

- Peter's Question (Matt 18:21-22, Rev 13:8)

#1. The Mercy of God (Matt 18:23-27, 1Sam 2:8, Isa 55:9, Matt 9:36, 14:14)

- God's Mercy and Grace on Jacob (Num 23:19-21, Gal 6:16, Luke 1:33, John 1:13, Matt 1:21)
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- Why Is It So Difficult For Us to Forgive? (Matt 18:15-17, Eph 4:32, Rom 14:4, Matt 6:14-15)

Please open your Bibles to the Gospel According to Matthew, Matt 18:21 (2X). We are in a whirlwind tour through the Gospel of Matthew. And now that we have arrived at Matt 18, I have to focus again on just one of the topics that are mentioned here. The subject matter at hand is that of "Forgiveness"; which is God forgiving man, and man forgiving his fellow man. Of course the most important aspect of all this business of forgiving is whether forgiveness has taken place vertically, and a lesser important aspect is that of forgiving horizontally. And thus, what we want to know is in the title of this sermon: What is "The Evidence of Having Been Forgiven?" (2X) What is the evidence that God has indeed forgiven all my sins? And of course you can guess where I am heading for the answer to this question. Somehow I have to relate this to the faith that God has given me. Let us look at the background for this intriguing question

- **Peter's Question** (Matt 18:21-22, Rev 13:8)

Peter came to the Lord with a question that concerned him personally. We read in Matt 18:21,
Mt 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Mt 18:22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

This question of Peter was prompted by Jesus' teaching in verses 15-17 (2X) that within the church a man must do all that is in his power to save his brother who trespasses against him. And I am stressing "within the church", for that is what these words refer to. When we read, "my brother", we understand that this refers to a brother or a sister in Christ. If we would be living 200 years ago then I could possibly count all members of Christian churches (not Roman Catholic churches, but Christian churches) my brothers and sisters in Christ. But today we live in a time of great apostacy. And so, when any stranger tells me that he is a Christian, I run from him, for the majority of people today who call themselves Christian are bearing the name of the Lord in vain. When I remember what God is warning us for in Rev 13:8, then I must be aware that the majority of the churches today have been deceived by Antichrist. And so, the only brothers or sisters in Christ we have today are those in our own local church, for here are people who listen to and believe the true Gospel. In addition there are some outside our local church whom I personally know, and they too are my brothers and sisters in Christ. These are the brothers referred to in this passage and in the parable following. This chapter deals primarily with relationships between "brothers in Christ"; it is not concerned with "our neighbor". The question of "Who is my neighbor?" comes up in another chapter, but not here. We must listen carefully to the words that are used, so that we will learn to focus, rather than have our mind scattered all over the Bible. Peter asked this question because he thought he was very generous in forgiving his brother in Christ seven times. But the answer the Lord Jesus gave was, "No, not 7 times but 70 X 7 times, which is 490 times". This means that we must not be like the legalists who are counting until the number of times my brother has sinned against me has reached 490, and then they stop forgiving. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life". The spirit of Jesus' answer was, "Keep forgiving, for long before you reach 490 you will lose count". There is no limit to the number of times we

forgive our brother in Christ. Therefore, the basis of this rule that Jesus gave is that we must love one another, for without love our faith is vain, and we are still in our sins. Now this forms the background for the parable that follows. First the Lord Jesus answered Peter's question directly, which is unusual if we consider the answers of Jesus throughout the NT. But then the Lord gave the reasons for His answer in the form of a parable. This is not a historical event, but is truly a parable with a focus on forgiveness, and so we should not try to squeeze a works gospel out of the details of this parable. Remember what the Lord said in Matt 13; a parable is understood only by the saints, for to the unregenerate mind parables are confusing. So, let us read now about:

#1. The Mercy of God (Matt 18:23-27, 1Sam 2:8, Isa 55:9, Matt 9:36, 14:14)

Mt 18:23-27 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain King, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The Lord Jesus starts out this parable with the word "Therefore", or "For this reason". And so, we see that this parable must refer to the rule of forgiveness that the Lord stated in the previous verse. When the Lord stated "The kingdom of heaven is like", He indicated thereby that these are truly events that take place in the church, which is the earthly manifestation of the kingdom of heaven. All members of a church have been sanctified, which does not mean saved but set apart for service to God. All people in a church have been given in loan a wealth of spiritual and physical things. To us is committed the calling of using all these things to God's glory and in His service. These things over which we are placed are never ours, but they belong to God, who is the King in this parable. We are given the responsibility to use them for the King's benefit. This is a daily debt we owe to God, and in this we fall short every day, which is sin. And thus we steal from God by not using the resources that He has entrusted to us. And so we can see that we easily can accumulate an enormous debt. The Lord Jesus stated this debt as 10,000 talents, which actually has the value of 10,000 years of wages, for a talent was the wage of a laborer for one year. The Lord could just as well have stated that this debt was 100 million talents, for if we would attempt to pay the debt that we owe to God we would have to spend more than 100 million years in Hell; in fact it would require an eternity in Hell to pay our debt in full. And thus we understand that this debt is so great that it is absolutely unpayable. Moreover, even if we would repent and dedicate our life from this moment forward we still have to pay our past debt, and we cannot even pay our current bills for we find it impossible to love God with all our heart and soul and mind every minute and every second of the day. And thus we daily increase our debt to God, for daily we fall short of giving Him all the honor and the glory. This then is our condition before God bestows His mercy on us. And thus we see here in this passage how infinite

