its branches."**

In time I'll talk more concerning this parable and explain in depth the use and meaning of Parables. However a fundamental principle of parables is that they use every day cultural thoughts, objects and activities in a simplistic and general way to teach the Torah. And when we look at the Mustard Seed parable it draws a similarity between how the Kingdom of Heaven appears on earth versus how a mustard seed grows. The idea is that a mustard seed is among the tiniest of seeds and so its life as a plant starts as a miniscule, nearly imperceptible form. One would think that such a tiny seed would only grow up into a tiny plant. But in fact a mustard seed grows into a big plant over time, until it is so large that birds can make nests in its branches.

Thus the Kingdom of Heaven has already come, although it is so very small that

it is hardly noticeable in Christ's time. However the ultimate fullness of it into all that God intends for it is indeed in the future. Thus in the **P'shat** interpretation sense the Kingdom of Heaven on earth is a present reality. The fruits of it are present for us to see, if we have the eyes to see it. And as the **Kaddish** prayer expresses, hopefully everyone alive (every Jew alive was the meaning at the time) will be part of it in the here and now. Yet in the **Remez** interpretation sense, the Kingdom of Heaven speaks of a later time when all of God's creatures, worldwide and without exception, will bow before Him and hallow His Name. It is about a time when the Kingdom enters its perfection and completeness and we with it. And that time was future to Matthew's Gospel and is still future, but nearer, to us.

Let me take just a moment to remind you of something I taught long ago when I taught on the Torah. The English word holy is in it's original biblical Hebrew **kaddosh**. Kaddosh, holy and sanctified are equivalents. So to be sanctified means to be holy-fied..... that is, to be made holy. The essence of this word **kaddosh** is that something is set apart from all else. So since God is inherently holy..... His very substance is holy.... He is also the standard for holy.... then when the Lord's Prayer says "May your name be kept holy" (as in the CJB) or in the more familiar KJV "hallowed be Your Name", the idea is not that God's Name isn't currently holy, it is that among the minds and souls of all humanity God would finally be held holy to each and every one. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven with John the Baptist begins that process, which is culminated with the 2nd coming of Christ, the destruction of evil and of wicked humans, and then His 1000 year reign.

So up to now these verses mouthed by Yeshua address the adoration and glorification of God, which should be the overriding thought behind all prayers. It also expresses a hope for God's will to be done in our lives. This issue of God's will being done is a tough one, especially as concerns prayer. Usually when we go to God in prayer it is because we want something. Perhaps it expresses the needs of others; perhaps it is for ourselves. But how can we know for certain that what we are asking is in His will? I wish I could give you a pat explanation for that, but I can't. However much like Yeshua using a parable to help illustrate His meaning when defining something in the spiritual world and in the future can be so very difficult to get a handle on, I think that the instance of Christ praying before the day of His execution can help us to best understand what it means for us to pray in God's will.

CJB **Luke 22:39-44** <sup>39</sup> *On leaving, Yeshua went as usual to the Mount of Olives; and the talmidim followed him.* <sup>40</sup> *When he arrived, he said to them, "Pray that you won't be put to the test."* <sup>41</sup> *He went about a stone's throw away from them, kneeled down and prayed,* <sup>42</sup> *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, let not my will but yours be done."* <sup>43</sup> *There appeared to him an angel from heaven giving him strength,* <sup>44</sup> *and in great anguish he prayed more intensely, so that his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

Notice that He starts His prayer with "Father" and then takes His petition to Him. Yeshua's petition is: please take this cup from Me. "This cup" was simply an expression that meant what was destined for Him that was about to happen. And what was about to happen was His arrest, brutal torture, and then grim crucifixion. Is suffering and dying something Jesus wanted to endure? Clearly not. The Holy Spirit in Him knew that this was precisely what He was born to do, and that all of God's plans for redemption depended upon it. And yet He was a human being who knew pain, saw death up close and personal and wasn't seeking it, and so He had great trepidation over what was coming. He prayed so intensely about this..... His spirit in heated conflict with His flesh..... that we are told that the blood capillaries (I suppose on His scalp and forehead) burst and He began sweating blood. So His own will was twofold: Father I pray I **don't** have to do this. But also He prayed not His own will but rather the will of His Father be done. That is, if there is no other way for Jesus than the cross, then God's will would overcome Jesus's own human instinct and will to save Himself.

