

10,000 Talents

“O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?”

Matthew 18:32-33

Introduction:

1. The gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ is what God has done for us through Him and what we ought to do to please Him in return. This sermon identifies and exalts both aspects of the gospel.
2. You should (a) delight in God’s forgiveness, (b) delight in opportunities to forgive others, (c) rejoice at the reward of God’s mercy toward the merciful, and (e) fear His great wrath toward the unmerciful.
3. We can never hear too much about God’s forgiveness of us and our duty to forgive those around us.
4. The binding relationship we have in Jesus Christ as a church is based in forgiveness (Col 3:12-17).
5. The more perfect way of serving Jesus Christ is by charity in forgiving one another (I Cor 13:4-7).

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

- A. Peter, being quite impulsive, often said and did what we think, say, or wish we could say.
- B. The context shows Peter and others had argued about being the greatest, which led Peter to clarify the rules of forgiveness for being greatest in the kingdom of heaven (18:1).
- C. The context shows our Lord’s rules for settling personal disputes in the church, with the most important being the forgiveness of one another, if a man were not glorious enough to simply overlook and forget the matter (18:15). Therefore, Peter needed to clarify how often he would have to forgive his offending brother under these guidelines.
- D. In light of his desire to be the greatest and meet the Lord’s conditions, Peter sought to limit the number of times he would have to let his brother “take advantage of him.”
- E. It is nearly impossible for men to forgive one another, let alone repeatedly for the same offence! Pride and self-defense both fear and resent anyone taking advantage of them. This is true in spite of the facts that every person sins against God and others repeatedly in the same offences, even after being taught, warned, and threatened about the offences.
- F. Natural hatred does not want to allow anyone to get away with even the smallest offence.
- G. Peter thought he was being quite forgiving and merciful to offer the Lord seven times!
- H. If the Lord had allowed Peter his number seven, imagine the rising resentment and hatred as an offender approached the magic number of eight, where forgiveness could end.

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ showed the great inferiority of Peter’s forgiveness and mercy.
- B. Peter may have thought seven was the perfect number and should be more than sufficient.
- C. Peter entirely missed the character and nature of Christianity and the emphasis on mercy.
- D. God’s thoughts and ways are far above our thoughts and ways – in the degree of forgiveness and mercy and the abundance of pardon (Isaiah 55:6-9). We are much harder and harsher in forgiving others than the blessed and holy God is in forgiving wicked men.
- E. Our Lord’s “seventy times seven” is not a benchmark or limit, but an infinite increase over Peter’s. He simply used Peter’s number of seven and multiplied it many times.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

- A. Our Lord uses a parable to make this lesson of forgiving one another very meaningful.
- B. A parable is an extended simile or metaphor comparing something natural and spiritual.
- C. The kingdom of heaven is the reign and rule of Jesus Christ over His elect followers.
- D. As with all parables, we will err and involve ourselves in serious difficulties, if we try to put some precise meaning on every term and action. We want the overall lesson.
- E. The lesson is how merciful we should be to forgive others, since God has forgiven us.
- F. At each step of the parable we should make a mental application to the gospel lessons.
- G. It is important to remember that Jesus Christ does take account (Heb 4:12-13; Rev 2:23).
- H. It is important to remember that Jesus Christ will take account (Rom 14:10; II Cor 5:10).
- I. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3).
- J. A king has no limit to his authority or power: he can both know and enforce all things.
- K. This parable is the pure gospel of Jesus Christ – in both doctrine and practice. Hear it!

