

Reading: Exodus 20 & Acts 3:11-26 & Luke 17:1-6  
Singing: 394:1-3 – 187:1-4 – 446:1-2 – 83:1-3

**God waits long for sinners because He delights to forgive them.**  
(William Gurnall)

- A. What Biblical support would this Puritan have so such a claim?
1. Luke 15:20, 31
  2. Acts 2:21, 38; 3:19-20, 26

**THE PRAYER FOR THE INCREASE OF FAITH IN GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

I. The occasion of this prayer    II. The content of this prayer

**I. THE OCCASION OF THIS PRAYER**

A. Expound vs. 1-4

1. Vs.1-2: It is impossible to avoid offences
2. Vs. 3-4: God's will regarding confrontation and forgiveness
  - a. addressed to the *offended*
  - b. offender can be as close as a *brother* and all beyond
  - c. to rebuke is an act of love: Lev. 19:17; Eph. 4:15, 25, 29
  - d. to repent is a change of mind which leads to change of deed
    - includes an open confession
    - faces two main obstacles
  - e. to forgive is the act to put the sin away forever (Micah 7:19)
  - f. Jesus' command knows no limit (Matt. 18:22)

B. The disciples' petition reveals their understanding and worry

**II. THE CONTENT OF THIS PRAYER**

A. Jesus' instruction reveals an alarming truth (vs. 3-4)

1. Perhaps vs. 3-4 seems unrealistic among us as humans
2. But is unrealistic to sin 7x a day in our *walk/talk/thought toward God?*
  - a. Examine yourself with regard to the 1<sup>st</sup> table of God's Law

c. Examine yourself with regard to 2<sup>nd</sup> table of the God's Law

3. Do you sense how true it is: ***we sin seven times seventy times daily?***

B. If this reality is dawning on you, you feel like multitude on Pentecost

1. Pricked in their heart, they asked, "What shall we do?"

a. Peter: *you cannot undo your sin!*

b. Peter: *God offers instant and absolute forgiveness (Acts 3:19; 26)*

C. Disciple: *Increase our faith in thy readiness to forgive us!*

1. If God requires us to be so forgiving to each other, it is **because He is!**

a. each virtue God requires of us, is a reflection of His own

2. Pray this petition for increase of faith in Him each time you become conscious of your sins through the Spirit's convicting ministry

a. don't let Satan discourage you to return to Jesus

b. don't drink the poison of works-grace mixture

c. don't dishonor God by using yourself as the measure

Close: He is *ready and able to forgive when we confess our sins* (1 John 1:9)

A. Don't just *pray* for forgiveness but *confess your sins* (Ps. 32:3-5)

B. Repent and *believe His promise of forgiveness*

1. He is faithful and just **to forgive** when we confess our sins

2. Forgiveness will not be experienced until you believe HIS promise

a. Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

b. Rom. 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*

C. Faith in God's forgiveness is the fountain of every Christian virtue

1. Eph. 4:31-32 *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And ye be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*