

God's Forgiveness To You and Through You

- INJ. I'm going say some thngs in this sermon: very dffclt – not to undrstnd (fr prbl/service, you can tell that the central focus today: how God frgvs us, so we should frgv others – pretty smpl, strghtfrwd concept; not dffclt undrstnd) but dffclt put into prctc. I know it's dffclt put into prctc bec I know how many/you have come/talked to me persnlly re ppl in your life who've harmed you, wronged, brght sdnss/pain into life; ppl you have hard time frgvng. And even if haven't told me all details of pain you bear bec of others, I'm sure evone you here right now can think smone who's hurt you, smone you might have hard time frgvng.
- But you: Xian; so means: you want frgv, do right thng; know that's what J wants you do, what he's tchnng you do in this prbl. But smtms that's really hard! J knows that; knows it's chrctr trait of sinful humans/Xians to struggle to frgv ppl that sin vs us – which is why J today tells such captvtng, pwrfl prbl re mercfl king & unmercfl srvnt – so that you can fully undrstnd God's frgvnss to you & thru you.
- This whole discssn on frgvns began when Pt came J: **vs. 21**. Sound pretty generous on Pt's part? We: hard engh time frgvng 1x, let alone 7x. Pt here: J, I know I need frgv; you want me frgv. But there's gotta be some kind thrshhld, right? I'm just wndng what limit is. If smone sins vs me again/again, and I frgv 7x (sounds nice round, biblcl #), is that suffcnt? Generous enough? And J: **vs. 22**. Intrstng: in Grk, tad ambig; could be 77x or 70x7x (490x). But whether 77 or 490, clearly # doesn't matter. J's point: we're not suppsd keep track; there is to be no limit to our frgvns; we must always, under all crcmstncs, for all ppl, be willing frgv.
- I told you: that's hard! In fact, sounds nearly impssbl! Limitlss frgvns? J, serious? We know he is serious, bec tells us this prbl, and in Mt 6: **"If you frgv other ppl when they sin vs you, your hvnly Fr'll also frgv you. But if you do not frgv others their sins, your Fr will not frgv your sins" (14-15)**. So if you're a Xian, this puts you in agonzng dilemma, moral tug/war btwn sinful nature & God's will – bec you know: J serious re limitlss frgvns; but there are some ppl you have hard time frgvng bec what they've done you/fam. Bully that picks on kid; prnt that left you when child; cwrkr that lies/talks trash re you; spouse that cheated on you; drunk driver that killed your child; creep that molstd your child; monster that raped you when little girl. These: sorts ppl that make think: how ever frgv them!?
- J knows that, so tells this prbl re God's frgvns to you. **Vs. 23-24**. Might remem trnsltn: 10k talents, not skills/abilties, but a talent was massive sum \$. So 10k talents: hardly calculable! I kinda like trnsltn 10k bags gold bec you can really visualize. Today, a 1 oz gold coin fr US Mint: worth ~\$2k – one coin. Now take heavy duty leather money bag filled w/30 lbs. of gold coins worth \$2k each; then have 10k of those bags – practically unrealistic. Like J saying: \$10k gagillion/bazillion – hard to fathom; obviously unpayable! **Vs. 25-26**. Crazy! Not a chance! Never gonna happen! But, **vs. 27** (multi-bil!).
- This: God's frgvns to you. God: kng; you: srvnt. Bec: your sins (wicked wrds/thghts/actns); sinful nature born w/; godless thngs you've done (which've made it hard for others frgv you); godly thngs you fail to do (like frgvng others) – you have accrud debt to God, a stgrng/ctstrphc/astrnmcl that you could nvr pay! You'd be fool: "Be patient w/me, God; I'll pay back evthng." Crazy! Not a chance! Never gonna happen! You owe God big time! And he's fully w/in rights to repossess your soul and send you hell as punshmnt for your debt.
- But, **vs. 27**. J cancelled your debt! Took your debt statement, that lists evthng wrong you've ever done, came this earth to pay it off by living life of perf obednc. J had no debt, bec J nvr: sinned, held grudge, withheld frgvns fr anyone, not even soldiers who hammrd nails thru wrists into cross, who whipped skin off back, who ridicld him to dying breath. Remem, J: **"Fr, frgv them" (Lk 23:34)**. Then: **"Finshd" (Jn 19:30)**. You've been to enough GF services to know word means: debt paid in full, nothing owed any longer, paymnt recvd, balnc paid in full – finished! J paid stgrng/ctstrphc/astrnmcl debt you owed God. This: God's frgvns to you.
- And now, God's frgvns to you becomes thru you. **Vs. 28a**. Silver denarius coin worth ~1 day's wages for average wrkr; so 100 silver denarius coins ≈ 3 mos wages, ¼ annual salry. Now, that's no small debt other prsn owed him! Makes think: when anthr prsn hurts you/fam/marg, brings pain/sadness into your life, that's no small debt other prsn owes you. They've sinned vs you in ways that've made your life more painful, less joyful. They've hurt you, and that's no small debt. So how you going react to that?
- In prbl, servant reacts like this: **vs. 28b-29**. This isn't that multi-bil \$ debt fr before, impossbl pay back. This, maybe ~\$15k; not impossbl, still very dffclt pay back. When you commit grievous sin vs smone, or smone vs you, it's very dffclt pay that back, make up for that wrong. Damage is done; pain is there; can't undo it. So, prsn sinned agnst finds self in moral tug/war: either frgv or refuse. In prbl, we're told: **vs. 30**. And you know what haps next. King finds out; furious; summons servant; "I canclld your multi-bil \$ debt; you wouldn't even budge on his \$15k!?" And king withdrew frgvns, reinstated debt, threw man in prison forever.