What Believer, having been given a very serious diagnosis from a doctor, perhaps a life threatening one, wouldn't go to the Father and plead for healing? And yet; are we willing to accept NOT being healed as the Father's will? Here's a tougher one yet: your 2 year old child is found to have a terminal and painful illness and you go to the Father asking for his or her life to be spared. Are you willing to accept it as the Father's will if that child suffers and dies? Over the years I've seen several people in similar predicaments who aren't healed, or who aren't relieved of some awful predicament, and who walk away from God because of it. But Yeshua's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is what it means to pray in God's will. You ask for the thing you want....your will... even intensely.... but at the same time you place a higher priority on God's will being done as a matter of faith and trust. And when God's will doesn't match yours, you accept His and glorify Him no matter the outcome. Why? Because indeed God's will WAS done on earth as it is in Heaven. And by the way: this doesn't mean that



an outcome that leaves you in a bad way is somehow "best for you" but you just don't realize it yet. Rather in the Lord's Prayer 2 things are emphasized: that God's Kingdom would grow and thrive and that His will would be done. And sometimes the very thing we dread most is an unknowable part of bringing about His will and His Kingdom in ways we may never know.... at least we won't know on this side of Heaven.

So when we pray the Lord's Prayer it shows us not just similar words and thoughts to pray, but also the attitude to pray in. Recall that just before Christ gave His instruction on what and how to pray, He spent some time discussing motive and intent for our behavior. This is just an extension of that principle into our prayer life.

As we move to verse 11, Yeshua says that we should ask God for our daily bread. The Greek word used for bread is **artos**. It is used similarly to the way the Jews use the Hebrew word **lechem**. It has the dual meaning of bread, as in the baked product consisting of grain, water and yeast, but it also is an expression simply meaning food in general. Bread was the main dish at almost every meal for the common people, and so it doubled as meaning the entire meal. I think some Preachers and Bible commentators work a bit too hard trying to insert very deep meaning when at least in the **P'shat** sense the meaning was plain. It is just as the CJB has it; it is a plea to God to provide food because having sufficient food each day was by no means a given for the average Jew. If this extends to anything deeper or broader I see the prayer for food as perhaps representative of asking God to provide for the basics that all humans need to exist at least above the level that the beasts of the field live. The need for food, adequate shelter, and clothing that is suitable for the purpose and the season is a very good reason to pray.

One of the reasons that I think Yeshua included this plea for food in His prayer model is that He had deep concerns for the daily needs of people. He was a man of the people. He truly did "feel their pain". He fed thousands using miraculous means simply because they were hungry and needed food. He healed thousands of their illnesses and lameness (also miraculously) because there was almost no other means for their suffering to be alleviated. So much that He accomplished on earth was for human physical needs in the here and now, even though much of it was also for the future. He told His disciples to continue doing the same; care for the people's physical and spiritual needs. Therefore this lesson from what Yeshua showed to us should be apprehended simply: it is not wrong to pray

for our material needs. God knows our needs. In our time it is not wrong to pray that God might give you a means to have a reliable car; or a sufficient house; or to get a good job in order to make enough money to have those things. I don't want to start of list of material things that are proper and improper to pray to the Lord for because the circumstances are too many and vary far too much; and me being the judge of it all is far above my pay grade. What I want us all to take from this is that God does care about our every day human needs on earth, in our present lives, because these lives, even in these flawed and imperfect fleshly tents, have value to Him. He made us, He loves us, and He has a purpose for us today.... in the present; not only at the End of Days and on into eternity.

Starting in verse 12 is Yeshua's instruction to pray for our own forgiveness. This principle was already well embedded in Jewish religious life. They even prayed rather standardized synagogue prayers that asked God for forgiveness of their wrongs. In one of the several so-called Apocryphal books, we find the Book of Ecclesiasticus (this is NOT the same as the Book of Ecclesiastes) dealing with forgiveness. This book was written between one and two centuries prior to the time of Christ. In chapter 28 we read this: ***"Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet seek healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins? If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make expiation for his sins?"*** Therefore when we read what Yeshua is saying our prayers ought to look like (and remember, He was speaking to Jews) He is not telling His audience that they've been doing it wrong, nor is He bringing a novel new way to think about prayer. He is teaching them old Torah based do's and don'ts. He is reminding them mostly of things they've already been taught, but perhaps have been relegated to unimportant or forgotten altogether. At times He is teaching them about things the Pharisee led synagogues have taught them, but perhaps their teachings have been a few degrees off the mark and consist far too much of man-centered behaviors rather than God-centered inner intent and motive.

