

II SAMUEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Samuel chapter 13 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our studies of II Samuel we have seen David rise to the pinnacle of success. He was the king in Israel, he was taking back territory from the enemies of Israel, his kingdom was very wealthy, things were going great until he did not purpose in his heart to remain holy before God! He did not guard his mind and allowed things to come in that caused him to sin.

David not only committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of David's mighty men, but he also had Uriah killed in battle to cover up his sin with Bathsheba! And for a whole year David tried to cover his sin, he tried to ignore his sin, but it ate at him. Physically he was weak, spiritually he was dry, but still he refused to repent before God! It wasn't until Nathan the prophet exposed David to his sin and it is then that he repented and got right with God.

Now here's the thing. David committed 2 of the 22 capital crimes listed in the Bible. Thus, he should have been put to death for his transgression of the Law along with Bathsheba, who is now his wife. But we see God's grace and mercy extended to both of them and God told David that he would not die for his sins, but there would be consequences for his actions, the sword would not depart from his house! As we move into chapter 13 this evening, we will see how true of a statement that will be. So with that said, let's begin reading in II Samuel chapter 13, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

II SAMUEL 13**VERSES 1-2**

1. Here we see Absalom and his sister, born of David through his wife Maacah, and Tamar was beautiful. Also mentioned is Amnon, David's first-born son through Ahinoam the Jezreelitess. Being the first-born meant that he was next in line to the throne, but Amnon had a problem. He lusted after his half-sister Tamar and it was so bad that he was sick over it. It affected his life. Now I want you to notice that I didn't say that he was in love with her but he lusted after her and you may think that is harsh, but when you read the story, you will see why I have said that. Like his father David, Amnon wants to take something that did not belong to him!

VERSES 3-5

1. Jonadab was the cousin of Amnon and both these men were wicked. It says that Jonadab was Amnon's friend, but I disagree. You see, a true friend will not lead you down a sinful path. A true friend will not encourage you to sin, and yet, that is exactly what Jonadab is doing here! Jonadab asks Amnon why he is looking so ill, and Amnon tells him that he is in love with the sister of Absalom. Why didn't he just say his own sister? Because sin, this lust is so strong that it is twisting the reality of the situation so he can continue down this path!

And Jonadab tells him that he needs to lay down on his bed and when David comes in and asks what is wrong, just tell him that you would like your sister Tamar to come in and care for you. It all sounds good until you understand that they both were plotting the rape of Tamar! How fast we respond to wicked advise and reject godly!

2. In Proverbs 17:17 we are told, “**A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.**” A true friend is there in good times and in bad times to help you, not lead you down a path of sin! If you have friends that are willing to condone your sin, they are not your friends. On the other hand, if you have someone who loves you so much that they are willing to confront your sin, to encourage you to draw close to God, that truly is your friend! It is as Proverbs 27:17 says, “**As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.**”

VERSES 6-10

1. Now as you read this you think, “How old is Amnon, refusing to eat unless Tamar feeds him?” Folk’s, he was not a child but he certainly was acting like a child and David fed into this behavior. When Amnon asked for Tamar, David sent her to him. And here is this innocent young woman who was willing to care for her brother. And as she prepares all this food for him, he still refuses to eat until he dismisses all the servants in his house. Once they are gone he tells Tamar to bring the food for him into the bedroom. What a wicked plan, and all this is being done to deceive Tamar so that he can rape her!

VERSES 11-14

1. Tamar is shocked over what Amnon wants to do and she is pleading with him not to go down this path, not to be a fool and disgrace her. He was to be the next king in Israel and this would put an end to that. Very wise words from Tamar trying to persuade Amnon to stop this before it goes any further. It is as Clarke wrote, “There is something exceedingly tender and persuasive in this speech of Tamar; but Amnon was a mere brute, and it was all lost on him.”

