



Daily Reflections

August 11, 2016

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

One of the most difficult things that we are commanded to do as Jesus' disciples is to forgive those who have hurt us. Our motivation to do so is two-fold:

1. Gratitude: we have been forgiven many times already by Our Merciful Lord.
2. Freedom: in forgiving, I lift the yoke of hatred for the person who injured me off of my neck. I no longer allow the painful memories to control my mind and heart.

Food for your Journey

In his book *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*, Lewis Smedes says that the parable of the unforgiving servant is about God and us. It promises that if we act like the unforgiving servant, then God will act like the king. "Jesus grabs the hardest trick in the bag — forgiving — and says we have to perform it or we are out in the cold, way out, in the boondocks of the unforgiven. He is tough because the incongruity of sinners refusing to forgive sinners boggles God's mind. He cannot cope with it; there is no honest way to put up with it."

Belief in God is like being a pumpkin. God lifts you up, takes you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. He opens you up, touches you deep inside and scoops out all the yucky stuff — including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then he carves you a new smiling face and puts his light inside you to shine for all the world to see.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I could never repay the love You showed for me on Calvary. May I humbly show my gratitude by extending Your mercy to those who have harmed me. Amen.

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