

# Lutheran Women in Mission

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## Me Forgiven? Me Forgive? by Carol Zehnder

(5th in our series on the Lord's Prayer: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.)

### Opening

Sing stanza 1 of Martin Luther's hymn, "Our Father, Who from Heaven Above" (*LW* 431, *TLH* 458) or "Freely, Freely" (*The Other Songbook*) or "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive" (*Jesus' People Sing!*).

Read **Matthew 6:7-8**. Then slowly and thoughtfully pray the Lord's Prayer.

### Introduction

We live in a world where the concept of sin has changed radically within the last 50 years. Name some things that society considers acceptable today but were unacceptable a generation ago.

How does the Bible define sin? See:

- **1 John 3:4**
- **Matthew 15:19**
- **James 4:17**

The motto of many people is: Go ahead and do it-it's easier to get forgiveness than permission! But failure to forgive, or to seek forgiveness, often leads to family rifts, workplace animosity, congregational splits and ultimately separation from the Lord. This fifth petition is an important one in regard to relationships. Can you cite examples? (Consider even the secrets we share and the unloving thoughts we think and say.)

### Forgive Us Our Sins

Have you ever thought as you prayed this petition, "God could never forgive me; I've done so many horrible things in my life!" Or perhaps you've thought, "I'm not so bad. I haven't killed anyone. My intentions are good. I don't want to do anything wrong. Why do I need forgiveness?"

Why should we seek forgiveness according to the following verses?

- **Romans 7:19** Why is it often easy to do evil and difficult to do good?
- **1 John 1:8-9** - Why is it difficult to admit that we are sinners?
- **James 2:10** - Does this seem fair to you? Why does the Lord say this?

Who should ask for forgiveness?

- **Acts 17:30-31**
- **Romans 3:10-12, 23.**

Why are repentance and forgiveness important?

- **Romans 6:23**
- **Ezekiel 18:20**

Where is forgiveness found?

- **1 John 1:7 and 2:1-2**
- **Acts 2:38-39**
- **Matthew 26:26-28**

### **As We Forgive Others**

As you have prayed the fifth petition, have you ever wondered about the phrase, "as we forgive those who sin against us"? Why must we forgive those people? How can we forgive them?

What is the connection between Christ's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others?

- **Mark 11:25-26**
- **Matthew 18:21-35**
- **Genesis 50:15-21**

Martin Luther found the "as we forgive" clause comforting. He saw it as a sign that as you forgive others, you have the comfort and assurance that you are forgiven in heaven. Do you agree? Why?

A young father, looking at his sleeping baby daughter after she had been baptized, said, "Well, Lizzy, you've been crucified, drowned, and buried." What do those words and the following passages have to do with our ability to forgive others?

- **Galatians 2:20**
- **Romans 6:3-4**
- **Titus 3:5-7**
- **Colossians 3:2-3**

### **Close**

Sing stanzas 6 and 9 of "Our Father, Who from Heaven Above" or "Shalom, My Friends" (*Jesus' People Sing!*).

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