**“Forgive as Forgiven”**

Psalm 103:1-12

Genesis 50:15-20

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Pentecost 15

“Peter came up and said to [Jesus], ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.’”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

**“FORGIVE AS FORGIVEN”! Forgive** (God’s **command** **/ Law**) as **forgiven** (which is pure **Gospel** / the **Good News** ours by the bloodshed of Jesus having died on a cross). Two weeks ago (my last time with you) we skirted **around** this focal topic in the Lord’s Prayer (working our way backwards from “deliver us from evil” and “lead us not into temptation” **to** “**Thy** will be done on earth as it is in heaven” and “**Thy** kingdom come”). This week we’re hitting the nail on the head / the core / the **benefit** of all that we ask for in other ways. **Here’s the** **gem** … the most generous of the gifts of God, and He earned it to gift it to us by the sending of His Son to die for the world. And those who receive Him and what this text speaks of today in grace has what it brings: eternal life starting when “**forgiveness**” does. “**FORGIVE AS FORGIVEN**” is, both, command and gift … and the gift of **forgiveness** is from God, and of such great magnitude that our willingness to **forgive-likewise** has to become **simple by comparison**. It’s a **message that’s forever-lasting for us** … but of duty for our **todays** and **tomorrows** and **the days after that**.

**Text**

Jesus put it the way I began it with the text for this sermon in the command that extends from beyond the benefit … but pointing out, quickly, that the benefit has to insist upon the command: “Peter came up and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother **sin against me**, and **I** forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.’” “Seven” is the **number of perfection that Scripture uses (it’s perfect forgiveness in other words)**. And Peter had the right **idea**, but not **magnitude** (which Jesus corrected) …

… “therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to”, Jesus said here as He, again, expounds upon the divine kingdom issue by the use of an **illustration** in a **parable**. It’s like “**a king**” (He said) “**who wished to settle accounts with his servants**”. God, the Father, is the “king”, and we (any human) is “his servant” who (one day if not every day), have to “settle accounts” (for what we is owed Him from us for life and for air and for every Good that we’ve been given to enjoy, for spouses and children, for parents and a system of education, for civility and the rule of law, for protection and the health we most-of-the-time have, and for angels who guard against the chaos that would ensue if they didn’t and for earthly “daily bread” leaving totally aside redemption and the atonement of God’s saving work with heaven and eternal life are a gifted option). What we **“owe” God** is **for forgiveness**, the **pinnacle** of all I just named, yet what Jesus will illustrate as most substantial and significant in just a moment, the **“bottom line” for anyone one individually**, but (even before that), all that I first mentioned given by God **on loan to us**, **entrusted to us** with a huge expectation to **do something Godly Good with it**. And that **trust** is **due payback**. “**Accounts** would be **settled**”. **What’s owed** would come **due**.

“When God (the King) began to settle, one was brought to Him who owed Him ten thousand talents” (about 2 and a half million dollars), “and since he could not pay” (who, much, could return this in payback) his Master (God) by-right proceeded to “**order** him to be sold into slavery for it, with his wife and children and all that he had, and **payment to proceed to be made**.”

God could **compel** thankfulness and obedience to say it differently. What He’s **owed is it** and He has every right to **enslave every human to that effort**. God could **compel** obedience without choice. He’s **owed it** and has every right to **enslave humans (every one) to its efforts** …

… which is (at very least) intense **thankfulness**. Again, absolutely everything (that is 2 and a half million dollars-worth of (at that time) valuable services in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness got entrusted to be **put into a Godly Good way returned with like value to what it was given (“accounts settled”)** and an almost infinite amount is the amount that had been **entrusted** the servant … an impossible (almost) amount to ever pay back.

And, to the servant’s credit, he **knew his dilemma**. For people, often, these days, the “settling of accounts” with God doesn’t cause the **fear** that it should (and that’s a dangerous amount of tragedy). Far too many think life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is a **human creation rather than God’s**. Some think that paying back the debt is accomplished with a good-enough amount of simple civility. God gives and abundantly everything that’s Good (it all comes from Him), and our debt couldn’t be returned in a smidgen of adequacy “**returning the favor**” either **to** Him or **for** Him … and this servant at least knew his **indebtedness**.

What he did was smart, and appropriate: he **begged**. It was the **best possible thing he could have done**: “so the servant fell on his knees, imploring the “King” / the “Master” / God, the Father, ‘Have patience with me, and I will **try to repay you everything**’” … but, then, he didn’t even try. Yet God showed what He most wants to show: “out of pity for him the master of that servant **released him and FORGAVE HIM THE DEBT**”. ….

I want to stop there for a minute. The rest that we have to consider in the Law of duty both toward God and on His behalf with people is just a **fractional expression of something similar** **that’s** **from this trust that we’re given in His forgiveness of us**. He doesn’t deal with us according to what we deserve for our **guilt** in thanklessness and carelessness, neglect and anything short of a **perfect execution** of His will with, even, our **thoughts** about proper worship grossly inadequate and unworthy, but graciously, merciful and “slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, **not dealing with us according to our sins, not repaying us according to our iniquities** but, instead, **giving us an undeserved favor. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him**; for as far as the east is from the west, so far **DOES HE remove our transgressions from us” … so much DOES HE forgive us**.

**Application**

But there’s an **application of this trust of being forgiven so abundantly**. One must **receive the gift** and, then, **never ever hold grudges on things so-much the inferior**. Jesus’ told then of the **unwillingness of the vastly-forgiven servant to pass on some small amount of it to one who’d owed him from out of a harm (about $20 in comparative value)**.

The greed of grudges aren’t how a Christian responds to the immense grace of God. Jesus just finished instructing the disciples on how settle conflict showing He expected it … yet demanded we **“FORGIVE AS FORGIVEN”** since we (as our Epistle reading reminds us) “live **to the Lord**”, and not **to ourselves**.

Here I’m going to, pretty much, stop. See, everything else that I’ll ever say about God’s grace and His will desire is just an **unpacking of this (so remember this): “FORGIVE AS FORGIVEN”**. Remember it as both **gift** and as **responsibility** (or the **living-out of that gift**). And, in that, the best that we can do is **pray that we, first, receive and appreciation being forgiven much by God … then sharing it everywhere further**. Let’s pray:

“Most merciful Father, our sins make us **unworthy** to ask anything of You, but for the sake of Your dear Son, do not **condemn us for our sins**, but (rather) hear our cries for mercy, and **forgive us our trespasses**. Then **may we, enlivened by Your forgiveness**, sincerely **forgive too** as any sin against us. All this we pray through +Jesus Christ, our Lord, who earned us forgiveness by His bloodshed. Amen.”