

**Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**Matthew 6: 7-15**

When I received the email from Deonna with my reading, my first thought was OK, I've got the Lord's Prayer – piece of cake. That was a couple of weeks ago and, as is usually the case, I'm finding my assignment a little more challenging. It is a little intimidating reflecting on probably the most well-known and memorized verse in the Bible. Even Episcopalians have this one down pat. I can remember as a small child kneeling down by the side of my bed with my brother and sister, reciting the Lord's Prayer.

As I got older and thought more about what I was saying, it became a very comforting prayer – it starts by recognizing God's authority, asks (or demands) that each day we be taken care of with daily bread, asks for forgiveness of our trespasses, asks that we be kept out of bad situations, and closes with a plea to be rescued from evil. Sounds pretty easy, right? Mathew locks in on the 12<sup>th</sup> verse – forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. I was pretty sure I didn't have anything to worry about here because, to my knowledge, the only time I trespassed was when I cut through a neighbor's yard and they never seemed to mind. As a ten-year-old, I didn't own any property so I was pretty confident nobody had trespassed against me - I didn't have to forgive anyone. If only it were that simple. Maybe it was in confirmation class but, at some point, I understood trespasses were a metaphor for sins and all of a sudden, the part about forgiving others became much more complicated.

Verses 14 and 15 “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your father forgive your trespasses” are the only additional reflections from Mathew on the Lord's Prayer. No additional comments on “Give me my daily bread, keep me out of trouble, or rescue me but, FORGIVE!

Numerous books have been written on these verses..., we've all heard multiple sermons on it and quite possibly, you might have attended a class or two about the Lord's Prayer. One of the things I have always remembered is that the only person you are hurting by not forgiving others is yourself. It can certainly take some time but give yourself a break, pray, let go, and move on. While you're at it, remember to forgive yourself- God will – all you have to do is ask.

***Charlie Harris***