

# Forgiveness Sunday

by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria - **Matthew 6:14-21**



**14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

Again He teaches us not to remember wrongs. He reminds us of the Father so that we might revere Him, since we are the children of such a Father, and not act as fierce beasts, refusing to forgive.

**15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father**

**forgive your trespasses.**

God, Who is meek, hates nothing more than cruelty.

**16. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.**

"Disfigurement of the face" is an artificial discoloration of the face, painting it pale, so that one does not appear as he really is, but feigns mournfulness.

**17-18. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father Who is in secret: and thy Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.**

Men of old would anoint themselves with oil after bathing as a mark of their joy and well-being. So you also, O reader, should appear joyful when you fast. The oil used to anoint we also understand to mean almsgiving. Our Head is Christ, Which we should anoint with deeds of mercy; and our face, that is our senses, we should wash with tears of repentance.

**19-21. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and corruption doth destroy, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor corruption doth destroy, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

Having first cast out the sickness of vainglory by what He said before, now He speaks about non-possessiveness. For men possess more than they need because of vainglory. He shows how unprofitable earthly treasure is: moth and corruption consume food and clothing, and thieves steal gold and silver. And then, so that no one should say to Him that not all treasure is stolen, Jesus says, even if nothing is lost in this manner, are you not wretched for being nailed down by your worries over wealth? This is why He says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."