



Love is a Many-Splendored Thing

Forgiving Our Debtors

Matthew 18:21-35

The Debt Metaphor

The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant: Matthew 18:23-35; Luke 7:41-50

How is sin comparable to monetary debt?

As one created in the image of the Triune God of love

I am obligated by this nature to love both God and neighbor in every and all occasions

Every failure to love, at every juncture, is a duty missed, an obligation gone wanting

Every such failure is a "double debt"

The first, to God, Who created me to love after His image

The second, to the person not loved, who deserves my love and respect

(And this due to my obligation and the person's inherent worth as an image bearer)

The Unpayable Nature of This Debt

When one opportunity to love is missed, it can never be made up

Why? Because every moment forward demands its own perfect & full execution of love

There is never a break or space to generate extra love to make up the deficit!

Common Counterfeit "Payments"

Apologies and repentance are very important but do not "pay off" the debt

Punishment for the offender may satisfy legal justice but does not "pay off" the debt

Revenge may provide a temporary shallow catharsis but does not "pay off" the debt

Restitution can simulate replacement of things but does not touch the love debt

The **only** two options: the victim to forgive the debt or hold on to the debt

Forgiving Our Debtors

Holding on to the debt means we continue to hold a power over the offender

This means we by necessity must drag around our debtors (very cumbersome)

It also means we continue to live within the ongoing radiation of the offense

Forgiveness means we release the unpayable debt we rightfully hold

Forgiveness is a free action (as no required payment can erase the debt)

Forgiveness is not an emotion but a choice of the will, like tearing up a piece of paper

It doesn't mean we forget, or waive just consequences, or fail to set future boundaries
It doesn't erase or minimize the importance and value of what was lost
It means we release an intrinsic power over the other due to their action
Which allows the victim to reverse powerlessness by acting in power to release
And it gives a fundamental spiritual freedom to the forgiven one

The Reason We Forgive

The primary reason we forgive others is because we have been forgiven a greater debt
Ten thousand talents! 164,000 years of work: Matthew 18:24
Our debt to God is always greater than our debt to any one person
We cannot fail to forgive when we truly know the forgiveness we have been given
The one who has been forgiven little loves little: Luke 7: 47
The power to forgive is found in the very power of Jesus Who said:
Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do: Luke 23:34
Our will to choose forgiveness activates His power to perform it!

***"We believe in choosing to forgive when someone has wronged us; and seeking forgiveness
when we have wronged another"***
