

Matthew 18:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Analysis

So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry (ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα, elypēthēsan sphodra)—the Greek indicates profound grief and distress. The fellow servants weren't merely disappointed but deeply troubled by the injustice. This public dimension is crucial: the wicked servant's hypocrisy and cruelty offended the moral sensibilities of the community. Forgiveness is never purely private—our treatment of others reflects God's character (or our distortion of it) before watching witnesses.

And came and told unto their lord all that was done (διεσάφησαν, diesaphēsan)—'explained fully, made clear.' They provided complete testimony, not gossip. This appeals to higher authority for justice mirrors how creation itself 'groans' under sin's weight (Rom 8:22) and how the blood of martyrs 'cries out' for vindication (Rev 6:10). God sees and will address all injustice.

Historical Context

In ancient patron-client relationships, servants of the same master formed communities with shared interests. Reporting serious offenses to the lord was expected—maintaining household order required transparency. The fellow servants' grief reflects the corporate nature of ancient Mediterranean society, where individual actions affected the whole community's honor and well-being.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does your treatment of others reflect on God's character to watching 'fellow servants' around you?
2. What does the fellow servants' grief over injustice teach about the proper Christian response to unforgiveness and hypocrisy in the church?
3. How should knowing that witnesses report to the Lord affect your private dealings with those who've wronged you?

Interlinear Text

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|------------|----------------|-------|----------------|---------------|-------|---------------|
| ἰδόντες | δὲ | οἱ | σύνδουλοι | αὐτῶν | τὰ | γενόμενα |
| saw | So | G3588 | fellowservants | when his | G3588 | that was done |
| G1492 | G1161 | | G4889 | G846 | | G1096 |
| ἐλυπήθησαν | σφόδρα | καὶ | ἐλθόντες | διεσάφησαν | τῷ | |
| sorry | they were very | and | came | and told | G3588 | |
| G3076 | G4970 | G2532 | G2064 | G1285 | | |
| κυρίῳ | αὐτῶν | πάντα | τὰ | γενόμενα | | |
| lord | when his | all | G3588 | that was done | | |
| G2962 | G846 | G3956 | | G1096 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:15 (Parallel theme): Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Hebrews 13:3 (Parallel theme): Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Mark 3:5 (Parallel theme): And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

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