

limited applications must be made in a passage like this. In particular I note this:

-The Lord is not teaching initial forgiveness and righteousness (justification). The hearers already possess this as is shown in the phrase "our Father". He must therefore be giving a practical application to what is true in Christian life...that those who have been forgiven will find fulfillment in learning to forgive.

-Thus my assertion is that a "state" distinction is being made in this passage to the end that those who practice what God has shed in their hearts are the ones able to profit and enjoy what he has done. Hence the forgiveness spoken of is what we might call "pathway" forgiveness...practical forgiveness to be enjoyed, complementing positional forgiveness which is already ours in Christ.

-So the Christian who will not "forgive" in the practical realm, soon loses the day by day sense of God's forgiveness and is turned inside himself into an unhappy and selfish saint.

-There are other interpretations of the passage but in my mind this is the concept that makes it meaningful and real.

(2) What it means then is that we cannot expect to enjoy with God what we will not allow others to enjoy from us. It is not really a difficult challenge if the other parts of the prayer are real in our members...i.e., those yielded to God and committed to his Word, should find it not hard to practice a forgiving attitude as he tells them in the holy Word.

(3) But it is his leading example that makes this practical to us. And to that one might add the concepts of Ephesians 4:32 as a sort of parting word on what is possible to us through what is imparted to us by God.