2. Tamar also said, “**. . . Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.**” It seems like she is saying that if Amnon would ask David to have her hand in marriage, that he would allow it and yet, in Leviticus 18:11 we are told, “**The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father — she is your sister — you shall not uncover her nakedness.**” It is possible that this was not strictly observed, but I don’t think that is the case here. I think she was stalling for time, trying to get away and he would not let her and he overpowered her and raped her! Now it said that he loved her, let’s find out how true that is and the reality is, rape is not a sign of love, but of lust!

VERSES 15-18

1. Love is not turned off and on like a light switch, but lust most certainly is! And please understand that love is not just the act but it is a relationship, it is not just a feeling, it is an act of your will. And here Amnon, as soon as he is done raping her, he tosses her out in the street like a dog! He refuses to listen to her pleas to let her stay. He could still do the right thing and marry her or pay her bride-price that was compensation for the fact that she would be less likely to be married since she was no longer a virgin. In Exodus 22:16-17 we are told, **“If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.”** Also, in Deuteronomy 22:28-29 we are told, **“If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.”** But again, he does not do this but throws her out into the streets!

2. Regarding sexual relations outside the marriage relationship, Smith tells us, “Let me give a friendly, fatherly, tip unto all of you young girls, who may be in the position of Tamar, in that you have some fellow who is really pressing hard to have sex with you. He is the soul of kindness. He is very attentive. He calls all the time. He opens the door for you. He brings you flowers, but he’s pushing hard for a sexual relationship. Don’t give in. If you really love him, make him wait until you’re married. If he really loves you, he will. Over, and over, time and again, the fellow will press and press until he has taken you to bed, and that’s the last you see or hear from him. You’re no longer a challenge. He’s conquered, and he’s off for new conquests. If you really love him and want him, make him wait. If you really love God, and love yourself, make him wait.”

And let me also say this. I understand that in high school there is a lot of pressure to have sexual relations, but listen carefully to what I have to say. Girls want to have sexual relations with boys because they think that will solidify their relationship. Boys want to have sex with girls because they want to have sex with girls. And girls, please understand that once you have sex with a boy, within a few weeks those relationships have dissolved away and you have given a piece of yourself away. God has what is best and if it is true love, understand that ***TRUE LOVE WAITS!***

VERSES 19-20

1. Amnon was sick in lust because he could not have her, and now he is bolting her out of his mind and his life. He is through with her and he can put another notch on his belt buckle you might say. And Tamar, on the other had, was devastated by all that had happened to her, and rightly so. And her robe, which symbolized her virginity, was now torn and she was mourning over the situation. And all who saw her would recognize what had happened to her. The question is who has done this to her?

Well, isn't it interesting that Absalom recognized that it was Amnon who had done this to her, his half brother. How did He know? This may have been an ongoing problem with Amnon, this lust. And think about it, who could refuse to sleep with the heir to the throne? And thus, it seems that he had a reputation for this kind of behavior, and Absalom knew right away who had done this, his half brother Amnon. And Absalom would not forget what Amnon did to his sister, and he is going to wait for the most opportune time to get his revenge. In the mean time he takes care of his sister Tamar, and hides his feelings towards Amnon. And like I have said, David took that which did not belong to him and now we see this here with his son, Amnon doing the same thing you might say!

2. We are told that, **“Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom’s house.”**

That word, **“desolate”** is used of ravaged cities, of ruined lands, as in Isaiah 6:11. That was now Tamar’s life and we do not know what happened to her because we don’t have any more information on her in the Scriptures, but it is more than likely that she lived out her life in this desolate position in the home of Absalom. And later on Absalom will name his daughter Tamar, more than likely to honor his sister!

3. Now how would her father, David respond to this situation? We don’t have to guess for we are told in the next verse.

VERSE 21

1. When David finds out what Amnon did to his daughter, Tamar, he is mad! No kidding. The tragedy here is that is as far as it goes. There is no discipline, nothing. And as you read this you wonder why? Maybe David felt he was in no position to say anything since he sinned with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. Yes, that was wrong, but you still have to discipline your children and this was a serious offense against his daughter! I guess it is as Meyer wrote, “They say a man never hears his own voice till it comes back to him from the phonograph. Certainly a man never sees the worst of himself until it reappears in his child.” And as we see what transpires here, David was not a good disciplinarian and his children reflected that. Solomon wrote over and over again on training up a child, and you may ask why? Because he saw the affects in his own family, and he wanted others to learn from their mistakes!

