

# ARM Prison Outreach International

## "Ministers' Minute" Volume 12 Number 1

### Getting Rid of Guilt -- Matthew 6:12

This "MM" is the 1st of 2013 -- and the 133rd email sermon overall. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon is the fourth in our current series on the Lord's Prayer. Parts 1-4 are archived at the address below. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it!

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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### **ARM FAST FACT**

#### DaySpring Christian Greeting Card Report

On average, 12,030 DaySpring greeting cards were mailed daily in 2012!

4,390,930 DaySpring cards were sent last year!

1,009,505 DaySpring greeting cards were sent to prisons in Nov/Dec 2012!

Since 1990, over 100 MILLION cards have been sent to faithful chaplains who distribute these to inmates as a witness for Christ! Our sincere thanks to DaySpring for their invaluable partnership!

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### **Getting Rid of Guilt -- Matthew 6:12**

***"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."***

A man entered a diner, ordered a glass of lemonade and then immediately threw it into the waitress's face. Quickly grabbing a napkin, he helped the waitress dry her face while he apologized with great remorse. "I'm so sorry," he said. "I have this compulsion to do this. I fight it, but I don't know what to do about it." "You had better do something about your problem," the waitress replied. "You can be sure I'll remember you and will never serve you another lemonade until you get help." It was

months before the man faced the waitress again. When he asked for a lemonade, the waitress refused. Then the man explained that he had been seeing a psychiatrist and that his problem was solved. Convinced it was now okay to serve him, the waitress poured him a lemonade. The man took the glass and splashed the lemonade into the waitress's astonished face. "I thought you were cured," the shocked waitress screamed. "I am," said the man. "I still do it, but I don't feel guilty about it anymore."

Our society tries to tell us to never feel guilty, but guilt is only a symptom and sometimes you should feel guilty. Guilt isn't the problem; sin is!

Lies undermine friendship and trust. Adultery betrays the covenant of marriage. Uncontrolled outbursts of anger demean others. Feeling guilty when we do these things is not really the problem, DOING THESE SINFUL THINGS IS THE PROBLEM!

Guilt is a terrible feeling! Guilt can eat you alive. Guilt must be dealt with- to ignore it is to ask for bigger troubles.

Guilt is like the oil pressure light on your car. Don't just cover the light with electrical tape! Respond to the symptom by getting at the root of the problem! For, you see, Guilt is designed to drive you to God for forgiveness.

**Matthew 6:9,12** "This, then, is how you should pray: ... 12 Forgive us our debts,"

Sermon in a Sentence: The only solution for guilt is forgiveness and God is the only source.

Have you had the experience of confessing a sin, even many, many times and still feeling guilty?

The Bible offers three simple steps you need to take to be forgiven and to feel forgiven. It's an A-B-C outline today... A R T last week... ask, remember, trust

## **I. ADMIT YOUR GUILT. "Fess up" Confess your sin!**

The model prayer phrases a confession for us... "Forgive us our sins..."

I once saw a greeting card with "reason" for our adult misbehavior reveals how we blame others for our sins: Most kids had a cereal bowl message in the bottom that said: "Mommy loves you." Mine said "All gone, stupid!" REALLY? BLAME A CEREAL BOWL FOR OUR ADULT MISBEHAVIOR?

A poem has been written to elaborate on this faulty approach of blaming everyone

but ourselves for our sins:

I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed  
To find out why I killed the cat and blackened my wife's eyes  
He put me on this downy couch to see what he could find  
And this is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind.  
When I was one, my mommy hid my dolly in the swings  
So it now follows naturally I'm always stealing things.  
When I was two, I saw my dad steal a Baby Ruth  
And that is why even till today I never tell the truth.  
When I was six, I was lectured by all my teachers,  
Now I know the reason why I've poisoned two old preachers.  
I'm so glad that I have learned the lesson it has taught.  
That everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault.

**Isn't it too true? We often lie to ourselves about our responsibility for our own sin.**

**God says in 1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.** Here are some common ways we deceive ourselves about our sin. Defensive Mechanisms, one could call them.

**DEFLECTION**- Blaming others- Adam blamed Eve and God. Saul blamed soldiers. I Sam 15.15

**RATIONALIZATION**- Trying to convince yourself with your mind that something is alright when you know in your heart it is wrong.

**COMPARISONS**- "My sin isn't so bad, at least I'm not like \_\_\_\_\_."

**SUPPRESSION**- pushing guilt into the subconscious- that is like trying to hold ten tennis balls under the water.

**DISTRACTION** - Staying too busy to have time to think.

**ISOLATION** - Avoiding places (like church) that remind you of your guilt.

None of that solves anything. The first step in dealing with guilt is to admit it- own your sin!

**Ps 32:3-6 "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long."**

**4 For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.**

**5 I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah.**

**6 Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not reach him.**

## **II. BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS TO FORGIVE YOU.**

Some admit sin to God and feel no relief from guilt. It may be this step has been omitted. Believing that God WANTS to forgive may be the key to receiving the peace of forgiveness - Let's look at the Truths from Scripture about the way God forgives.

