



Daily Reflections

August 17, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 18: 21- 19: 1

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 the fellow servant 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 his brother from his heart."

When Jesus finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the district of Judea across the Jordan.

Our Scripture Reflection

Poor Peter was so proud of himself at being able to forgive seven times. After all, the Law required two times and at the very most, three times. Can you imagine how deflated he was when Jesus informed him that seven times was insufficient? Seventy seven times is a symbolic way of saying an unlimited number of times. And why are we to forgive? Because Jesus has first forgiven us.

Food for your Journey

In *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir* (Norton, 1996), author D.J. Waldie observes that the biggest drawback to living alone is having nobody to forgive. It is not, in other words, that you don't get certain things -- companionship, sex, somebody to share the chores -- it is that you can't give them. You are deprived of a great opportunity: to learn to love your neighbor as yourself. This was a radical notion in Christ's time; it is radical now. It will always be radical because it is the hardest way, the most illogical way, the "unfairest" way -- and the only way that can grant us the peace that passes all understanding.

Waldie elaborates on forgiveness ... "I need Christ to help me to give glory to God. Again and again, I ask his help in overcoming my fear and pride and greed; again and again, I am ashamed to realize how much I have been given and how I balk when asked to give the slightest thing in return. And every once in a while, I am given a glimpse of something truly revelatory: that it might be less than paradisaical to live with my bossiness, my anxiety, my wildly fluctuating moods. All that time I have been forgiving my husband, he has been quietly forgiving me, too."

--Heather King and D.J. Waldie in *Context*, February 15, 1999, 1.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You gave Your life for my sins. Help me, Lord, to show my profound gratitude by extending mercy and forgiveness to those who have sinned against me. Amen.