the mercy of God is when He shows His forgiveness. You remember the definition of mercy? Mercy is God withholding what we do deserve. We deserve an infinity in Hell. When God has mercy on us He withholds from us this penalty of Hell. And that is a great blessing in itself, for if we do not have to go to Hell, then we can look forward to a life hereafter of no suffering at all. That is wonderful but this is not the whole story. Mercy takes us out of the Bottomless Pit and lifts us up to ground zero. But God also pours His grace upon those on whom He delights to show mercy. Do we all remember the definition of grace? Grace is unmerited favor. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve. What do we not deserve? We do not deserve to go to heaven and be in God's presence forever. But God takes us up out of the Bottomless Pit by bestowing mercy on us, and then He also bestows His grace upon us; which means He lifts us up from the Bottomless Pit to ground zero (that is mercy), and He takes us from ground zero and lifts us up higher than the angels and makes us sons of God. That is grace, and that is how great the mercy and grace of God is for those whom He loves. That is why God says in 1Sam 2:8,

1Sa 2:8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne (*singular*) of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

We are those poor, for we have nothing to offer to God, for all our works are tainted with sin. We are those beggars, for we are begging God for His mercy, for we do not want to go to Hell. But it is God who has softened our hearts, and it is God who has put these prayers for mercy within us, for it is God who delights in mercy so that He has from before the foundation of the world ordained that we should ask for mercy; and it is God who sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to save us from our sins and from the consequences of our sins, and it is God who through Christ has bestowed His mercy and grace upon us, so that through Christ's purchase of us He has made us accepted by the Father as the Bride of Christ and as sons of God. Can we now get some appreciation of the infinite mercy and grace that God has for those He has chosen to be His people? Truly as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. His mercy is incomprehensible. Let us now turn our eyes to Matt 18:27. You remember that I said we have been given in loan a wealth of spiritual and physical things which we are obligated to use in the service of God. The last word of Matt 18:27 is a Greek word that is not used anywhere else in the Bible, but that word says actually "loan", not debt. The nature of a loan is that we have to pay it back not immediately, but much later. This servant accumulated a loan which he had to repay later when his body has died, and when he has stood before Christ as the Judge and has been found guilty of still having to pay his loan. The Lord very carefully chose His words in this parable. Nowhere in this parable is the Lord using a word that would absolutely imply salvation. When we read in Matt 18:27 the three words "moved with compassion", it does not necessarily mean that the Lord saved that servant. These three words in English are actually one word in the Greek, which is also used in Matt 9:36, and in Matt 14:14, where we find that the Lord Jesus was moved with compassion

for the multitudes. Certainly Jesus did not save everyone in the multitude, but it means that He had pity on the multitude, for they were as sheep having no shepherd. Within this context of mercy and grace, we would like to know: On whom does God bestow His mercy?

- **God's Mercy and Grace on Jacob** (Num 23:19-21, Gal 6:16, Luke 1:33, John 1:13, Matt 1:21)

Please turn in your Bibles to the Prophecy of Numbers, Num 23:19 (2X). It is the 4th prophecy in the Bible; Gen, Ex, Lev, Numbers. We are looking for Num 23:19. This is the story of the wicked soothsayer Balaam who was asked by the king of Moab to curse the nation of Israel. But God spoke to Balaam at night and told him that God would put His words in Balaam's mouth, for God did not want the nation of Israel to be cursed by anyone. And so, when Balak took Balaam to the top of a high mountain where he could see the entire multitude of Israel, and Balak asked him to pronounce a curse on Israel, out of Balaam's mouth came wonderful blessings on Israel. We read in Num 23:19,

Nu 23:19 God *is* not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do *it*? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

Nu 23:20 Behold, I have received *commandment* to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

Nu 23:21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them.

