

Weekly Devotional Column

By JAMES MACKENZIE

"... and forgive us ... as we forgive" (Matthew 6:12).

Have you ever stopped to consider just what these words mean? Here in the "Lord's Prayer" we are asking God to forgive our sins in the exact same measure that we have forgiven those who have wronged us. Dare we make that prayer?

For example, at one time or another in your life, no doubt, someone has cheated you out of some money. Do you hold a grudge against that person? Or have you tried to understand and forgive him. Would you be willing for God to forgive you for cheating Him exactly as you have forgiven those who have cheated you?

Or perhaps, someone has circulated a vicious, cowardly and untrue tale about you behind your back (and how much of that we have right here in Edenton). Have you forgiven that person? Or have you retaliated in one way or another, perhaps by circulating a tale about him twice as slanderous (and twice as untrue) as the one he started about you. How dare a man presume to ask forgiveness for taking the precious name of God in vain when that man is nursing a grudge against some person who has taken his own name in vain.

Jesus told of a servant who owed his master ten-thousand talents (about ten-million dollars), which he was unable to pay. The master was about to sell the servant, the servant's wife and children, and all their possessions, as was then the custom, to meet the debt. But the servant begged for mercy, and the master, moved by the plea, graciously canceled the debt.

Now this servant had a fellow-servant, who owed him one-hundred pence (about twenty dollars) and he demanded payment of him. The fellow servant begged for time, but he was thrown into a debtor's prison by the servant who had been forgiven so much by their master. The master, hearing of this, canceled his original forgiveness and delivered the wicked servant "to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Then Jesus added, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (see Matthew 18:21-35).

Certainly we are all debtors to God, far beyond our ability to pay. By His own mercy and grace He saved us. He paid the debt Himself by offering up His only Son at Calvary, and He has marked "paid in full" across the accounts of all those who have put their trust in Him. It is a very clear teaching of Holy Scripture that God will not forgive the sins of any person who has an unforgiving



60 - SECOND SERMONS

By FRED DODGE

TEXT: "The wise man has two powers — bearing and forbearing." —Epictetus.

An American tourist visited Kensington Gardens in England. She was very much impressed with the vast stretches of perfect lawns. Hoping she could obtain a magic method to take back to her Garden Club in America she asked,

"Please tell me, how did you ever get lawns as perfect as these?"

"Well, madam," said the gardener, "the first thing you have to do is spirit toward his fellow men—a hard teaching it is true, which is probably why I have never heard a sermon on it, but it is a true teaching nevertheless."

It is so easy—so easy!—to hold a grudge. Thinking ill of someone else is ever a sop to sinful pride. It is so easy—but it is not Christian. "To err is human, to forgive is divine." For we are all weak "frail children of dust, and feeble as frail," and but for the wonderful free grace of God, and the providence of heredity, environment, and "circumstance" you are the vilest sinner, and the vilest sinner is you.

Forgive us, Father, now we pray. The unkind words we often say. The words that bring to others harm. Or cause our friends to feel alarm. Forgive us, Father, we pray too. The thoughtless things we often do. And, Father, may we always live So we can say, "As we forgive."

Where He Was

Motorist—It's not my fault. He was crossing in the middle of the block.

Policeman—Don't tell me that. He's lying right here at the street intersection.

Motorist—Well, he was in the middle of the block when I hit him.

start about 600 years ago." A lovely lawn, a masterpiece of music, a praiseworthy painting and a well-lived life are not produced in a moment of time. Years of painstaking care, self discipline, sacrifice, backache and heartache are wrapped in every masterpiece we admire. The artlessness of true art makes the lovely lawn and the well-lived life appear effortless. If we would achieve even a measure of perfection, we must suffer the bearing and forbearing, the pain and the patience that are hidden in every perfect result.



America by 1975 will have 850,000 more business firms than it had in 1954, according to estimates made by the Research Department of the National Association of Manufacturers.

The NAM points out that in 1929 there were 3,097,100 business firms, and that by 1952 this total had climbed to 4,050,300.

By 1975 this total should reach approximately 4,900,000.

With America's population expected to reach about 200,000,000 by 1975, it is evident that there will be an increase in business establishments needed to provide the services required by an expanded market.

Benevolence is man's mind, and righteousness is man's path. —Mencius.

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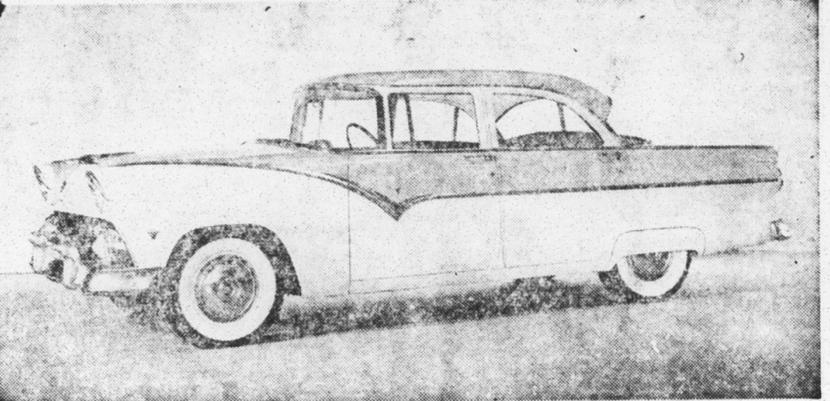
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