

How Forgiveness Reveals a Transformed Heart



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) July 24, 2020

Most of Jesus' parables relate to him and his church. In Matthew 18 he describes a king who calls his servants to account. Evidently, the king was dealing with servants who had been exposed for committing crimes and the servant in greatest debt was one of the first offenders to be brought before him. In some way, this man had managed to fall into tremendous debt, owing the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars. When he was called to account, "he was not able to pay" (Matthew 18:25). So the king commanded that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he possessed.

This servant immediately cried out, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all" (18:26). The man had nothing of value to exchange for his criminal act — so he fell on the mercy of his king. "Give me some time. I can make up for my sin and satisfy all your demands." But the truth was, this servant couldn't possibly pay for his crime.

"Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt" (18:27). And then we find that the servant wasn't repentant at all, he was merely trying to play on the king's feeling, seeking his pity. The king knew this, but he had compassion because of the awful sickness that plagued this man's mind and heart.

The king in Jesus' parable knew just how crushing the consequences of his servant's sins were. And he could see that if he gave him over to those consequences, the servant would be lost forever. Without forgiveness, he would spiral downward hopelessly and become hardened for life. So the king forgave him and declared the man to be free and clear, releasing him from all debt.

How did the forgiven servant respond to his master's grace and forgiveness? He went right out and attacked a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money (18:28-30). What an abominable sin; the blackness in his heart was revealed, even after he had been forgiven.

Are you getting the message? We cannot ever repay God for our trespasses; we must just accept his grace and mercy toward us. And we must be tenderhearted and loving to one another: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

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