

**Title:** The Big Payback

**Text:** Matthew 18:21-35 ESV

**Forgiveness is not:**

a feeling.

forgetting.

fair.

reconciliation.

**Biblical forgiveness is:** *the one-time and ongoing decision to cancel the debt of someone who has wronged you and release them from what you believe they owe you.*

**1. We see the standard of forgiveness.**

- a. *"Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" (Vs. 21-22)*

**2. We see the mercy of forgiveness.**

- a. *"So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt." (Vs. 26-27)*
- b. The servant owes 10,000 talents.
  - i. 1 talent = about 20 years' wages
  - ii. 10,000 talents = 200,000 years of labor = an *unpayable* debt
  - iii. Equivalent today: hundreds of millions to billions
- c. King's Response: took pity → released him → canceled the debt
- d. *"by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." (Colossians 2:14)*
- e. *"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" (Luke 23:34)*

**3. We see the hypocrisy of unforgiveness.**

- a. *"But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'" (Vs. 28)*
- b. 100 denarii = about three months' wages
- c. *"He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt." (Vs. 30)*
- d. **Refusing to forgive vs. Struggling to forgive**

**4. We see the consequences of unforgiveness.**

- a. *"Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'" (Vs. 32-33)*
- b. *"So you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow... so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs." (2 Corinthians 2:7 & 11)*

- c. *“And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.”* (Vs. 34)
- d. **“Jailers”** = torturers or tormentors
- e. *“So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”* (Vs. 35)

**How do we forgive?**

1. Remember how much you've been forgiven.
2. Cancel the debt they owe.
3. Pray for their well-being.

**Take Away:** Remember the debt God canceled for you, so you can stop keeping receipts on those who've wronged you.