VERSE 22

1. Absalom is brooding over this, allowing this anger, this bitterness, this hatred for Amnon to grow and grow and it will finally manifest itself. Absalom is waiting for the right time, the right set of circumstances to get his revenge on Amnon. I wonder if David would have intervened and done something if Absalom would have let it go but, as Trapp wrote, “Nothing is more unsafe to be trusted, than the fair looks of a festered heart.”

VERSES 23-27

1. Sheep shearing was a festive time and as Absalom was finishing up shearing the sheep he asked his father if the family could get together and celebrate. But David refuses to go but allows his son Amnon to represent him there, as he was the heir to the throne, and the rest of David’s sons go along. Absalom has been waiting 2 full years to get back at Amnon and now the time had come for his revenge. Folk’s, we can allow bitterness, anger, hate to build up inside of us so that we plot to come against another to take some kind of revenge on them. That is wrong. Give it to God, He will take care of it and you should be praying for their restoration and not their destruction, just as you would want others to be praying for you!

VERSES 28-29

1. So as the brothers gather together at Absalom's house, eating and drinking, Absalom gave the word to his servants and they killed Amnon! When his other brothers saw what happened they ran for their lives. Why did they run away like that? Because they thought they were next in line to be killed. You see, it was not uncommon that one son would kill his brothers so that he would be the uncontested heir to the throne! We saw that in Judges 9:4-6 as Abimelech killed 69 of 70 of his brothers, one got away, so that he could reign! It is just as the Lord said to David after he confessed his sin, "**Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.**" That is what we are seeing here.

VERSES 30-36

1. First of all here is a good lesson for us to learn. It is amazing at how distorted information can get. Thus, before you go spreading it around, make sure it is the correct information.

2. Secondly, Jonadab tells David that what he first heard about all his sons being killed by Absalom was wrong, only Amnon was killed and he was killed because he raped his sister Tamar. It was a revenge killing you might say. Now what important piece of information did Jonadab leave out? He forgot to tell David that it was his plan that he gave to Amnon so that he could rape his sister Tamar. I guess Jonadab wanted to get on the good side of David and if he would have told David this was partly his fault, well, things would not have gone so well!

3. Once again you have to wonder if David would have administered Biblical correction, if he did what Exodus 22:16-17 and Deuteronomy 22:28-29 tells us, maybe Absalom would not have murdered Amnon!

VERSES 37-39

1. Why didn't Absalom go to the city of refuge for protection? Because he was guilty of premeditated murder and the city of refuge was a place for the innocent, those that accidentally killed someone!

2. Also, why in the world did Absalom go to Geshur, on the east side of the Jordan River? He fled to Geshur because Absalom's mother was the daughter of the king of Geshur, Talmi, which made the king his grandfather. Thus, he runs to his grandpa's house for safety. Remember, Absalom was the son of Maacah and David.

3. We see that David has now accepted the fact that his son Amnon was dead, and now he longed to see his son Absalom. But there was a huge obstacle in the way - **PRIDE!** David could not get past that nor could Absalom. Neither would be the first to say they were sorry or wrong, and try to heal the wounds. Thus they remained far apart for three years. And as hard as that is to believe, how many families today do the same thing. No one wants to humble themselves and heal the wounds. They would rather go to the grave before admitting they were wrong and say that they are sorry. And tragically many do without ever coming face to face with each other. This is not going to be a good thing for both David and Absalom, as we will see!