The CJB version of this verse tries to explain the meaning as the author sees it. But more literally it reads:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Matthew 6:12** *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

Luke has it slightly differently.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Luke 11:4** *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Therefore in various denominations some will pray "forgive us our sins" while others will pray "forgive us our debts". The reality is that in the Hebrew culture of that era and earlier there was a common connection between sins and debts. It was that sins brought on a debt owed to God, so sins expressed as debts was usual and customary. In fact the Lord used the concept of debt in His inspired words to help us understand His justice system.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Deuteronomy 15:2** *Here is how the sh'mittah is to be done: every creditor is to give up what he has loaned to his fellow member of the community- he is not to force his neighbor or relative to repay it, because ADONAI's time of remission has been proclaimed.*

This passage is speaking about the every 50 year cycle of Jubilee. It was always thought by the earliest Hebrew sages that this passage had a dual meaning: a **P'shat** and a **Remez** sense to it. The **P'shat** is that indeed there is a God-ordained appointed time for release of debts owed among the Hebrew people. And God's people are to practice it just as ordained in the Torah. However in the **Remez** it is speaking of the debt due to God because of our sins, and there is a future time when God remits that debt and declares it paid in full. In verse 12 Christ then also presents us with a dual meaning. He is speaking in the **P'shat** about the dealings between human beings in the here and now having a direct effect upon how God deals with us in the here and now. He sets up a direct quid-pro-quo. It is that since, in the Lord's Prayer, we are asking God to forgive us for our offenses against Him in proportion to how we forgive our fellow man for their offenses against us, then the bottom line is that we'll get as we give. If we forgive our fellow man for offending us, then God will forgive us. If we don't, He won't. But in the **Remez**, this is also speaking about the ultimate and once-for-all forgiveness that comes through Christ's death on the cross. So as Believers, then is praying for forgiveness a thing of the past? That is, since our atonement is complete is it almost wrong to pray for forgiveness because it is denying what Jesus did for us? No it is not.

Despite the claim of any theological doctrine, the biblical reality is that this is the prayer form that Christ Himself gave to us and He says to pray for forgiveness. It did not contain a sunset provision. There is no place in Holy Scripture that ever says to cease praying for forgiveness. It is my opinion that for the Believer to

continue to pray for forgiveness even though we have been forgiven is to keep reminding ourselves, and confessing to God, that we do continue to offend Him even after we have our salvation. And in the prayer form that Messiah showed us, it also reminds us that we are to forgive those who have offended us. The example that we'll encounter later in Matthew is a wonderful illustration of this principle.

CJB **Matthew 18:21-35** <sup>21</sup> *Then Kefa came up and said to him, "Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?"* <sup>22</sup> *"No, not seven times," answered Yeshua, "but seventy times seven!"* <sup>23</sup> *Because of this, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared with a king who decided to settle accounts with his deputies.* <sup>24</sup> *Right away they brought forward a man who owed him many millions;* <sup>25</sup> *and since he couldn't pay, his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold to pay the debt.* <sup>26</sup> *But the servant fell down before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'* <sup>27</sup> *So out of pity for him, the master let him go and forgave the debt.* <sup>28</sup> *"But as that servant was leaving, he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him some tiny sum. He grabbed him and began to choke him, crying, 'Pay back what you owe me!'"* <sup>29</sup> *His fellow servant fell before him and begged, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'* <sup>30</sup> *But he refused; instead, he had him thrown in jail until he should repay the debt.* <sup>31</sup> *When the other servants saw what had happened, they were extremely distressed; and they went and told their master everything that had taken place.* <sup>32</sup> *Then the master summoned his servant and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt just because you begged me to do it.'* <sup>33</sup> *Shouldn't you have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'*  <sup>34</sup> *And in anger his master turned him over to the jailers for punishment until he paid back everything he owed.* <sup>35</sup> *This is how my heavenly Father will treat you, unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts."*

Folks, this parable applies to all of Christ's followers. I do not know exactly how eternal society will be structured but Yeshua makes it clear in Chapter 5 that there will be a structure and a hierarchy, because there will be the greater and the lesser and each will experience eternity somewhat differently even though they are all saved. There will be various criteria of intent and actual behavior that will determine where we each fit in that structure, with how little or how much we show mercy to our fellow man being chief among those criteria.

We'll finish up the Lord's Prayer and move further into Matthew Chapter 6 next time.