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

- A. The King examined books and records for each servant, and found one greatly in debt.
- B. Such a servant might be a vassal prince, with annual obligations of tribute to his King.
- C. If we assume 200lbs per talent, a moderate measure of several for talents, and a recent closing price of gold at \$472 per ounce, we have a staggering debt of \$15,104,000,000.
- D. Yet, this proves the parable's weakness, for our debt is eternal torment in hell's fires!
- E. Is there any doubt in your mind or soul today that you owe the King 10,000 talents?
- F. When a holy God unveils every thought, word, and deed of commission or omission – consider it well – every one of us is found a great debtor, at least 10,000 talents worth.
- G. One talent – one sin – against an infinitely holy God is enough to send us to hell forever, which means that our debt is far greater than this poor servant owing a little money.
- H. The Lord Jesus Christ lacks neither knowledge nor power to cast us into the deepest hell.
- I. If the Lord should mark iniquities against us, who can stand before Him (Psalm 130:3)?

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

- A. The servant had squandered his Lord's goods, and he had nothing to pay back the debt.
- B. Therefore, the King ordered that everything he had should be stripped from him and immediately sold to recover as much of the debt as possible.
- C. Here is hidden wisdom: selling families into slavery for the payment of personal and company debts would bring a whole new level of financial management to the world, and it would end the curse to this nation of personal and corporate bankruptcy privileges.
- D. The Jews understood selling persons for their debts (Ex 22:3; Lev 25:39-41; Deut 15:12).
- E. When we are examined in light of our sins, we will be found hopelessly in debt without the slightest means to pay off the slightest sin. We are in desperate and fearful condition.
- F. The only payment we can make is to suffer body and soul and spirit in hell for all eternity, which is an infinite punishment by its duration without end.
- G. The Lord Jesus Christ taught in another place the fear of God about hell (Luke 12:4-5).

26 *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

- A. The servant begged for mercy, lest he, his wife, his children, and everything be sold.
- B. Observe the language and sentiments carefully, for you will meet with them again soon.
- C. The metaphor here describes our desperate situation before the holy God of heaven, which only occurs after the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and sinfulness.
- D. As is the case with all parables, they are not perfect in detail: the Lord is not teaching the five phases of salvation here, but rather focusing on the limited topic of forgiveness.
- E. We are most earnest when faced with our many sins, and we beg pitifully for survival.
- F. We hope against hope that there might be mercy with the Most High to spare us.

27 *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

- A. Observe that the lord did not merely give the servant time to repay the debt; he freely forgave him the debt and loosed him from any further obligation or punishment. Glory!
- B. How should this servant now live ... in obedience to his Lord ... and toward all others?
- C. Should not this glorious freedom and forgiveness cause him to be incredibly merciful?
- D. Should not this great act of grace in his life cause him to laugh at any offence of others?
- E. The blessed God has had compassion on us and forgiven us the 10,000 talents we owe.
- F. With nothing to pay, we are hopeless; with total forgiveness, we are freed from the debt.
- G. Here is mercy ... the debt is ours, we were already bound, the Lord has power to punish.
- H. How can the holy God, the great and dreadful God of the Flood, forgive us all our sins?
- I. Though the substitute payment of His own Son is not plainly stated, it is understood well!
- J. One sin is enough to send you to hell forever, but millions of sins have been forgiven.
- K. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Romans 5:6-11; 8:1,33).

28 *But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.*

- A. But the servant acted entirely contrary to the grace and mercy that had been shown him.
- B. If we assume 1/8oz per pence of gold at \$472/oz, we have a debt of merely \$5,900.
- C. This debt is 2,560,000 times smaller than the debt the King had forgiven the servant.
- D. Yet, this proves the parable's weakness, for offences against us are absolutely nothing!
- E. What act of cruelty can we imagine from a brother in Christ that would deserve revenge?
- F. But we often get bitter, hold grudges, show hatred, and mistreat others for nothing at all!
- G. Christians, saved from hell for eternity, are ferocious in demanding payment for offences.
- H. He took him by the throat ... showing his envious, overbearing, unmerciful, harsh, hateful, malicious, violent, and wicked spirit, just as Paul described (Titus 3:3).
- I. The Holy Spirit inspired these graphic words to describe our general dealings with others.

