

# Lenten

# Reflections



The Divine Intervention

March 1, 2016

## *Scripture*

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

Peter approached Jesus and asked him,

“Lord, if my brother sins against me,  
how often must I forgive him?

As many as seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

That is why the Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king  
who decided to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began the accounting,

a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount.

Since he had no way of paying it back,

his master ordered him to be sold,

along with his wife, his children, and all his property,

in payment of the debt.

At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said,

‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.’

Moved with compassion the master of that servant

let him go and forgave him the loan.

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants

who owed him a much smaller amount.

He seized him and started to choke him, demanding,  
'Pay back what you owe.'  
Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him,  
'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'  
But he refused.  
Instead, he had him put in prison  
until he paid back the debt.  
Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened,  
they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master  
and reported the whole affair.  
His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant!  
I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.  
Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant,  
as I had pity on you?'  
Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers  
until he should pay back the whole debt.  
So will my heavenly Father do to you,  
unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."

## *Our Scripture Reflection*

So, must we forgive? Jesus' answer is very clear: absolutely YES. Why? Because He has forgiven us, pure and simple. But how do I forgive someone who has hurt me deeply?

THE ANSWER: Are you sick and tired of being a slave? When we choose not to forgive someone we become a double victim and a slave. We are a victim of the evil deed done to us. We continue to cause pain to ourselves because even though the deed is long over, every time we see the person who hurt us, every time we remember them even in passing, the flames of our anger are rekindled and get red hot. And, we are slaves. How so? Because the place where God alone is to occupy, our hearts and minds, we have ALLOWED to be occupied by the person who once hurt us.

Are you tired of being a slave? Then, turn it over to Jesus and let go!

## *Food for your Journey*

A Turkish officer raided and looted an Armenian home. He killed the aged parents and gave the daughters to the soldiers, keeping the eldest daughter for himself. Some time later she escaped and trained as a nurse. As time passed, she found herself nursing in a ward of

Turkish officers. One night, by the light of a lantern, she saw the face of this officer. He was so gravely ill that without exceptional nursing he would die. The days passed, and he recovered. One day, the doctor stood by the bed with her and said to him, "But for her devotion to you, you would be dead." He looked at her and said, "We have met before, haven't we?" "Yes," she said, "We have met before." "Why didn't you kill me?" he asked. She replied, "I am a follower of him who said 'Love your enemies.'"

--L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 265-266.

## *Prayer from the Heart*

Precious Lord, You know my heart inside and out, You are aware of my most hidden secrets. Day after day You show me Your tender mercy, especially when I don't deserve it. Lord, for those times when I have hurt You by hurting others, I beg Your forgiveness and the courage to change. Amen.



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