II SAMUEL 14**VERSES 1-3**

1. Joab was David's nephew, his sister Zeruiah's son. And Joab saw how much David longed to see his son Absalom, but he would not make the first move to heal the hurt. Baldwin reminds us, "In the case of Absalom and the king, the relationship remained virtually deadlocked, neither side having the spiritual incentive to break it." And I'm sure that Joab tried to get David to take that step, but when it kept failing he resorts to plan B. He is going to send a woman to come to king David with this story of what has happened in her family and she will bring her fears to him. This woman was from Tekoa, which was about 5 or 6 miles from Bethlehem. And Joab grew up in the vicinity of Tekoa and may have known this woman from earlier days, but I don't believe this was a true story. We are told that Joab told her to, "**Go to the king and speak to him in this manner.**" **So Joab put the words in her mouth.**" II Samuel 14:3. So let's see at how this all plays out and if the plan of Joab works.

VERSES 4-7

1. So Joab gets this woman to tell this sad story, fabricated but truly sad. The story goes like this; “My husband is dead. I am a widow with two sons. One day they got into a fight and one killed the other. Now my family wants me to deliver him to the avenger of blood for killing his brother, so that he might be put to death. In doing so, my family will die also, for I have no other sons, and this one is the only spark that keeps me going.” You see, this woman is not coming before the king and asking for justice, but for mercy regarding this situation. If she asked for justice, that would mean her son would be put to death for murdering his brother, and thus, she wants David to be merciful to her son. How will he respond? Listen carefully to what he tells her.

VERSE 8-11

1. This woman keeps pushing David, not for some kind of promise, but he being the king could make an official judgment on this situation. She is afraid that the avenger of blood, one of their relatives will come and kill her son for what he did to his brother, and that was legal. And David makes a judgment saying that no one can touch her son, he is safe as per the order of the king! Now, what David has done, which he does not know yet, is made a statement protecting his own son, Absalom from the death penalty for his premeditated murder! It is as Redpath said, “He guaranteed safety at the expense of justice, and immediately the farsighted woman captured him in her trap.” Let’s see how this plays out.

VERSES 12-17

1. Just like when Nathan the prophet told David a story and he made judgment based upon what he heard from Nathan, and then Nathan told him, “**You are the man!**” we once again see David’s actions being exposed by this story! And this woman is bold with David. She tells David that he has made a judgment against her son and yet, when it comes to his own family, when it comes to his own son Absalom, he does not bring him home. And she makes the point that this will hurt the nation, and the point is that the people loved Absalom or he could cause trouble and it is better to reconcile than to let this go on. It is as Clarke wrote, “He is willing to pardon the meanest of his subjects the murder of a brother at the instance of a poor widow, and he is not willing to pardon his son Absalom, whose restoration to favour is the desire of the whole nation.”

2. Her points are really good. She says, “**For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him.**” II Samuel 14:14. We have talked about this before but the point she is making is this. She is telling David that once you or Absalom dies, there can be no more restoration. Don’t pass up that opportunity, do it now! You need to find a way to do it!

And I think that is an important lesson for us. God is in the business of bringing sinners into the kingdom of God, of bringing the banished ones back to Him and if God can forgive, why can't we! And yes, that forgiveness is found only in Christ but think about it, who made the first step to bring about this forgiveness? It was God, who gave His beloved Son; it was Jesus who stepped forward to pay for our sins! And thus, as His representatives, may we show that same kind of love and forgiveness that He has shown us!

3. Thus, she is telling the king, "David, just as God has devised a way to restore us back to Him, to bring back the banished ones by His mercy, you should receive your son back to yourself through your mercy that you show him!" How will David respond to this?

Let's read on and see.

VERSES 18-20

1. David recognized that Joab must be behind this story, he must have put this woman up to this and he was right. That just tells me that Joab knew what strings to pull to get David to react and David knew what kind of man Joab was. He might have been a good military leader, but as we have seen, he was a loose cannon, doing his own thing. And maybe since he was on the bad side of David after Joab killed Abner, he is trying to heal that relationship, we don't know, but truly, this relationship with Joab is never healed! Well, the woman says it was Joab and then she says that nothing can be hidden from David, his wisdom is like the angel of God, he knows all things. I think she was just buttering him up, not wanting to get in trouble for her actions. David knew Joab and this was not a difficult thing for him to figure out.

