

Matthew 18:21-35
September, 2023
Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam

The brain is a wonderful organ; but my brain works in a curious way at times. When I think of Bible Study after church, my mind thinks of chocolate chip cookies. At the 50th year celebration of my ministry, I was thinking of lemon bars! Whenever this gospel is read during a service, I think about my sins, all of them. To be honest, I can't remember **all** my sins - there are too many to count!

If I sinned just 300 times every day, I would have committed 8,437,275 sins against God who says, You shall be holy for I am holy! God's Word also says the wages of sin is death! God's Word is true: there is no one who does good, not even one! I have broken every commandment in thought, word, or deed. **I am in trouble!** I can't do anything to pay God for committing just one sin! One sin brings punishment in hell! There is nothing I can do!

Our text shows us our huge debt of sin. We consider:

The cost of our forgiveness!

Peter had asked Jesus how often we should forgive people who sin against us. Peter thought 7 times would be fair. He was surprised when Jesus told him to forgive 77 times or 490 times. God wants us to forgive **all** the time; we are not to keep score and finally decide that enough is enough.

Jesus told a parable about a man who owed a king a huge debt, some say about 20 million dollars, others say several lifetimes of pay! This was a tremendous debt; no one could pay it! When the king found out that the man could not pay his debt, he ordered that everything the man had, family included, should be sold to pay the debt. When the man

begged for mercy, the king willingly forgave the entire debt! That man should have been grateful; but he wasn't!

The forgiven man met a fellow servant who owed him several month's pay. We would think the forgiven man would be willing to forgive the smaller debt; but when he found out that the man could not pay the debt, he had the man thrown into prison.

When the king heard what the man, he had forgiven, had done, he called that servant back and had him thrown into prison forever. Jesus finished the parable by saying, This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

I have shown you how huge my debt of sin is. How large of a debt of sin do you have? Have you forgiven all the people who spread rumors about you in school, at work, or on facebook? Have you forgiven all those who have done things to you that you did not like at school, at work or during some sport's event? If you haven't forgiven those people, why not? God has forgiven us; we should forgive others!

Sometimes it is hard to forgive, isn't it?

We all sin. We were born with sin. We have been sinful since the time we were in our mother's womb! We deserve to burn in hell forever!

What can we do? **Nothing!** God has done everything! God loved us and sent His Son to earth as our Substitute. The One who is larger than the universe became a microscopic embryo in the body of a Jewish virgin. Nine months later the Savior of the world was born, the only perfect baby. Since Jesus was not conceived by the union of a father and mother, He didn't inherit sin as we did from our parents.

Jesus was God in human form! The job of defeating Satan and freeing human beings from slavery to sin is one that only God could do. Jesus became the heavenly lightning rod that absorbed the fiery lightning bolts of God's anger at sin and at sinners.

Jesus loved us so much that he would endure being damned for sin so that we would not be damned for sin. The Father put all of my sins, your sins, and all sins, upon Jesus and the Father punished Jesus in hell a punishment that we deserved!

When we stand before God and He asks us, "What have you done with the gift of life that I gave you? Did you keep My law perfectly?" We will be able to say, "Yes, Father, not personally, but through Jesus, my Substitute." God's people, you and me included, know that our lives do not end at the cemetery – we will live forever!

Full and free forgiveness! What a great gift from a gracious God! We can live our lives happily and we can die peacefully because we are forgiven! Because Jesus died for us we know we are forgiven. Because Jesus arose from the dead, we know we will live again with Jesus forever! No sin stands between us and our heavenly Father. The cost of our forgiveness was the death of Jesus, God's Son. Jesus was willing to give up His life for us; we are willing to live our lives for Him!

Now what do you think about the sins that people commit against us? Should we forgive those sins? What do you think? What did Jesus do? On the cross Jesus said, Father, forgive them.

How can we not forgive? The debt of sin that people owe us cannot compare with the debt of sin we owe to God! **If** God

forgives all of our sins because of Jesus' work and we refuse to forgive the sins that others commit against us, we are acting like the unmerciful servant in Jesus' parable.

If God forgave us everything, and we don't forgive others, then the Father could say to us, "I forgave all your sins! You can't forgive someone? If that is how you feel, then I will not forgive your sins!"

Joseph is an excellent example of how we should forgive others. Satan doesn't want us to forgive those who sin against us. But God loves us and forgives us everything, because of Jesus.

We pray: Lord Jesus, we are thankful for Your perfect life and innocent death that paid for our sins. May we always be thankful for Your amazing grace and willingly forgive others.

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