

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Outline:

1. We have a great debt that we cannot repay, what? Debt of Sin
2. In Christ, God cancels our debt, lays on Jesus the debt of our sin
3. How do we respond? Unlike the unmerciful servant, we act in mercy towards others, lest we show ourselves as those not forgiven by God because we do not forgive fellows.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew the eighteenth chapter verses twenty-one through thirty-five.

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today. Have you always been nice to your brothers or sisters or to mom and dad? Nope! I did not think so. When someone knocks you down, when they are mean to you, and comes saying sorry. What is your response? You are forgiven. Right! What if they do the same thing again and again? Do you have to say you are forgiven a lot of times? Yes, that is what Jesus is illustrating in our text for today. He says we have to forgive others a lot of times. How can we do that? How does knowing that Jesus died and rose help us to forgive each other? Ponder those questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

We have a great debt that we cannot repay, what? Debt of Sin

Peter gets what our Lord is illustrating from last week with going to your brother and winning him back over. But he has an important question, how many times? How many times do I have to forgive the one who sins against me personally? He thinks that he is being generous, 7 times a day, or seven times throughout your life, is plenty! Imagine if someone came up to you saying I am sorry seven times a day. What would you do?

Eventually, we would get exasperated and upset and say no more! Enough is enough. We would refuse to forgive them, especially if they did the same sin against us time and time again. That's our sinful nature at work. We do not want to forgive those who sin against us. We want to hold it in, or hold it over their heads again and again.

Yet, what does Jesus say? He gives this wonderful parable to explain how often we should forgive our brother or sister. A slave owes a huge debt to a certain king, anywhere from ten to more than three hundred million dollars. He could not pay it, even though he promises to.

How many times have we begged and pleaded with God over our debt that we owe? We as Christians are all servants of God, the heavenly King And by nature we are unprofitable servants. We are guilty before the Lord on account of our thousandfold transgressions of the Law. Even one sin is too much for us to repay. Have any of us stopped at one? I am sure not. When we have murdered via anger against our brother. When we have sinned against God by not being in church where He has promised to be. When we have coveted all the things our brother has that

we do not. Our debt before Him is so great that it staggers the imagination, that we can never hope to pay it off. We are therefore guilty of hell and damnation before Him.

The king knows that no matter how much the slave works, he can never pay off the debt. The king has mercy upon his slave and considers the debt merely a bad loan, thus cancelling it in full.

In Christ, God cancels our debt, lays on Jesus the debt of our sin

God has done likewise for us. The massive debt arrayed against us has been fully cancelled, every single cent. It has been canceled by, and because of, Jesus Christ, and everything He has done on our behalf. Jesus lived a one hundred percent perfect life. Not only that, He did so while bearing the full weight of your and my sins against God. He took them to the cross. There Jesus suffered and died an unjust death. He suffered the full wrath of God on our behalf. Our damnation, our guilt, was laid upon the King's own son instead of us unprofitable servants. Rising again from the dead, Jesus proves that because of His sacrifice, our debt is canceled, our sins forgiven, and we, unprofitable servants though we are, are reconciled back to our God and King forever.

How do we respond? In Mercy

How do we respond to this great love that our God has shown to us by sending His only-begotten Son? Simply, We forgive as we have been forgiven.

We act the opposite as the slave in our Lord's parable. Whereas the slave, having been released from the king's presence, goes and finds one of his fellow slaves who owes him a small amount of less than seventeen dollars. He chokes the other slave, yells at him, shakes him violently, eventually throws him into prison. The other slaves go and give a detailed report to their master. The king, justly condemns the slave and hands him over to the tormentors to be tormented until his debt is paid in full, likely for the rest of his life.

Instead of acting harshly towards our fellow slaves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, in both small and minor as well as larger sins, we act in mercy and grace. The entirety of our debt has been paid by God Himself. This fact should elicit pure joy in us, shown in doing likewise to our brothers. This means that we forgive when someone hurts us, when someone gossips against us, when someone insults us. When they do this, we do not lash out in hatred and anger. Rather, we say, "You are forgiven." Even if they come to us four hundred seventy times, sinning against us with the same sin over and over again, we constantly say, "You are forgiven." It is not about amount. It is not a simple math equation. It is about mercy. We show mercy to our brother or sister, just as God has shown mercy to us. Because God has forgiven each one of us a mountain-size debt. We cannot help but forgive others the same.

Dear Christians, let us always forgive when our brother sins against us, no matter how many times they do so, showing them a small measure of the great forgiveness that God has shown to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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