VERSES 21-24

1. The king agreed to have his son Absalom come home, just as Joab had wanted and I think Joab thought that this was the best thing for the nation. Maybe Joab knew Absalom better than David did and he thought that this fighting would only lead to rebellion and thus, he sought for reconciliation to heal not only their relationship but the nation!

2. So Joab goes and brings Absalom home but David refuses to see him and it will be another 2 years before he will see his son. What in the world is going on here? What in the world is David doing? Why won't he see his son, he brought him back home, it seems that he forgave him? Maybe he refused to truly forgive Absalom for killing Amnon. And if that is true, David is wrong. You see, God forgave the actions of David and David should be able to forgive his own son for what he did. Yes, it is not always easy to forgive, but look at all that God has forgiven you and you need to make that first step in reconciliation.

Or it could be an act of discipline against Absalom. David did not discipline his children like God had instructed him to when they were young and there were many problems when they grew up, the problems were obviously magnified. And maybe David, because he didn't discipline Absalom after he murdered Amnon, he is overcompensating for that now and that is not going to work. In fact, it is only going to provoke Absalom to wrath and it is not going to heal the relationship.

VERSES 25-27

1. Why did the people love Saul so much? Because he was tall, dark and handsome, they were drawn to his appearance and yet inwardly, he was shallow. Sounds like Hollywood! The same is true with Absalom, he was good looking, he was a good talker and the people loved him. He was very popular. And maybe they saw him as the next king, he was acting like it and that will only get worse as this story line goes on. You see, the firstborn of David, Amnon is dead, killed by Absalom. We don't hear anything of Chileab, the second born. Thus, Absalom was next in line and maybe he is positioning himself for the throne. In fact, I think that is exactly what we see happening, the starting of the push for the throne for Absalom!

2. Now we are also told that he had heavy hair and in the 70's that meant good hair, but his hair was really heavy. When he had his hair cut each year it weighed out to 5 pounds! I am sure that it was a source of pride for him and as we will see, it will be the thing that entangles him and it will lead to his own death!

3. One more point here and that is Absalom has some children, one girl who he names Tamar, the name of his sister that was rapped by Amnon. And the three sons that he did have, must have died early on for in II Samuel 18:18, as Absalom set up pillars to memorialize his name, there is no mention of his sons. It says, **“Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which is in the King's Valley. For he said, ‘I have no son to keep my name in remembrance.’ He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.”**

VERSES 28-29

1. It has now been five years since David has seen his son Absalom face-to-face. Two of those five years he has been home and still David refuses to see him and he is getting tired of waiting. So he calls for Joab who kind of brokered this deal in the first place. And Joab refuses to come. So he calls for him again to work out a meeting with David, and Joab once again does not come. Obviously this is not sitting well with Absalom and he will try to get Joab's attention another way, as we will see!

VERSES 30-31

1. Absalom was frustrated with Joab ignoring him and thus, he came up with this plan to get Joab's attention. He told his servants to set his barley fields on fire and that got Joab's attention. This is not a good attribute that Absalom is displaying and we will see that it is all about him and he will do whatever it takes for him to get what he wants.

2. How does this relate to us? I wonder how many times God has to set our “barely field” on fire to get our attention. Many times we are not listening or responding to what He is showing us and He has to get our attention. And what happens when our “barely field” you might say is on fire? He gets our attention! Spurgeon makes this point as he wrote, “He, knowing that we will not come by any other means, sendeth a serious trial - he sets our barley-field on fire, which he has a right to do, seeing our barley-fields are far more his than they are ours.” The way to prevent this from happening is to be open, to not only listen but respond to what He is showing us! If we refuse, God does have ways of getting our attention so that we will focus back on Him. And please understand, He is doing it because he loves us and it is what is best for our lives. By ignoring what we are doing would just show that He didn’t care. Look at the Prodigal Son, he ran away, did his own thing until his “barely field” was burned, you might say. He was eating pig slop and then he came to his senses and returned home to his father who was waiting with open arms just as our Heavenly Father is!

