

“Forgiveness from God → Us Must Always Lead to Forgiveness from Us → Others!”

Based on Matthew 18:23-35
5th Wednesday of Lent – 2010
March 17 → 11:00 & 7:00

- i. God has forgiven us in Christ, *which SHOULD fill us with gratitude and joy!*
 - ii. *That gratitude and joy SHOULD ALWAYS LEAD US to offer forgiveness to all who have sinned against us!*
Now, let’s see how WRONG it is to withhold forgiveness from others!
- f. ³⁴ “In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. [Then, at the conclusion of the parable, Jesus said:]
³⁵ **This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”** So is it very important for us to genuinely forgive ALL WHO SIN AGAINST US? Definitely! Nevertheless, *it’s not easy!* According to our sinful nature, *we just don’t want to do it.* So our REASONS TO FORGIVE must be right! We forgive:
- i. NOT because ✦ we want to, ✦ we like the person, or ✦ he is sorry.
 - ii. INSTEAD because **WE HAVE GOD’S FORGIVENESS IN CHRIST!** Nothing more is necessary; it’s that simple; we have been forgiven, *so we forgive!*

Conclusion: Jesus taught the Lord’s Prayer; then He said: “For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” (Matt. 6:14-15 NAS) So, *knowing we are forgiven*, let us quickly and fully forgive others! *Amen!*

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Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, try to understand HOW MUCH God’s forgiveness changes a person:

- **Before** – ✦ dead in sin, ✦ outside of God’s family, ✦ focusing on temporary things, and ✦ bound for hell!
- **After** – ♥ alive in Christ, ♥ inside of God’s family, ♥ focusing on eternal things, and ♥ bound for heaven!

Those significant changes between **God and us** – *whenever they are real* – will certainly produce significant changes between **us and others!** Jesus told this parable – *in Matthew 18* – ✦ to help us understand HOW MUCH He has forgiven us and ✦ to strongly motivate us to forgive others!

1. **The KING is God the Father and WE are the Servant:**

- a. ²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.”
In the Lord’s Prayer we pray: “And forgive us our trespasses...” A more literal translation of Matthew 6:12 is: “And forgive us our debts...” In other words: Since we have sinned against God, *we owe Him, we are indebted to Him – every one of us!*

- b. ²⁴ **“As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.”** Let’s not miss the *significance* of the number – **“ten thousand talents”** is equal to about **10 million dollars!** We tend to think our sins are few, *but let’s do some math:* A 50-year-old person has lived over 18,000 days. If he committed only 10 sins / day, that would be 180,000 sins! *The number for you and me is probably far higher!*
- c. ²⁵ **“Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.”** Even today, when a house is foreclosed on, *the house is taken and sold in order to repay the debt!*
- d. ²⁶ **“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’”** ²⁷ **The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.”** *That is remarkable!* As the king canceled the 10 million dollar debt of the servant, so God the Father – *through Jesus* – has canceled our HUGE debt of sin!

2. **WE are the Servant and EVERYONE ELSE is the Other Servant:**

- a. ²⁸ **“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.”** Again, let’s catch the amount – **“a hundred Denarii”** is equal to about **20 dollars!** *Do you see the HUGE contrast?* The first servant had just been forgiven a **10 million**

dollar debt; nevertheless, *he is unwilling to forgive his fellow servant a 20 dollar debt!* **The same kind of contrast is in place when God has forgiven us, BUT WE REFUSE TO FORGIVE OTHERS!**

- b. ²⁹ **“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’”**
- i. *Notice how the words spoken by both servants are nearly identical:* In the Greek the first servant only said *one additional word*, which we translate: **“all things,”** *since he owed SO MUCH – 10 million dollars!*
- ii. ✦ Both owed a debt, ✦ both begged for mercy, and ✦ the first servant received mercy; now, *mercy has been requested* BUT WILL THE FIRST SERVANT FORGIVE HIS FELLOW SERVANT?
- c. ³⁰ **“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.”** *Isn’t that terrible, especially in light of his HUGE DEBT which had just been canceled!*
- d. ³¹ **“When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.”** The other servants were *upset, troubled, concerned!* What they witnessed was terribly wrong – **AND THEY KNEW IT!**
- e. ³² **“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.’”** ³³ **Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?”** This pattern is *good and right:*