What are we to understand when we read, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob"? Many of us have been taught in previous churches that when we read about "Jacob" in the Bible it must always refer to the physical descendants of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. But is this really so? We know for sure that only a remnant from the nation of the Jews will be saved, just like only a remnant of the Gentiles will be saved, for this is the teaching of Rom 11 and of Gal 4. And those who will be saved will have all their sins forgiven, past, present, and future sins, and they will be in the sight of God as righteous as Christ Himself, even while they still live on this earth. When God says, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob" it means that the group of people whom God calls "Jacob" are either a part of or represent all the elect whom God intends to save, for those in whom God does not see iniquity are absolutely those whose sins have been forgiven, and who have been saved. The doctrine of the 1000 year reign of Christ with the Jews evangelizing the world is a serious error on the part of those of the premillennial persuasion. Here in Num 23:21 the saved people called Jacob are the same saved people who are called Israel in the same verse, which is not referring to the nation of Israel, but to the Israel of God according to Gal 6:16. And so, the fact that God calls the elect Jacob as well as Israel is a totally new concept for many of us. And we wonder if this is substantiated in the NT. Please turn to the Gospel According to Luke, Luke 1:33 (2X). In this passage the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin named Mary, to tell her that God has bestowed on her the honor of becoming the mother of Jesus, the promised Messiah, the Son of God. And then the Angel Gabriel adds, "And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David". And then follow the words of Luke 1:33 (2X),

Lu 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Christ shall reign over a people that are called “the house of Jacob”. If this means only the physical descendants of Jacob, then Christ is not ruling over us, for most of us are not physical descendants of Jacob. But that is not possible, for Christ rules over all those who have put their trust in Him. Therefore, in Luke 1:33 the name Jacob refers to Christ and all those who are in Christ; not a portion only who are physical descendants of Jacob. We must always keep in mind that God says in John 1:13, “Not of blood” indicating that no one can claim a special relationship to God for being a descendant of one of His favorite people of the past. This rule also may not be violated. We can look at Luke 1:33 with similar eyes as we look at Matt 1:21, where the Angel said to Joseph, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins”. Who are we to understand “His people” are? If His people refers to only the Jews, then Jesus did not save me from my sins, for I am not a physical descendant of Jacob. Therefore, just like we must understand that “His people” in Matt 1:21 refers to all the elect, so we must understand that “the house of Jacob” in Luke 1:33 refers to all the elect. Let us now return to the parable in Matt 18:23-27, where we see God’s infinite mercy on display. We must always keep in mind that God does not grant His mercy by just some hand waving. And for this we are infinitely grateful; for if God could forgive sins by just some hand waving, then He also could retract from this obligation by just some hand waving. But this is not the God whom we are serving. Our God is infinitely righteous. And:

- **God’s Righteousness Must Be Satisfied** (Isa 53:10-12, Acts 3:18)

Please turn in your Bibles to the Prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 53:10 (2X). For the most part, Isa 40 through Isa 66 contains doctrines that are immediately applicable to the NT time. Here in Isa 53 God gives us various pictures of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. God’s righteousness must be satisfied for every sin that He forgives to mortal man. The penalty for each sin must be paid in full. We are not able to pay such a great penalty, for it would take us an infinite time in Hell to pay for even one sin. But Christ is able to pay such a great penalty without being consumed in the process, for the man Christ Jesus has been united with God the Son, the second Person of the Triune God. He must be a man, for only as a man can He substitute for another man. He must be God also, for only if He has the strength of God can He endure the penalty for sins, which require the equivalent of an eternity in Hell. And thus, when Christ paid the penalty for our sins He suffered this payment in His humanity, in His human body and soul, but especially in His soul, for man’s sins are registered in his soul, but He endured this payment with the strength of God. And since He was united with God the Son into one Person, it was not possible that He would fail in His attempt to satisfy the righteousness of God for the payment for our sins. God entirely orchestrated this event of Christ’s atoning work for us on the cross, for God says in Acts 3:18, “But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled”. And so, we read here in just one of the prophets how much Christ had to suffer for our sins.

Isa 53:10-11 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, for God delights in mercy, and only if Christ would pay for people's sins is God able to exercise His mercy. And therefore, it is the pleasure of the Lord that shall prosper in Christ's hand. We have a hard time understanding that it was the pleasure of the Lord when Christ's hands were pierced by cruel nails. We have even less understanding when God says that He shall make the soul of Christ an offering for sin. It means that Christ in His soul endured the wrath of God equivalent to the penalty that we must endure if we would have to pay for our own sins. Only then can we say that the righteousness of God is satisfied. And we actually can see that when Christ on the cross with a loud voice cried out, "It Is Finished!" What was finished? He was still hanging on the cross. He still suffered greatly in His body. But the suffering in His soul had ended. He finished suffering in His soul, and now the suffering in His body is a mere pittance compared to what He had to endure in His soul. And herein we can see the great suffering of Christ in His soul. This is also evident from Isa 53:11 (2X) where God speaks of the travail of Christ in His soul. However, when we read in verse 10, "He shall see His seed", and again in verse 11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul", we understand that this refers to the promise of His resurrection from the dead. It is the promise that He shall not fail and be successful in all His suffering, for God is with Him to strengthen Him in all that He had to endure. It is a surprise to me that some people have a hard time accepting that Christ had to endure the equivalent of an eternity in Hell. When we think of the substitution that God promised in Gen 3:15, and when we also think of the righteousness of God that must be satisfied, how could Christ accomplish a substitutionary payment if it was not a payment that was equivalent to our payment in Hell? And so, we realize how great the sacrifice of Christ was when He atoned for our sins. This is what God had to do in order to forgive.