- Applctn here: very easy see. If we, who've been frgvn stgrng/ctstrphc/astrnmcl debt by God, refuse frgv the lesser debts others owe us, this infuriates God! We cannot be unaffected by God's grace! When God shows frgvns to you, expects frgvns thru you. And when no frgvns thru you, that's despising God's frgvns to you. And when God's frgvns to you is despised, evntly: withdrwn, debt reinstatd, thrown hell forever.
- So, if we've been sinned against and find selves in moral tug/war (Frgv or not? Know supposed to; but don't really want; don't even know if can), we must always remem crshng debt God frgv us – bec, honestly, it dwarfs lesser debts owed to us by others. We need persnlz this prbl and recgnz just how much we've been frgvn by God. And when do that, then our Xian hrts will well up w/such gratitude to God that we can't help but frgv others. God's frgvns to you motivates God's frgvns thru you.
- Now, not saying: that's easy thing do. But am saying: Xian/necessary thing do, bec what Xp wants us do; so what we want do too. So as we conclude, here: few thoughts to help us become better at frgvng others.
- 1) If we want be better at frgvng, first need be better at confssng. Need spend little less time focusing on what others've done to us; more: we've done to others. If you've done smone wrong, you need swallow pride, apprch, and say, "Sorry; please frgv me." And need not sugar coat it w/excuses or try pay it off w/gifts or fish for counter-apology. We need learn how make sincere apology and get better at confessing.
- 2) Need undrstnd what frgvns essntly is. Frgvns means releasng, surrndrng, lettng go – we've got let thngs go! Defntn, helpful: lettng go my self-perceivd right get even. If smone wrongs me, true frgvns means not: holding grudge, looking for ways make them pay, seeking revenge, trying ruin their reputation, wishing evil upon them. Frgvng smone means lettng go of that part of you that really wants make them pay. We've got let that go – bec when we do, that releases our hrts fr bondage/hatred, and we'll really start to heal.
- 3) This also true: frgvns ≠ no natrl consqncs. Sin results in natrl consqncs – babysitter that molests child; son or grandson who steals money/jewels to pay for drug addctn; husb that beats wife; wife who has affair on husb – no longer. These: just natrl consqncs that keep us fr being victmzd. Frgvng smone doesn't mean allowing self be victmzd; that'd be wrong, too. Now, let's be honest: very fine line btwn protctng self fr being victmzd and harboring vengeance that refuses to frgv. That's fine line that can easily be crossed. But, we must frgv! No matter what anyone does to us, even if there are natrl consqncs, we must frgv.
- 4) Finally, if you're listening/thinking, "This is just impossbl!" remem: frgvns is not emotion but decision. When smone does you wrong, may hurt for long time. But as Xians, we can't let emotions get in way; we must make decision to frgv. Maybe we have to make that decision ev day. Maybe ev morning we wake up and say: "This still hurts; my emotions hurt me; but I still make the decision to frgv."
- I told you I'd say some things in this sermon that are pretty diffclt – not to undrstnd but put into practc. But remem: this isn't just my advice on how to live happier life. J gave us prbl of unmercfl servant bec he knows that in this sinful wrld we all will be wronged and we all will have hard time frgvng others. But, we wronged God, and he frgv us; and he calls on us to frgv others. That is point of this prbl! So challenge yourself to be better at frgvng, bec God's frgvns to you means God's frgvns thru you.

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."