

My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday's Parable from the Gospel of Matthew contains an important lesson for all of us, if we are truly to unite ourselves to our Creator and to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Lord tells us of a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he approached a servant to whom he had loaned 10,000 talents, and found that the servant could not pay, the king ordered that he should be sent into debtor's prison along with his wife, children, and all his possessions. The servant fell at his master's feet, begging for time, and the king showed him mercy. However, this same servant later approached one of his coworkers, who owed him 100 denarii. When his fellow servant also begged, the Wicked Servant refused, and had him thrown into prison.

Several fellow servants witnessed this, and they reported the Wicked Servant to the King. Naturally, the King was furious, and when he summoned the servant who owed him 10,000 talents he said, *'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'* (Matthew 18:32-33) Christ finishes this parable by explaining that the wicked servant's fate will befall us too, *"if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."* (Matthew 18:35)

There are a few details we can examine to show the Wicked Servant's hardness of heart. In saying the Wicked Servant owed 10,000 talents, the Lord is exaggerating to show us something. If we begin with the understanding that a denarius was the daily wage of a worker, and that one single talent could equal up 10,000 denarii, we understand the Wicked Servant's trouble: he must work for 200,000 years to repay everything! By comparison, the fellow Servant's 100 denarii is a very small amount indeed. Also, remember that nowhere in the Bible is prison a punishment for debt. Our Lord is instead using the language of the occupying Roman laws to demonstrate that unlike the legalistic spirit of the pagans, even as sinful beings, we can hope only for God's mercy to save us.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us not be like the Wicked Servant and forget the mercy of our own Heavenly King, who lovingly understands our weakness and faults. Let us instead willingly forgive our brothers and sisters for the wrongs they have done to us. Only then we will we truly imitate the perfectness of our Father who is in Heaven.

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