29 *And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

- A. Using the same appeal for mercy that the debtor servant had used with his lord, this poor servant begs for patience and a little mercy from his fellowservant.
- B. How quickly did the forgiven servant forget mercy? How thoroughly did he forget it?

- C. The parable is not dealing with our eternal and legal forgiveness without any pleading, but we should remember to forgive whether our offender is begging for mercy or not.

30 *And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.*

- A. This wicked servant had no compassion, no mercy, no forgiveness ... just harsh and unrelenting anger and resentment for the ridiculously small debt that was owed.
B. This evil treatment of a fellowservant by a forgiven man should make us angry and sick.
C. We hold the harshest and strictest standards for others to live by in our sight, but we beg with all the pleadings of our soul for God to relax and compromise His holy standards.
D. How often are just like this wicked servant when we get bitter, hold grudges, backbite, whisper, and slander others out of hateful revenge for some minor offence against us?
E. Consider how merciful David was with King Saul, who made many attempts on his life!
F. Consider how merciful Joseph was with his brothers, who had tried to kill him, and instead sold him into slavery in Egypt and lied to his father about him!

31 *So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.*

- A. There is no difficulty in the God of heaven knowing what we do to our fellowservants.
B. The angels in heaven communicate clearly with God about our actions toward others.
C. It should make us sick and angry when we see others not forgiving their fellowservants, because we have all been forgiven 10,000 talents, enough to send us to hell forever.

32 *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

- A. The lord confronted this wicked servant by bringing him back for a face-to-face meeting.
B. The God of heaven says to each of us, How in the world can you be so merciless, when I had such compassion and mercy on you?
C. We had nothing to pay, and yet the infinitely holy God freely forgave us all our sins.
D. He confronts us when He comes to examine our spirits and chasten us for our folly.

33 *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?*

- A. The answer to this rhetorical or obvious question must be a resounding, "Yes!"
B. If God forgave us, we should be eagerly willing to always forgive others (Eph 4:31-32).
C. It is devilish to know God's forgiveness of 10,000 talents and to punish for 100 pence.
D. In every situation with others where a choice must be made, err toward mercy (Jas 2:13).

34 *And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.*

- A. In fairness, the lord withdrew his forgiveness and mercy and tortured him for his debt!
B. How angry must the Lord of heaven be when we do not forgive offences against us?
C. To the merciful, God will be merciful; to the froward, God will be froward (Ps 18:25-26).
D. If you wonder why God's hand is against you, examine your forgiveness of others.
E. This is a horrible prospect, but the harsh in spirit never think beyond their hurt pride!

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ applied this parable in precise application to Peter and each of us.
- B. The adverbs “so,” “likewise,” and “also” declare that God will treat you in the very same manner that the lord treated the wicked servant.
- C. The God of heaven will extract from you the last measure of chastening for your sins, if you do not forgive others their sins against you.
- D. This is not describing eternal, legal, or vital forgiveness, but rather practical forgiveness.
- E. Observe that the forgiveness we give others must be from our hearts ... there cannot even be the thoughts of injury, bitterness, revenge, or hatred. Lord, help us!
- F. Is there not the greatest motive to be the glorious man of Proverbs 19:11? Everyone can have the discretion of Solomon and the glory of David by forgiving all sins against them.
- G. The more excellent way – better than being an apostle – of serving the Lord Jesus Christ is to love one another ... and most of I Corinthians 13:4-7 has to do with forgiving others.

Conclusion:

- 1. The gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ is what God has done for us through Him and what we ought to do to please Him in return. This sermon identifies and exalts both aspects of the gospel.
- 2. You should (a) delight in God’s forgiveness, (b) delight in opportunities to forgive others, (c) rejoice at the reward of God’s mercy toward the merciful, and (e) fear His great wrath toward the unmerciful.
- 3. Remember the 10,000 talents and 100 pence for the rest of your lives to always forgive others.

For Further Study:

- 1. The sermon outline, “[The Forgiveness of Sins](#),” details God’s forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others.