

# 70 TIMES 7 MATTHEW 18:21-35 MESSAGE BY THE REV. DR. NATHAN WEAVER

## 70 Times 7 - September 2023

Read Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT)

This morning's text offers a simple yet important question: How many times should I forgive wrongs?

Jesus answers with a story. In this parable there is a king who has a subject who owes a huge amount of money. In Greek it says his debt is 10,000 talents. This is an absurd amount of money. He owes the equivalent of \$21 trillion dollars. Jesus' hearers would have clearly understood that it was impossible to repay this debt. So the king says, "Listen your debt is so great, there is nothing you can do to repay. So it's going to cost you your freedom. Your property will be sold and you and your family will be slaves." The man begs for forgiveness. "Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all." But repayment of this debt was utterly impossible. The debt was too great. There was no chance.

But in light of this impossibility, the master "was filled with pity, released him, and forgave his debt." He forgave the debt. He didn't say, "Come back and pay it later." He said, repayment is impossible, and I will take the burden of your debt on myself. You are forgiven.

You would think this radical act of forgiveness would inspire the servant to do the same with others, but that's not what happens. He immediately hunts down someone who owes him money – today's equivalent of \$20,000. This is a sizable debt, but nothing compared to the trillions he was just forgiven. But he did not learn a lesson from his

generous ruler. He demands immediate repayment. The debtor begs for time – I will repay it! It's a big debt, but I'm good for it. Just give me time. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

The king finds out about this act of injustice and brings the original debtor back. Despite the mercy I showed you, you failed to show mercy to others. The forgiveness that he had been given was rescinded. He was sent to prison until his debt was paid, but with the absurd amount he owed, it would take an eternity to pay it off. He was lost forever.

Questions:

Do you find it challenging to offer forgiveness to others?

Why is it difficult to forgive?

Tell a story about a time when you thought it would be impossible to forgive something.

If Jesus has forgiven us (and forgiven the person who hurt us), why is it so important for us to forgive them too?

