

Sunday of the Unjust Judge – “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
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Gospel Reading: Luke 1:20-18:14*

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

As I always preach, the purpose of Lent is to learn. It is an opportunity to learn about our faith, how to grow closer to God, and how we can become better Christians. Continuing with that tradition, this year’s Lenten Sermon Series is about the *Lord’s Prayer*. Last week we began learning about the second half of the *Lord’s Prayer*, which deals with our personal requests, namely “Our daily bread”. We learned that when we pray, we must only ask for what is immediately needed, not worrying about the future, but only the present and whatever we receive, we must share with others, because what we receive is not only ours, but everyone’s.

Today we will learn about a request which deals with our past: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”. This request brings our past actions (our sins) to the present and places them before our eyes. However, there are many different sins in this world. In the New Testament, there are five forms of sin.

1. *Hamartia* [Greek]; մեղք (meghk), which in Greek, literally translates as “missing the target”. This sin is when we fail to be what we might or could’ve been. We can all ask ourselves, could we have been better spouses, children, parents, workers, employers, friends, or even Christians?
2. *Parabasis* [Greek]; յսնցանք (hantsank), which in both Greek and Armenian, express the idea of crossing a line: the line of right and wrong. So we stand on the right side of the line of truth, honesty and kindness, or have we crossed/transgressed to the other side?
3. *Paraptoma* [Greek]; գայթակղութիւն (kaytakghootyoon), which implies slipping in a moment’s time. This type of sin happens through our passions and impulses; not deliberately, but in the spur of the moment.

4. *Anomia* [Greek]; անօրէնութիւն (anorenootyoon), which in Greek and Armenian, means lawlessness. This is the sin we commit when we know the law and we do the exact opposite. This is deliberate and even premeditated.

5. *Opheilema* [Greek]; պարսիք (bardik), means debt, failure to pay that which is due or failure to fulfill a duty/calling. What is interesting is that this is the idea of sin which is used in the *Lord's Prayer*. Perhaps some of us can remember a time or have heard the *Lord's Prayer* which says, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors". This word is used, because of how sin makes us feel. All of us have been in debt at one time or another, and we know the feeling of owing something to someone, and if we've been forgiven of that debt, we know that feeling too; like the lifting of weights from our shoulders and utter freedom.

Jesus teaches His disciples and us the importance of asking for forgiveness in prayer, which we often forget to do because we either think it is not important or because we feel we didn't do anything really wrong. But this is not true, because we all sin, failing to truly fulfill our calling as Christians. But we also forget a very important truth: forgiveness from God depends upon our willingness to forgive others. In actuality, we pray, "forgive us in proportion to how we forgive others".

There is a false belief in the Church and Christianity today, which is spread by Satan, who whispers into our ears that God will forgive us no matter what we have done, as long as we ask for forgiveness from Him. This is one of the greatest lies which Christians believe. God does not forgive no matter how much we ask, if we refuse to forgive others. If we hold a grudge against another and we pray the *Lord's Prayer*, we are saying, "Heavenly Father, do NOT forgive me!" Yet, as Christians, we must forgive, as my seminary professor, Dr. Abraham Terian said, "Christians are in the business of forgiveness". We don't do it enough and we should.

So let us ask for forgiveness for our sins and let us follow our Lord's example of forgiveness, who from the cross forgave His executors and prayed for those who hated Him. In doing so, not only will we secure our forgiveness from God, but we will stay away from the traps of Satan, about which we will learn next week.

Amen.