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The Parables of Jesus Christ: The Forgiven Who Wouldn't Forgive

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PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

TWENTY-TWO: The Forgiven Who Wouldn't Forgive (Mt. 18:23-35)

SURVEY

A king decided to settle accounts with his servants. One of them owed him a vast amount of money but was unable to pay and begged for mercy, pleading that he and his family be not sold into slavery in order to pay on the debt. The king took pity and cancelled his debt. The forgiven servant had a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money. Like the first servant, he too pled for mercy. However, refusing his plea the forgiven man had him thrown in prison.

Upon hearing of this terrible act of ingratitude the furious king commanded his wicked servant be cast into prison until the entire debt be paid.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This parable, perhaps as no other, illustrates in graphic fashion the cruelty, thanklessness, and utter depravity of the unregenerate heart.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Consider the staggering contrasts concerning both the amounts owed and the attitudes displayed in this parable.
 1. The amount owed to the king—It amounted to ten thousand talents. The servant here was no doubt a tax-collecting governor of sorts, entrusted by the king to rule over a city or province. He had apparently either embezzled or misappropriated vast sums of money collected for the king.
 - a. One talent would purchase a slave.
 - b. One talent represented twenty years' wages for the average workman.
 - c. The total annual tax bill for all of Palestine was less than one thousand talents. Yet the gracious king forgave all this.
 2. The amount owed to the servant—It was only one hundred pence, which amounted to approximately four months' wages (1/60 of a talent). Yet the greedy servant refused to forgive.

- This great principle of the importance for the forgiven to forgive is brought out time and again in the New Testament.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Mt. 6:13-14)

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:32)

- Jesus would begin to end His ministry by voicing that wonderful word *forgiveness*—

1. During His Sermon on the Mount

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Mt. 6:12)

2. During His sufferings on the cross

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” (Lk. 23:34)