

13th September, 2020



Grace, peace and mercy to you from God our Father and
the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

We Pray

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ,
Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from
all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me
this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings
and life may please You. For into Your hands I
commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let
your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have
no power over me. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

What about for you? How many times do you think you should forgive someone who wrongs you? Someone who sins against you?

Peter has a very attainable answer, up to seven times. Are you all able to do that? To forgive the same brother or sister up to seven times when they sin against you?

But Jesus gives Peter a little lesson as He does for us today. Up to seven times, hmmm that is very noble to be able to do that right? Maybe this is the sort of super Christian we might become if we can do this. If the

same person sins against you up to seven times, you could forgive them right?

But Jesus answered Peter, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Now the stakes have been seriously raised. How much forgiving is too much? What if the same person sinned against you twenty times? Or thirty times? Or more? How much forgiving is too much? Would you get to the point where you might just stop forgiving because the person who is wronging you is simply not learning or growing? Maybe this is the time you might step in and teach them a lesson. And yet Jesus says seventy-seven times or seventy times seven.

But you see as soon as you start counting the number of times you must do this, things start becoming a law and a list of what must I do to gain eternal life. Jesus says to the rich man who asks Him that question you must keep the commandments and you must sell all you have and give to the poor then come and follow me. The key to this is the following, getting rid of everything else that might hinder and follow Jesus. Follow the way the truth and the life Jesus Christ God's only Son who suffered and died for your sin and my sin.

So if we start counting we run into problems. The numbers become a law and a burden on our souls. A burden for our sin that weight that holds us down so much or the guilt that comes from not keeping up to the

numbers that we must or at least we start to think we must do to please God and earn His amazing gift of life- eternal life, the amazing gift of forgiveness and salvation.

So let us look a little deeper into the numbers of today's text.

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 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.

So let us look at the numbers. 10000 bags of gold or 10000 talents if you consider each talent was about 20 years' wages. Or 60 000 000 Denarii. A Denarius was the wage for a day's work. So here is a debt that even in thousands of lifetimes could not be paid back. Not even if this servant put his wife and children to work too. So what does he do?

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.

He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

Here is a fellow servant who could have paid the debt off. His debt was 100 Denarii that is 100 days of work. Yes this was doable and yet the servant who had his debt forgiven punished him.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

You see numbers here are important but only to highlight that the first servant's debt was immeasurable compared to the second servant just as Peter's

suggestion of seven times was measurable compared to the meaning behind Jesus' words seventy times seven.

You know forgiveness is a journey and for many of us the person who has wronged us takes time to forgive. They say to forgive and forget but this takes time. You know when someone has really hurt you and you say to them I forgive you - then you see them again or think of that person and you might start feeling anger or hurt again. This is a good time to forgive them again in your heart and keep forgiving until you can think of that person and feel joy. Keep saying the words of Jesus - I forgive you, the words He says to you over and over again. So the greatest gift you and I have in the journey of forgiving is Jesus. By His grace we don't have to find

our own strength to forgive rather we can forgive by the power and love of Jesus in us. Over and over again.

It is hard, when people wrong us and they never say sorry. What do you do? Well you can forgive them in your heart and there you find peace in the love of Jesus.

The great healing that comes from God's grace who first forgave you and me because He sent His only Son Jesus to suffer and die for your sin and my sin.

Today hear anew the words of Jesus as you come to take part in His holy meal. Take and eat this is my body given for you. Take and drink this is my blood of the new covenant shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Your debt is paid in full by the precious blood of Jesus.

We pray in the prayer Jesus taught us forgive us our sins and we forgive those who sin against us. It is Jesus who died while you and I were still sinners to be our sin and to set us free. Free from eternal death, from sin and the devil.

'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

Let us boldly follow Jesus. When someone wrongs us let us boldly forgive. This is living Jesus love out, love in action. This brings peace to those whom we forgive and let us know that we wrong people many times so let us repent and seek their forgiveness also.

Today if you think of someone whom you need to forgive or whom you need to repent and ask for forgiveness make today that day you do something about it. Remember you live by grace, by God's grace and love and mercy through faith. When you feel you can't forgive or ask for forgiveness let Jesus carry you and help you.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen

Pastor Mark Gierus