

Matthew 18:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Analysis

And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all—the identical words and posture the first servant used (v. 26). This deliberate repetition heightens the tragedy: the forgiven servant heard his own plea echoed back but remained unmoved. The parallel language creates dramatic irony—readers recognize what the wicked servant ignores: he's recreating the exact scenario from which he just escaped.

The Greek *parekalei* (παρεκάλει, 'besought') indicates earnest pleading. Unlike the first servant's impossible promise (10,000 talents), this debt was actually payable given time. The fellow servant sought what the first servant received: *makrothymia* (μακροθυμία, 'patience, forbearance'). Yet the forgiven servant couldn't extend the minor grace he'd received in infinite measure.

Historical Context

In Mediterranean honor-shame culture, suppliant postures (falling at feet, public pleading) created social obligation for the superior to show mercy, especially in front of witnesses. The wicked servant's refusal would be recognized as shameful—violating expected reciprocity. His behavior publicly dishonors himself while exposing his ingratitude for his own cancelled debt.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When have you heard your own words of excuse or self-justification from someone seeking your forgiveness, yet still withheld mercy?
2. How does withholding forgiveness reveal that you haven't truly internalized the magnitude of forgiveness you've received from God?
3. What makes a payable debt (100 denarii) seem too large to forgive when you've been forgiven an impossible one (10,000 talents)?

Interlinear Text

πεσὼν	οὖν	ὁ	σύνδουλος	αὐτὸν	εἰς	τοὺς	πόδας	αὐτὸν
fell down	And		fellowservant	him	at		feet	him
G4098	G3767	G3588	G4889	G846	G1519	G3588	G4228	G846
παρεκάλει	αὐτὸν	λέγων,	Μακροθύμησον	ἐπ'	ἐμοί	καὶ		
and besought	him	saying	Have patience	with	me	and		
G3870	G846	G3004	G3114	G1909	G1698	G2532		
πάντα	ἀποδώσω	σοι						
all	I will pay	thee						
G3956	G591	G4671						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 18:26 (Parallel theme): The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Matthew 6:12 (Parallel theme): And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

