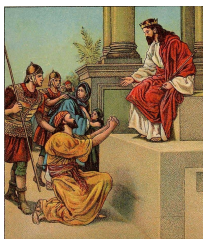




*The Armor of Faith*  
**Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?**  
*Part X: Offer and Receive Forgiveness*



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## **Introduction**

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Sister Sara Draney is a Dominican Nun from the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas. Helen is a lay-Dominican and has a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I should mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions, because questions give us something to talk about. To answer those questions is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

## **Discussion:**

Last time, we talked about a special ministry and that is the care of one another in family. As we began our discussion, we identified that while the family is the basic unit of society and is traditionally the result of a man and woman in matrimony raising their children, there are also variants, such as single-parent and adoptive families. We also observed how we are all one extended family, not just by our lineage from Adam and Eve, but by our relationship with God.

As Saint John Paul II reminded us, the family is a “little domestic Church.” Within this church, we are called to learn, share, and live our faith. Parents are called to teach their children and children are called to learn from their parents.

As we look to the example of Christ, the key to blessings in our family relationships is not found in our personal desires or our selfishness, but by subordinating our desires so we may better share the blessings of love within our family.

Family relationships can be the best of times and they can be the worst of times. We are blessed when our families are able to sail the calm seas. We are even more blessed when the bond of family survives the storms, for what is revealed in such times is the strength of the bond of love. If we struggle in the storm, let us pray that God will guide us through and heal any wounds of the heart.

To share in love is not always easy in this world, indeed, the love to which we are called requires sacrifice and work, but if we allow, love will prepare us for the world to come.

Today, we will talk about a critical element of love, and that is forgiveness. In any loving relationship, love is tested by wrongs. When we are wronged and hurt, our first instinct is revenge and retribution. As someone once pointed out, if we live only by the principle of “an eye for an eye and tooth for tooth,” as we see mentioned in Exodus 21:23-25 and Leviticus 24:19-20, then, the world shall become filled with blind and toothless people.

According to a footnote in the NABRE to Matthew 5:38, the instruction of an “eye for an eye” was meant to prevent escalation of retaliation and provide proportionality of restitution for injuries. It was a sense of fairness, if you will, of “like for like.” Jesus, though, taught us a different standard.

(Matthew 5:38-39)

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well.*

**(Question 1:** The instruction which Jesus gives here appears to be one of passivity. What is accomplished by turning the other cheek? In what ways is this different than the “eye for an eye” standard?)

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He replied as we are told in Matthew 6:9-13:

(Matthew 6:9-13)

9 *“This is how you are to pray:*

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

10 *your kingdom come,*

*your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.*

11 *Give us today our daily bread;*

12 *and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors;*

13 *and do not subject us to the final test,  
but deliver us from the evil one.*

14 *If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.*

(Question 2: After Jesus provides this instruction, there is one portion of the prayer he reinforces and explains. What is this portion and why is it important to us?)

(Matthew 18:21-35)

21 *Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.*

23 *That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. 25 Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. 26 At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' 27 Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.*

28 *When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29 Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' 30 But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt.*

31 *Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. 32 His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. 33 Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' 34 Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. 35 So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."*

(Question 3: Here, Jesus uses a parable to explain forgiveness. What does this parable reveal to us? Why is this important for the examination of what is in our heart?)

(Luke 6:37-38)

37 *"Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. 38 Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."*

(Question 4: Here, we see a bit of a formula repeated several times. What is the theme we see here and how should this influence our behavior?)

So far, we have discussed one critical element of forgiveness, and that is our willingness to forgive. Essentially, if we are willing to truly forgive the transgressions of others, then, we open ourselves to receiving the forgiveness of our Heavenly Father for our transgressions against Him, aka sin. There is something else scripture reveals to us about our accountability to our Creator and His willingness to forgive. Let's examine two stories.

(1 Samuel 15:17-23)

17 Samuel then said: "Though little in your own eyes, are you not chief of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king of Israel 18 and sent you on a mission, saying: Go and put the sinful Amalekites under a ban of destruction. Fight against them until you have exterminated them. 19 Why then have you disobeyed the LORD? You have pounced on the spoil, thus doing what was evil in the LORD's sight." 20 Saul explained to Samuel: "I did indeed obey the LORD and fulfill the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought back Agag, the king of Amalek, and, carrying out the ban, I have destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But from the spoil the army took sheep and oxen, the best of what had been banned, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." 22 But Samuel said:

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the LORD's command?"

Obedience is better than sacrifice,  
to listen, better than the fat of rams.

23 For a sin of divination is rebellion,  
and arrogance, the crime of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,  
the LORD in turn has rejected you as king."

24 Saul admitted to Samuel: "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the command of the LORD and your instructions. I feared the people and obeyed them. 25 Now forgive my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." 26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, because you rejected the word of the LORD and the LORD has rejected you as king of Israel."