**1. God forgives quickly.** Neh 9:17 "...but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not." (KJV)

God is more ready to forgive than you are to ask for forgiveness. He isn't going to say think about it ten years, and then come back! He forgives without delay.

We like to let people suffer for a while before we forgive. "Make 'em sweat!"

Some people mistakenly think that feeling guilty makes you a better person. Not true, it makes you miserable. God wants to forgive instantly so you can go on.

Some people like preaching that sends them away feeling guilty. That's not my purpose. I want to preach the truth, and if God's truth makes folks feel guilty so that they GET RIGHT WITH JESUS CHRIST THRU FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, then we'll have accomplished our Biblical purpose. For you see, God wants to forgive, He is waiting on you!

**2. God forgives completely.** Col 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in

the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins. (NIV)

"ALL our sins!" Past and Future! Completely wipes them out- good as new! Contrasted to the way we forgive partially- we hold on to the offense for later ammunition- "I remember when you did that."

Jeremiah 31:34 "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

God not only forgives, He forgets. He wipes the slate clean! Some of you are going to get to Heaven and say, "About the time I ..." and God is going to say, "What are you talking about? Problem- if we don't think we are completely forgiven, we think God is out to get us every time we have a problem. God doesn't carry a grudge!

Odd! We can't let go what He has already forgotten.

### **3. God forgives repeatedly.**

How many of you have ever committed the same sin more than once? We tend to get stuck in ruts -- folks, that is the nature of sin, it is that way. Do you ever have the feeling you have no originality? "God, it's me again, and I've done the same stupid thing!" We are to remember the pattern and stop the repeating WITH HIS HELP, but God has forgotten the past episodes!

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Greek present- if we keep on confessing...)

**Hebrews 7:25** Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. God is always there waiting and ready to forgive, even repeatedly. Guilt is like garbage- you have to take it out repeatedly. Don't just let it pile up! Get rid of it or the whole house will start to stink.

### **4. God forgives freely.**

**Isaiah 55:7** Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will **freely** pardon. The bill for your sin has already been paid!

2 Cor 5:19-21 "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through

us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (NAS)

Free forgiveness for us, very costly for Jesus. God is love and God is holy- therefore the price for sin had to be paid. On the cross Jesus cried out, "tetelestai" -- "it is finished" That word has been found on first century receipts. It meant: "Paid in Full"

You don't need to carry a load of guilt- it has already been paid for! A- B— C is for commit yourself to Christ the One Who died and Rose again.

### **III. COMMIT YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST.**

**Romans 8:1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**1. Believe in Jesus.** Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

**(Hebrews 11:6, Mark 16:16)**

**2. Repent of your sins.** Change your mind about sin and let Jesus be the master of your life.

**Acts 2:38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**3. Be baptized into Jesus.**

**Acts 22:16** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

**1 Peter 3:21** ... and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Firefighters who battle monster fires in the west have a survival technique that illustrates the one God has given us. If surrounded by flames and unable to find an escape route, he sets a fire right where he is standing and allows it to burn outward

from his location. He then digs a shallow grave, climbs in, and covers himself with a reflector shield in his backpack. Salvation is that burned over place.

Our salvation is in the burned over place called Calvary where our sin was punished. ARE YOU WILLING TO CRAWL IN THE GRAVE WITH JESUS, AND TRUST HIS POWER TO RAISE YOU TO A BETTER LIFE?

But that isn't the end. No, not at all.

#### **4. Keep on confessing your sins.**

Christians still battle with sin. When you do sin, repent, confess and re-commit your life to Jesus. Here is the promise of God-

**1 John 1:9** If we (keep on confessing) confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will keep on forgiving (forgive) us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

#### **Conclusion:**

Jesus came to tell us that He preferred to leave Heaven and die than to abandon us to the mess we've made. YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN! You say, "But you don't know my sin!" True, but I know the one who forgives Instantly, Completely, Repeatedly, and Freely. He forgave Paul the persecutor, David the adulterer. Peter the denier...

3. "But I still don't feel forgiven!" Let me encourage you to study all these passages and trust the Word of God over your feelings. Read the Word and remember who you are!

4. Outside of New York City in a small cemetery there is a large tombstone that has only one word "FORGIVEN" No mention of name, date of birth or death, or of relationships.

Whoever it was, he or she was consumed with the peace that comes from the forgiveness that God gives.

**A little boy visiting his grandparents was given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target. As he came back to Grandma's back yard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead. The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.**

**After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you,**

Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck! So Johnny did the dishes.

Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing. After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck. "I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgive you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you.

**Don't let Satan make a slave out of you with those sins that GOD KNOWS ABOUT AND WANTS TO FORGIVE.**

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**Remember: All "Ministers' Minutes" are archived at:**

<http://www.abarc.org/Resources/Ministers%20Minutes/Ministers%20Minutes.htm>

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