

Show Mercy Out of Gratitude

by Zac Poonen

Showing mercy out of gratitude is essential to living a life of perpetual happiness and following Jesus' example.

Scripture: Matthew 18:23

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Gratitude"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of living a life of gratitude for the forgiveness we have received from God, as demonstrated in the parable of the unmerciful servant. He illustrates that while the servant was forgiven an enormous debt, he failed to extend the same mercy to others, leading to dire consequences. Poonen argues that true gratitude should compel us to show mercy, reflecting the spirit of Christ, who forgave even those who wronged Him. He warns that failing to forgive others can lead to spiritual torment and unrest, urging believers to embody the new covenant of love and forgiveness. Ultimately, we are called to bless others and follow Jesus' example of unconditional love.

Transcript

We must never lose the wonder of the forgiveness that the Lord has granted us so freely. OUR WHOLE LIFE MUST NOW BE LIVED AS AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO THE LORD FOR ALL THAT HE DID FOR US ON CALVARY'S CROSS. Under the Law it was through threats of judgment that people served the Lord. But under grace, it is to be through the power of gratitude.

In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus told His disciples a parable of a kind king who had forgiven his servant a large debt of thirty crores rupees (Rs.300 million). That servant's debt was so large that he could never have repaid it in his own lifetime or for generations to come. So he should have been immensely grateful for the forgiveness that he had received. But, he did not render to others in the same measure as he himself had received. He went out from his master's presence and immediately went to the house of another man who owed him sixty thousand rupees. Now, Rs.60,000/- is certainly not a small sum of money that we can easily overlook. But it was a mere drop in the ocean compared to the Rs.300,000,000 that he had been forgiven! But what did this man do? He "grabbed the other man by the throat and demanded instant repayment". And when the other man could not repay, he had him arrested and jailed. This was reported to the king who immediately called for the unmerciful servant and calling him "an evil-hearted wretch", handed him over to the torturers, until he repaid the entire amount. And then Jesus said, "So shall My Heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matt. 18:35).

The king in this parable had wanted his servant to show mercy out of gratitude. It was only when the servant failed to act out of gratitude for the mercies that he himself had received, that the king adopted Method No.2 - that of torture. It is the same with God. He desires primarily that we forgive others out of gratitude for what He has done for us. It is when we don't respond to that call of grace, then God places us under the Law, hoping that we will respond at least to the threats of the Law. Then He seeks to teach us to forgive others, by handing us over to the torturers. The reason why many believers never seem to be able to enter the Sabbath rest of God and are unsteady, unpredictable in their behaviour, often gloomy, long-faced, depressed and irritable is because they haven't forgiven others. The torturers are working on their spirit.

If the Pharisees who brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus, had started stoning that poor woman, Jesus would have stood in front of that woman and received the stones Himself and said, "Kill Me first". That is what He did for us on Calvary. He stood in front of us and received the "stones" that we should have received. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of the new covenant, and it is the exact opposite of the spirit of the Pharisees. Only one who has the Spirit of Christ can enter into a lifetime of perpetual happiness.

A true story entitled "Love's Atom Bomb", was published some years ago about a godly Christian in Korea whose young son was shot dead by a Communist youth. That godly father went and sought out his son's murderer and not only forgave him but adopted him as his own son and brought him up. Such a man certainly understood "the new and living way" far better than many who know only the doctrine and the Scripture-references! Jesus did not teach the way as a doctrine. He walked it all through His life. He loved those who hated Him to such an extent, that He gave His life-blood to save them. This is the new and living way. We are now called to follow in Jesus' footsteps - not putting a curse on others by wishing evil for them, but by blessing those who curse us. The world is full of people who wish evil for others and who go around cursing and complaining and speaking evil of others. Let us go around instead doing good and blessing and releasing people.

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