Dear Open Door Family,

A good friend of mine from Bolivia shared with me this week that one of the things he is seeking to learn is what it means to live as a forgiven man. We talk about forgiveness, we understand that Jesus died on the cross to forgive us. But many times we do not realize the depth of what it means to live daily in the shadow of Forgiveness which we find in Jesus and His cross. When I was in High school I did something which was wrong and caused my parents to be ashamed of what I had done. Yet the amazing thing is that rather than show their anger and frustration and bitterness towards me, they told me how disappointed they were and then forgave me when I repented and asked them to forgive me. I remember thinking this is never going to go away. Yet it did because they had forgiven. They did not bring it up again and I learned what it meant to live as a Forgiven son. Let's look at these verses together.

Matthew 6:12 (NIV) Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12 (NLT) and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32 (MSG) Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

This phrase in what is commonly called the Lord's prayer is all about forgiveness. We must confess our sin so that we can be restored in our relationship with Jesus. The thought seems to be that when we pray and ask for restoration after we have sinned, that also opens us up and makes us more willing to forgive those who have hurt or sinned against us. Ephesians sets the standard of how we should forgive others extremely high. We are supposed forgive in the SAME WAY that our Lord Jesus forgave us. We are to be like Him in our forgiveness of each other and those who have hurt us. J. Loftness puts it this way: "Confessing our own sin softens our hearts to forgive those who have sinned against us. Sometimes renouncing bitterness begins with commitment but involves an ongoing process..."

PRAYER: Lord, God thank you for YOUR AMAZING Forgiveness. I do not deserve Your Grace, but I thank You for it. Help me to live in light of that Forgiveness. Please help me to be a good forgiver. May I continue to learn to forgive others as quickly and freely as You have forgiven me. Lord Jesus, help me to be able to forgive and then never bring it up again.

Pastor Mark Kieft