

“Your Problems ... God’s Answers”
God’s Answer to Your Broken Relationships
Matthew 6:12

- I. We’ve been talking about the Lord’s Prayer.
 - a. It’s a perfect model prayer.
 - i. The disciples asked Jesus, “Teach us how to pray.”
 - ii. Jesus’ response was this prayer.
 - b. It’s also a great way to see how God addresses all of our human concerns.
 - i. We have problems; God provides answers.
 - ii. Answers to our Inferiority, our Questions, our Guilt, our Worries.
- II. And answers for our broken relationships.
 - a. Last week we saw that “Forgive us our debts,” was God’s answer to our Guilt.
 - i. We’ve sinned, we’ve fallen short; but God’s forgiveness is bigger than the depth of our guilt.
 - ii. While we’re aware of our sin, our guilt; we’re also aware that there are those who have hurt us, who have sinned against us.
 - b. “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”
 - i. Part of God’s plan is that we forgive those who have hurt and injured us.
 - ii. It God’s forgiveness of our debts is linked to our forgiveness of the debts of others.
- III. Relationships are central to God’s story.
 - a. The Bible is full of stories of relationships and how God works through them.
 - i. Cain/Abel; Jonathon/David; Paul/Barnabas; Deborah/Barak.
 - ii. There isn’t a prominent figure in the Bible that fulfills their God-given mission without relationships with others.
 - iii. Even Jesus had 12 (the disciples); and 3 (Peter, James & John); and 1(John)!
 - b. There is a sense in which God himself is a relationship.
 - i. Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
 - ii. We don’t completely understand the mystery of the Trinity.
 - iii. But we know that in God’s very nature is the reality of 3-in-1.
 - iv. Relationships are in God’s nature.
 - c. Because relationships are at the core of God’s nature and at the core of our human existence, God is very concerned about them.
 - i. Our biggest problems are people problems.
 - ii. God doesn’t leave us without guidance in one of the most difficult areas of our life.
- IV. God heals broken relationships.
 - a. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus shows us that God is able to heal broken relationships.
 - i. The younger son returns home ready to be a servant in his father’s house, but his father runs to him and welcomes him home.
 - ii. The father knows that his son has squandered his inheritance and made himself unclean while working with pigs.
 - iii. The father had every right to be angry and bitter, but the father didn’t care about any of that.
 - iv. He welcomes his son home and God heals their relationship.
 - b. David and Jonathon are the best of friends.
 - i. They were so close that the Bible calls their friendship a “sacred covenant.”

- ii. Jonathon was King Saul's son and Saul saw David as a threat to his throne.
 - iii. Throughout their lives, Saul came between David and Jonathon.
 - iv. Over and over again, Jonathon and David are able to overcome their differences and overcome Saul's interference.
 - 1. Ultimately, they had to let go of their friendship.
 - 2. Jonathon chose to stand with his father Saul and David fled into the wilderness.
 - 3. Jonathon died fighting for his father against the Philistines.
 - c. When God heals a broken relationship, the pain and the bitterness disappear.
 - i. Things may not get back to the way they were, but the pain and hurt goes away.
 - ii. There will always be a scar, but the wound heals over.
 - 1. It's visible if you look.
 - 2. But you go on in spite of it.
 - d. God can heal the wounds of broken relationships.
 - i. Relationships with people you no longer see.
 - ii. Relationships with people who are no longer alive.
 - iii. God can heal those wounds and free you from the pain and hurt of holding on to them.
- V. God restores broken relationships.
- a. Jacob and Esau were brothers.
 - i. Through trickery and deceit, Jacob stole Esau's birthright and received the blessing from their father Isaac.
 - ii. Isaac was real specific with his blessing.
 - 1. Jacob would be lord over his brother Esau.
 - 2. Jacob would have his other brothers as his servants.
 - 3. Jacob would have food and drink to sustain him.
 - 4. And, Jacob received 2/3's of everything Isaac possessed.
 - iii. There's not much left over for Esau.
 - 1. When Esau hears of his brother's treachery he begs Isaac for a blessing.
 - 2. "Have you only one blessing, Father?" he says.
 - 3. And the seeds of the destruction of their relationship have been planted.
 - a. In Genesis 27:41, Esau says "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."
 - b. In order to save his life Jacob flees.
 - iv. Years later, Jacob (along with his wives and families) returns home to the land of his father Isaac.
 - 1. On the way he learns that Esau and all his house are coming to "greet" him.
 - 2. He sends his brother a message that very politely says, "Please don't kill me."
 - v. When Esau arrives, Joseph is scared to death and approaches his brother with his head to the ground.
 - 1. He bows to his brother.
 - 2. But his brother "ran to meet him, and embraced him, and they wept." – Genesis 33:4.
 - b. If anyone had a right to be angry it was Esau – Jacob had stolen everything!
 - i. Jacob had made him look like a fool.
 - ii. And he had dragged his family (and their name) through the mud.
 - iii. Jacob had every right to be angry – and to stay angry.
 - c. But God restores broken relationships.
 - i. From this moment on Jacob and Esau lived together in peace.

- ii. God worked a miracle in BOTH of their hearts and restored their relationship.
- VI. We have our reasons for not moving toward healing and restoration.
 - a. “It’s been too long.”
 - i. For Jacob and Esau it was twenty years.
 - ii. Yet they were still able to reconcile.
 - iii. “It’s been too long,” really means “I’d rather stay angry and bitter.”
 - iv. We’re speaking out of our pain.
 - 1. We’ve lived with it for so long, it’s hard to imagine life without it.
 - 2. It’s taken over our lives to the degree that we can’t imagine ourselves any other way.
 - b. “The hurt is too deep.”
 - i. In effect, what you are saying is, “God is not big enough (or powerful enough) to heal this hurt.”
 - ii. I don’t think that’s what we mean.
 - iii. We really want God (and others?) to understand how deep the wounds really are.
 - iv. No hurt could be deeper than Jesus’ and yet on the cross he said, “Father, forgive them.”
 - c. “I’m waiting for them to make the first move.”
 - i. Interesting idea.
 - 1. Waiting until they make the first move vindicates us.
 - 2. “See – it wasn’t my fault! It was theirs.”
 - ii. Jesus has a different way of approaching this.
 - 1. Verse 4-15 =
 - 2. Jesus expects you to make the first move by forgiving.
 - 3. As you “forgive our debtors.”
 - iii. Paul takes this instruction one step further and says, “If someone offends you ...”
 - 1. Make the first move.
 - 2. Go to them!
- VII. What broken relationships in your life does God want to heal?
 - a. No matter how long it’s been, it’s not *too* long – God will heal.
 - b. No matter how deep the hurt, it’s not *too* deep – God will heal.
 - c. Make the first move; forgive as you have been forgiven – God will heal.