

A Mandate for Mercy (v. 35)

- A Nathan-esque parable

Matt. 6:14-15 -- *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

- Jesus did not just become a works-righteousness preacher. He's not saying that you earn forgiveness by forgiving others.
- Warning signs on a highway: "Danger up ahead!"
- A heart that refuses to forgive is evidence of a heart that has not been forgiven.
- Forgiveness flows from hearts that are satisfied in the mercy of God and that are rejoicing in the full and complete cancellation of our debt.

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A Mandate for Mercy from a Merciful Master

Matthew 18:21-35 – *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*

A Question of Limits (v. 21-22)

- "How often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"
 - Perhaps a reasonable question, but does it align with kingdom thinking?
- "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."
 - Jesus' point in using such a high number is that we should not count at all, but instead be willing to forgive generously, without limit!
 - "Come further up, come further in."

An Unpayable Debt (v. 23-26)

- The amount of the debt owed is staggering: *billions; 193,000 years' wages*
- Does our debt to God because of sin land on us with the weight Jesus intends?

Romans 14:23 -- *But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.*

1 Cor. 10:31 -- *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- If we don't understand how truly massive our offense is to God, his forgiveness just won't amaze us.

An Undeserved Mercy (v. 27)

- Talk about a story that would go viral!

Col. 2:13-14 -- *...having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

- Verse 27 literally changes everything. The gospel changes everything.
 - It's the wellspring of mercy and grace, and if you've tasted from its sweetness, you see why Jesus answers Peter's question the way he does.
- If showing undeserved mercy seems distant, maybe your story hasn't included a verse 27.

An Ungrateful Heart (v. 28-33)

- One hundred denarii: a denarius = about 1 day's wage; a few months' wages
- "Does he not realize the depth of mercy he has been shown?" -- **Do we?**
 - When we refuse to offer forgiveness, we're saying the Cross just isn't enough; it's just not big enough.

- Our unwillingness to forgive also means we doubt God's ability to ultimately and finally administer justice as he sees fit.

Romans 12:19 -- *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

- The master's response (v. 32-33)
 - An argument from the greater to the lesser.
 - The forgiveness we're commanded to give will always pale in comparison to the forgiveness God has given us.
 - This is straightforward, but that doesn't mean forgiveness is easy.
 - Biblical forgiveness assumes there's actually something to be forgiven, i.e. sin.
- Our forgiveness is to imitate God's forgiveness: (Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13, and v. 33)

A commitment by the one true God to pardon graciously those who repent and believe so that they are reconciled to him, although this commitment does not eliminate all consequences. – Chris Brauns, Unpacking Forgiveness
- Does God hold us to a higher standard than he holds himself?
- V. 34 – "jailers" = torturers/tormentors; the torment was to be unceasing