

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Aug 17th 2017

You could wonder a bit about what it means exactly to forgive seventy times seven. Perhaps the 491st time you can seek revenge or refuse mercy. That's okay, I guess, if you are interested in loopholes and being meticulous as the basis of your contract with God.

In today's Gospel, following from yesterday's, how would you argue or find a convenient escape. You do not need much commentary on just what exactly Jesus was getting at and offering us in this parable. The amounts of money are exaggeratedly extreme. The first man owes the master over ten thousand dollars. The man who owes him is in debt to about fifteen dollars. That is rather ear-catching which is what this parable is about.

This parable is so clear and easy to figure out until we feel it is directly about ourselves, ouch! I have many theories totally based on my own self-experiences. Here is an embarrassing one; try it on yourself.

I refuse forgiveness not because of the injurious act, but the relationship I have with the one doing the act or forgetting to do the act. Hence, the degree of forgiveness is a revelation of the degree of relationship I have. It seems being injured has much to do with disrespect shown to us by the harmer. We know our good friends reverence us and so the injuring us is easier to allow for healing. Being disrespected by even a less painful injury is more difficult to forgive. The "master" respected the first-servant's genuineness. This same forgiven wretch manifested no respect for his fellow debtor and his family.

There is another self-experienced theory of mine. Forgiving is more than a mental or even spiritual prayer or decision. It is somewhat easy to say to one's self, even in prayer that we forgive this person for that, but we do not want anything ever to do with that person again. I wonder if the master in the parable would have, after forgiving the servant, kept him in his employment. Would the first and second servants become closer friends after the first servant's forgiving.

How about this though, what if the first servant would forgive the debt, but tell the second servant that he did not want him around and even worse gossiped about the second servant negatively. That does not appear to be what this parable offers us for personal pondering.

There is a little corollary to my theory. It has been my experience of myself, that when I have an increased personal sense of self-reverence, self-respect, self-graced-acceptance, I am not so available to having my feelings or mind or body injured by another person's commission or omission.

One reflection about this parable is that forgiving is an indication of our respecting, our seeing something beyond the injurious act, within the injurer. My being hurt this one instant could be a reminder of other injuries of disrespect to which I continue to hold on, especially the sense of disrespect. Who is injuring me, just might be me, myself.

The parable might be more about forgiving myself, being forgiven by others and praying with the dignity of the Master Who forgives me and invites me to receive the dignity of being His forgiven servant.

Please forgive me if I have written too long!

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