

"A CHRISTIAN IS FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING"

Text: Matthew 18:23-35 (NIrV)

The Servant Who Had No Mercy

¹ Peter came to Jesus. He asked, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"



Matthew 18:21-35

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²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times.

²³ "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to collect all the money his servants owed him. ²⁴ As the king began to do it, a man who owed him millions of dollars was brought to him. ²⁵ The man was not able to pay. So his master gave an order. The man, his wife, his children, and all he owned had to be sold to pay back what he owed.

²⁶ "The servant fell on his knees in front of him. 'Give me time,' he begged. 'I'll pay everything back.'

²⁷ "His master felt sorry for him. He forgave him what he owed and let him go.

²⁸ "But then that servant went out and found one of the other servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said.

²⁹ "The other servant fell on his knees. 'Give me time,' he begged him. 'I'll pay you back.'

³⁰ "But the first servant refused. Instead, he went and had the man thrown into prison. The man would be held there until he could pay back what he owed. ³¹ The other servants saw what had happened. It troubled them greatly. They went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² "Then the master called the first servant in. 'You evil servant,' he said. 'I forgave all that you owed me because you begged me to.

³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on the other servant just as I had

mercy on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers. He would be punished until he paid back everything he owed.

³⁵ "This is how my Father in heaven will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

What happen in Story:

Forgive not seven times, but 77 times.

The servant owed king millions of dollars

The servant begged, and king forgave him

The servant saw other man who owed him few dollars

The man begged, but the servant did not forgive man

The king threw wicked servant in jail

Law

Jesus forgives us - now we forgive other people.

I do not want, they hurt me - hold against people - revenge.

If we do not forgive people sin against us, God will NOT forgive us!

Gospel

God finished forgive us MILLIONS and BILLIONS of sins!!

Jesus paid for ALL our sins, not some, not most - ALL!

God help us forgive other people, same-as You finish forgive us.

Apply

Thank God He does not force us to pay!

We say in Lord's prayer - "forgive our sins, same-as we forgive people sin against us." God gives and gives forgiveness to us. If we are not willing share His forgiveness with other people, then God does not forgive us.

We want to give thanks to God! We want to forgive other people, same-as He finished forgive us!

Once John Wesley, a Methodist preacher, overheard his neighbor say, "Take care how you offend (insult) me, for I never forgive." Rev. Wesley walked over to his neighbor and said, "I hope you never sin because the Bible says that you will be measured (judged) the same way that you measure others." As we go about our daily work this week, we need to remember that Jesus also said, "Blessed are the merciful, because they will obtain (receive) mercy too."

Many Christians have overcome evil in many ways, have led pure, clean lives, and have given freely to the needy. But when they are insulted or injured by a brother or a neighbor, they stubbornly refused to forgive. Why do they find it so hard forgive? Is there any real excuse for this? No, definitely NOT! Forgiveness seems too hard for them to do. It is easy to look at another person's life...like thru a magnifying glass, while we rarely want to take a glance at our own terrible sins. There is nothing harder for us than to examine our own hearts and to confess our sinful and evil ways. Yet nothing is more important for us to do! The Bible says, "He who covers his sins shall not prosper." "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." "The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart and saves such as be of a contrite (sorry) spirit." (Psalm 34) If we can't forgive a neighbor, then we still don't understand how badly we need forgiveness from God. Is there someone who is waiting for your forgiveness???

The Church year is soon coming to a close. This reminds us that our lives are quickly coming to an end too. Our lives are rushing passed us. Soon we must stand before the Judge of the living and dead. The only way we can be certain of not being lost forever, is to make sure that NOW...TODAY... that we are eager and willing to forgive others who have sinned against us.

Hopefully, we can learn from this reading the greatness of God's forgiveness. He made it easy for us to forgive our brother/sister and our neighbor. The reading for today says, "THAT IS THE REASON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THE SAME-AS A KING WANTING TO COUNT THE DEBTS OF HIS SERVANTS. AND HAPPENED THE KING BEGAN COUNTING, ONE SERVANT CAME WITH A DEBT OF \$10,000,000." The servant couldn't pay. According (agree) to the law, he and his family should be sold into slavery. But the servant begged for mercy. The king pitied (mercy) him and forgave every penny of the \$10,000,000.

You and I have sinned against God, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. If God marks (judges) our iniquities (sins) which one of us could stand? We owe a great debt that we can never pay. God owes us nothing. No one can force God to be merciful. But God found a way to pardon (forgive) us all our sins. Thru His gracious love...He sent His only Son to bear (responsible) all our sins. Jesus paid in full with His holy precious (chin-selfish sign) blood. "God was in Christ reconciling (joining-back) the world to Himself...Christ, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree (cross).

Think of the many and great sins our Almighty, Merciful God has forgiven us because of Jesus. Our reading says of those sins that they are over "ten million dollars worth." And then think of the sins which our neighbor commits against us- think of how small they are in comparison. The readings says the sins of our neighbor are worth about "twenty dollars."

Why is it so hard for us to forgive so little? It's very common to hear people say: I wouldn't find it so hard to forgive that person if all my kindness to him weren't repaid with meanness for me..Yet you and I so easily forget God has showered countless (without count) blessings

down on us daily. How often we think nothing of His forgiveness. We give no thanks or word of praise. Instead, we go on sinning against God...but God still continues to hold out His hand of mercy to us. How wonderful God's patience is to us. Therefore, we should have compassion (mercy-forgive) on our neighbor, in the same way God has mercy on us. Yes! We SHOULD but so very often we DON'T.

