

Matthew 18:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Analysis

The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him (προσεκύνει αὐτῷ, prosekynei autō)—the Greek indicates repeated prostration in desperate supplication, not worship of deity. This physical posture of total helplessness and submission reflects the sinner's proper position before God: recognizing inability and pleading for mercy.

Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all (μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοί, καὶ πάντα ἀποδώσω σοι)—tragic self-deception. The promise to repay 10,000 talents is delusional; even if he lived 200,000 years, complete repayment was impossible. This mirrors the unconverted sinner's attempt to bargain with God through works, resolutions, and moral improvement—all inadequate before infinite holiness. The servant seeks patience (makrothymēson, 'long-suffering'), not forgiveness, revealing incomplete understanding of his condition.

Historical Context

Prostration (falling face-down) was standard posture for approaching ancient Near Eastern monarchs. The servant's promise reflects ancient negotiation tactics where debtors proposed payment plans to avoid immediate consequences. However, no payment schedule could realistically address such debt, making the promise empty—though perhaps made sincerely in desperation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'payment plans' do people offer God instead of accepting the free gift of forgiveness through Christ?
2. How does the servant's self-deception ('I will pay thee all') mirror modern confidence in personal moral progress?
3. When have you approached God asking for patience/time rather than humbly accepting undeserved grace?

Interlinear Text

πεσὼν	οὖν	ὁ	δοῦλος	προσεκύνει	αὐτῷ	λέγων,	
fell down	therefore	G3588	The servant	and worshipped	him	saying	
G4098	G3767		G1401	G4352	G846	G3004	
Κύριε,	Μακροθύμησον	ἐπ'	ἐμοί	καὶ	πάντα	σοι	ἀποδώσω
Lord	have patience	with	me	and	all	thee	I will pay
G2962	G3114	G1909	G1698	G2532	G3956	G4671	G591

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 18:29 (Parallel theme): And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Matthew 8:2 (Worship): And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Luke 7:43 (Parallel theme): Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