VERSE 32

1. Absalom lets Joab have it. He feels if he is going to live in exile, it would be far better for him to be by his grandfather in Geshur, with his mother's family, than to be living in Jerusalem and rejected by his father. And look at Absalom's statement here, "**If there is any iniquity in me, let him execute me.**" In other words, it seems that Absalom feels that he is justified in what he did, the premeditated murder of his brother Amnon for raping his sister Tamar! I think that is one of the differences we see between David and Absalom. David repented of his sin, even though it took him a year to do so, while Absalom feels justified in his actions and does not repent!

VERSE 33

1. So Absalom's plan works, he is re-united with his father David and David gives him a kiss. But make no mistake about it; ever since David refused to deal with Amnon's actions, bitterness and anger grew inside Absalom, not only towards Amnon, but towards David also. Now five years have passed and they see each other and David gives Absalom a kiss. It is a kiss that was too little, too late. Absalom is now going to usurp the kingdom from David, not by force, but by deception. Remember, outwardly he was beautiful, but inwardly he was wicked. And his true colors are about to manifest themselves.

2. And this act of forgiveness on David's part was done without any repentance on the part of Absalom and for David, he was the king of Israel and thus, this was more than just a personal matter with Absalom. He needed to act as a judge and not ignore the crime that Absalom perpetrated upon his brother, murdering him! Of this Trapp wrote, "He should have kicked him rather; and not have hardened him to further villainy." And Redpath made these comments, "David's forgiveness of Absalom was completely inadequate, leading to a further outbreak of sin. God's forgiveness of a man's soul is completely adequate, and a great deterrent to continued sin." And he also wrote, "May God write it on your soul: if the pardon you want is that God should wink at your sin, He will not do it." You see, apart from repentance, there is no forgiveness.

But, as Christians, we are to forgive our brethren just as God has forgiven us. Now, what if they refuse to repent of the wrong they did to us? Forgive them, you see, that is now between them and the Lord. We are not the judge! God will deal with them. You forgive them as God has said. J. Vernon McGee made these comments on this idea of forgiveness. He wrote:

Oh, my friend, our God is a God who forgives. Galatians 6:1 tells us, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It appears that many of us don't read that verse correctly. We think it says, "If any man be overtaken in a fault, take a baseball bat and hit him over the head!" We are reluctant to forgive, and we can be very mean at times, very unloving, and critical. There are times when the truth should be spoken, but when forgiveness is asked for, it should be extended immediately.

David made a blunder in not forgiving his son as God had forgiven David. He will live to regret it.

- J. Vernon Mcgee, Thru The Bible,
Volume II, p. 221

Please understand that I am not saying that we ignore sin, but we forgive and we try to restore the brother or sister in God's love. The problem for many of us is that we refuse to forgive until the other person says, "I'm sorry!" That is not what we are to do, we are to forgive and let God deal with them. It is as Proverbs 10:12 says, "**Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.**" It is that unconditional love, not condoning sin, but loving as God loves us and our focus needs to be restoration, the restoring of relationships, the restoring of our brothers and sisters back to God and not destruction, the destruction of relationships, the driving of our brothers and sisters from the Lord! May we not forget that.

Peter asked the Lord how many times we should forgive a person, and the Lord said in Matthew 18:22-35, "**... 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.**"

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, “Pay me what you owe!” So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.” And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?” And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

What a picture we have here. God has forgiven all of our debts, and yet, someone has done something wrong to us, they have offended us, and we can't forgive them. I am sorry, that is totally wrong. It is as Paul said in Ephesians 4:30-32, **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”** That is what we need to do, have a heart of forgiveness!

And folk's, this is not an option or a suggestion, but a command that Jesus is giving to us. You see, forgiveness ought to be in direct proportion to the amount you have been forgiven! Show grace mercy and not justice, for that is what we want shown to us. James 2:13 tells us, "**For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.**" And I will tell you this, unforgiveness will destroy you, eat you up, and it will affect others as your web of unforgiveness entangles others. Forgive people as God has forgiven you, not 490 times, but unconditionally, not mathematically, but a matter of the heart. And this last section, obviously, deals with forgiveness, and we need to forgive and forgive until we lose count!