After this, the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint a new king, which was David. David committed his own transgression as he created the conditions for one of his soldiers to die in battle so David could take the soldier's wife as his own. After the grave transgression, the prophet Nathan comes to David to confront him in a similar fashion as Samuel confronted Saul.

(2 Samuel 12:1-14)

1 The LORD sent Nathan to David, and when he came to him, he said: "Tell me how you judge this case: In a certain town there were two men, one rich, the other poor. 2 The rich man had flocks and herds in great numbers. 3 But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He nourished her, and she grew up with him and his children. Of what little he had she ate; from his own cup she drank; in his bosom she slept; she was like a daughter to him. 4 Now, a visitor came to the rich man, but he spared his own flocks and herds to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him: he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the one who had come to him." 5 David grew very angry with that man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this

deserves death! 6 He shall make fourfold restitution for the lamb because he has done this and was unsparing.” 7 Then Nathan said to David: “You are the man!

“Thus says the LORD God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel. I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your lord’s house and your lord’s wives for your own. I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were not enough, I could count up for you still more. 9 Why have you despised the LORD and done what is evil in his sight? You have cut down Uriah the Hittite with the sword; his wife you took as your own, and him you killed with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. 11 Thus says the LORD: I will bring evil upon you out of your own house. I will take your wives before your very eyes, and will give them to your neighbor: he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You have acted in secret, but I will do this in the presence of all Israel, in the presence of the sun itself.”

13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan answered David: “For his part, the LORD has removed your sin. You shall not die.

**(Question 5:** As we compare these two stories, we might notice that both kings transgressed against the Lord, yet, God rejected Saul, but removed the sin of David. What was the difference between these two situations which brought the rejection of one, but not the other? What does this reveal about the examination of our own heart?)

(Mark 1:4)

4 John [the] Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

**(Question 6:** In this verse, we observe another word of importance as we discuss the calling to forgive and be forgiven. What is this word and what does this demonstrate to God?)

(Merriam-Webster)

1: to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life

2a : to feel regret or contrition

b : to change one's mind

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(Jonah 3:1-10)

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you. 3 So Jonah set out for Nineveh, in accord with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an awesomely great city; it took three days to walk through it. 4 Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day’s walk announcing, “Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown,” 5 the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh: “By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. 8 Man and beast alike must be

covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. 9 Who knows? God may again repent and turn from his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish." 10 When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

**(Question 7:** Here, the prophet Jonah is instructed by God to announce to the city of Nineveh of their impending destruction because of their evil ways. Why didn't God carry out his intent to destroy the evil of the city? What does this reveal to us about our own transgressions and how we might reconcile with God?)

(Matthew 3:7-8)

7 When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.

**(Question 8:** Here, John the Baptist advises the Pharisees and Sadducees to, "Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." We might be tempted to think this tells us we can buy our way into heaven through our works. Why is this not the case and what was John the Baptist really telling them?)

(Matthew 20:25-28)

25 But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. 26 But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; 27 whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. 28 Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## Quotes:

(CCC: 208)

But because God is holy, he can forgive the man who realizes that he is a sinner before him: "I will not execute my fierce anger . . . for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst."

– *Saint Catherine of Genoa*

Oh, what peril attaches to sin willfully committed! For it is so difficult for man to bring himself to penance, and without penitence guilt remains and will ever remain, so long as man retains unchanged the will to sin, or is intent upon committing it.

– *Saint John Climacus*

Remembrance of Jesus' passion will heal your soul of resentment, by making it ashamed of itself when it remembers the patience of the Lord.

– *Saint Mark the Ascetic*

The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.

## Final Thoughts:

When I had my first opportunity to become Catholic, I could not get myself out of bed that day. I made myself physically ill as a result of the struggle which raged within me. I wrestled with my perception of what it meant to be Catholic. I felt that to profess the faith that I would somehow have to become sinless, and I knew I was nowhere near that – not even close.

It wasn't until I came to understand the forgiveness which God offers to us that I was able to reconcile with what it means to be member of the church Christ built upon Peter. We are imperfect, but we are called to learn from our mistakes and to make every effort to reconcile our behavior to that which God asks of us.

As we discussed today, we cannot expect to be forgiven if we are unwilling to forgive. If we desire the forgiveness of God, we cannot approach Him with the arrogance of Saul, rather, we must seek to have the contriteness and humility of David when we recognize how we fail our Creator.

As I mentioned as we opened the show, the ability to forgive is a test of love. It is because of the love which God has for us that He is willing to forgive us of our transgressions. It is because of His love for us that He sent His only begotten Son to take upon His shoulders, through His sacrifice from upon the cross, the sins of the whole world across the all the generations.

Let us reflect that this sacrifice was made for us so we have the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins and cleansed of our iniquities so we may wash our robes white in the blood of the Lamb so we may walk forever with Him within the kingdom of our Lord and Savior where love is shared by all, where there is no pain or affliction, and where evil is not allowed to follow.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the call to live the fullness of our faith.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

**Next Session:** What Does God Ask of Us? - Part XI: Experience the Fullness of Faith

## References:

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