

# Matthew 18:21-35

*The (Unlimited) Extent of Forgiveness*

**Before Christianity was “Christianity”, it was known as “the WAY.”  
(Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22)**

**21 Then 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?”**

### **Job 33:29-30**

<sup>29</sup> *“Behold, God does all these things,  
twice, three times, with a man,  
<sup>30</sup> to bring back his soul from the pit,  
that he may be lighted with the light of life.*

### **Amos 1:3; 2:6**

<sup>3</sup> *Thus says the LORD:*

*“For three transgressions of Damascus,  
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,  
because they have threshed Gilead  
with threshing sledges of iron.*

<sup>6</sup> *Thus says the LORD:*

*“For three transgressions of Israel,  
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,  
because they sell the righteous for silver,  
and the needy for a pair of sandals*

# Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28

*18 “And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again **sevenfold** for your sins.”*

*21 “Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, **sevenfold** for your sins.”*

*24 “then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you **sevenfold** for your sins.”*

*28 “then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you **sevenfold** for your sins.”*

**<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.**

***For Christians, there are no term-limits or expiration dates in offering forgiveness to others***

**23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.<sup>24</sup> When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.<sup>1</sup>  
25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.  
26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’<sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.**



***Modern day equivalency of 10,000 Talents: \$6 billion dollars***

**28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,<sup>[i]</sup> and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.**

**<sup>31</sup> When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.**

***The two worlds are mutually exclusive and antithetical. The master's act of mercy does not represent simply a temporary and unrepeatable "exception" to the world of legal rights and claims, but an entirely different world, a new order. It is in fact the new age, "the kingdom of God," that invades and shatters the old one. – Martinus C. De Boer, biblical scholar***

***By refusing to cancel the debt of his fellow servant, the wicked servant inherently rejects his own citizenship in the merciful king's kingdom***

**<sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”**

# “Inaugurated Eschatology”:

*The invasion of God’s future reign into the present age through Jesus Christ, who will bring about its ultimate consummation when He appears again in glory*

# “This is the WAY” of the Heavenly Kingdom

- *Loving enemies*
- *Blessing those who persecute us*
- *Refusing to take revenge for ourselves, but leaving it to God*
- *Turning the other cheek*
- *Going the extra mile*
- *Forgiving the sins of others from the heart, even up to 70x7 times*



***Jesus sends the message that the failure to live according to the world of mercy, definitively disclosed and mediated through the work of Jesus himself, confronts the believer with the horror of the divine displeasure. To stray from the sphere of God's great mercy back into the sphere of hard-hearted refusal to grant forgiveness even to fellow Christians is to risk not simply the earthly torment of v. 34 but also, and more horribly, the eternal hell to which v. 35 points. – Martinus***

**De Boer, biblical scholar**

# Main Point:

***Our citizenship in God's merciful kingdom is most visibly demonstrated by our (Spirit-enabled) capacity to forgive others. To withhold mercy and forgiveness is to reject our citizenship and the merciful King Himself***

*Remember the \$6 billion you owe*

Eph. 4:32-5:1-2

Colossians 3:12-13

*Turn your “hate-list” into a prayer list*

Matthew 5:43-45

Romans 12:19-20

*Commit to being peacemaker*

Romans 12:18

*Guard your borders with white-picket fences, not  
high-security walls*

Romans 12:9

# Conclusion:

***Our capacity to forgive the sins (or not) directly reflects how much (or how little) we treasure and value the presence of the Merciful King***