Jesus was warning His disciples against the world desire for revenge or "getting even." Everywhere about us today, and deep within our own flesh, we find this terrible desire to "get what is owed to me."

But in this same chapter, Christ clearly tells you and me: "IF YOUR BROTHER INSULTS YOU, GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE!" So be careful (warned) of those people who tell you not to be forgiving. They are from the devil. Don't be a fool and join with them. But remind yourselves of what the king did in the reading to the UN-forgiving servant. "NOW THE KING ORDERED THAT SERVANT, HIS WIFE, HIS CHILDREN, AND ALL HIS THINGS SOLD TO PAY THE DEBT."

And so Jesus tells his disciples, "ALSO SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER TO ALSO TO YOU, IF YOUR FROM HEARTS DO NOT FORGIVE YOUR BROTHER HIS SINS." The is very plain (clear) language. If you don't forgive your neighbor, you'll no longer receive forgiveness from God. It is like breaking the electric circuit when you do not pass on forgiveness.

You and I must stop and think carefully. We may call ourselves Christians, but if we hate our neighbor, God will not listen to our worship and prayers, and all our gifts and offerings will mean nothing. They will be a sickly offering of shame. The Bible says, "HE WHO LOVES NOT HIS BROTHER WHO HE HAS SEEN EVERYDAY, HOW CAN HE LOVE GOD WHO HE HAS NOT SEEN YET." "WHOEVER

HATES HIS BROTHER, IS A MURDERER..."THOSE PEOPLE WHO BECOME POSSESSED BY A HATE, ARE ON THEIR OWN WAY TO MEET SATAN."

Then there are people who say, "Well if my neighbor wrongs me and doesn't ask me for forgiveness, I don't see why I have to go and try to make peace with him." Why? Because his soul is in danger of going to hell. God wants us to help him, and bring him to repentance (sorry for sins.) We may not succeed because he proudly or stubbornly refuses to be sorry but we must try and try again.

The fireman doesn't wait for the person to come out of the burning house. He puts up his ladder and goes into the house. He goes among the flames and smoke to save the person. We too should GO and tell others we forgive them and we want them to love God. We might suffer pain just like the fireman. Imagine if the fireman waited for you to come out of the burning house before he would give you help. No one would be saved! As Christians we need to save our neighbors from the burning world of sin- drugs, violence, hate, murder, and lack of love, gossip, two faced, lying, meanness, and etc.

What if God ask you to meet Him half-way between heaven and earth, before he forgave you and me? We would never make it! We are already lost and dead in sin. No! God came all the way! He gave his only Son. We did nothing to deserve forgiveness but now that we have it we should at least be thankful. We should at least share it with others. So, is it so much to go to a brother or sister and tell him/her humbly that you want peace?

As Christians we daily pray, "FATHER FORGIVE US AS WE FORGIVE THOSE PEOPLE WHO SIN AGAINST US." If we don't really mean those words then we are speaking spiritual death to ourselves. We are telling God to forgive us exactly how we forgive

others. If we don't forgive people then we won't receive forgiveness ourselves.

This doesn't mean that God forgives us BECAUSE we forgive others. NO! That would be earning our salvation! We can't earn our own salvation! No man can do that! Forgiving others is evidence (proof) that we have the Spirit of God already. Forgiving others is showing that we already have received the forgiveness of sins. If we have no forgiveness in us then it means the Holy Spirit does not live within us and we are dead in our sins and mistakes.

God doesn't force us to forgive others. Forgiveness cannot be force. But God's forgiveness to us will move us to forgive others out of the deepest thankful hearts. I believe this is the real reason Jesus told this story to his disciples. Peter said, "Lord, how often should I forgive my neighbor his sins? Seven times Seven?" Jesus said, "Seventy times Seventy." Jesus was telling Peter that forgiveness is not based upon an exact number. Forgiveness doesn't count. Forgiveness doesn't remember. Forgiveness means to forget the hurt and let it go away.

Dear friends, beloved people of God, we can't be true followers of Jesus, unless people say of us, "He is a Christian because of his love for everyone." People will know we are Christians by our love to them. We must be like (same) Õ Jesus on the cross, "FATHER FORGIVE THEM BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING."

If we are unforgiving people, we blasted the bridge between us and God. We have no joining with Him anymore. Jesus said it clearly in the reading. "IF YOU DON'T FORGIVE PEOPLE THEIR SINS AGAINST YOU, THEN NEITHER WILL MY HEAVENLY FATHER FORGIVE YOU."

Let us not be silly with our eternal salvation, as the unforgiving servant in the reading today. The unforgiving was release from a ten million dollar debt only to be thrown in jail for not forgiving his servant a \$20 debt. We say that was stupid. Let us not be so silly.

May the Holy Spirit dig out all our unforgiving hatred of people...dig out our grudges (mad)...dig out all revenge...and instead give us peaceful hearts and forgiving hands and minds! Paul wrote in the Bible, "BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDER-HEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, SAME AS GOD BECAUSE OF CHRIST HAS ALREADY FINISHED FORGIVEN YOU!" Amen!