#2. The Ungrateful Servant (Matt 18:28-30)

Let us now return to the parable of Matt 18:28 (2X). We read: the Lord was moved with compassion for that servant, because he was unable to pay back such a great loan. And the Lord released him from the obligation to pay back this loan. Now, notice that this is a parable about forgiveness, a mere money accounting business. It is not a parable about salvation, for the Greek words that are used do not imply salvation. This explains the course of events in the remainder of this parable. We read in Matt 18:28,

Mt 18:28-30 But that (same) servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

Notice in verse 28, the word “same” is not in the original. The Greek text says simply, “that servant”. And so, if someone tries to introduce another gospel here, we could reply that in the first part of this parable the servant is representing everyone of mankind, for everyone of us comes before Christ the Judge with a debt that is so great; it is unpayable. In the second part of the parable we are introduced to a very ungrateful servant who demands that his fellow servant pay him back a small debt, and he has to pay it immediately. The Lord indicates that this debt is equivalent to 100 pennies, or 100 denary, for it represented a laborer’s wage for 100 days of work. It is a debt which easily could be repaid maybe in a year or two years. But it is certainly no reason for throwing the man in jail for such a relatively small debt. Again we should stress that this is not a parable about salvation, but about money, although we can also extend the application to salvation, but then we should screen out those things that strictly speaking are about money. The Lord Jesus told us this story to show us the lopsided accounts we have vertically and horizontally. Vertically we owe God a great deal. What we owe to God is equivalent to an eternity in Hell. Horizontally, the hurts we receive from our fellow man are by comparison a mere pittance. If we cannot see that, it is because we have no appreciation for the enormous payment that Christ has to make for each one of us whom He wants to save. And if we have no appreciation for the payment Christ had to make, then we have no appreciation for God’s great salvation that He designed and worked through the Lord Jesus Christ, and that means that we are still in our sins. For if God has not opened our mind to the beauty of His magnificent salvation program, and if He has not opened our mind to our wretchedness of being slaves of sin and Satan, and if He has not opened our mind to our great need of being saved from our slippery slide into Hell, then we simply have not been saved. And thus the unsaved people of the world, which have no comparison with their vertical debt to God, will be very unforgiving toward their fellow man. But with us who are saved this ought not to be so. Let us read on in this story.

- **Man’s Ingratitude Must Be Rewarded** (Matt 18:31-34, Prov 9:10, Heb 2:1-3)

Mt 18:31-34 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done. Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Now we can see that the Lord is shifting this parable toward salvation issues. This fact is reflected in verse 34 where the Lord delivered him to the tormentors, which is a direct reference to Hell. When people are judged on the Last Day and are cast into Hell, who is waiting them there? O Yes, it is Satan and all his demons who are there already, for they do not need an arraignment and a process of justice. The tormentors are Satan and his demons, who hate mankind for they will blame mankind for their suffering.

God will delegate the torments in Hell to Satan and his demons. Please turn in your Bibles to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 2:1 (2X). It is then understandable that God says in Prov 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. When we have a fear of Hell, it is the beginning of the wisdom that eventually leads to salvation, for the fear of Hell leads us to the fear of God, for it is only God who can cast us into Hell. Here in Matt 18:6-9 God warns us for this condemnation. And God warns us that if we do not have great respect for His plan of salvation we will be condemned. God says in Heb 2:1-3,

Heb 2:1-2 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

O Yes. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”? For if we are so unforgiving toward our brothers in Christ, then we show by our conduct that we have no appreciation for what Christ has done to save us from our sins. And if we neglect to appreciate the cross of Christ, if we spurn the love of God for mankind, if we count the blood of Christ an unholy thing, then we have trampled under foot the Son of God and we must face the fact that we have no faith, and no fear of Hell. Let us now turn again to the Gospel of Matthew and turn to the last verse in this parable, Matt 18:35 (2X).

#3. The Evidence of Forgiveness (Matt 18:35, James 2:26, 1Cor 13:2-3)

What is the evidence that God has forgiven all our sins? What is the evidence that God has saved us? Of course, the first evidence is that we have received faith so that we believe the Gospel that Christ has suffered and died for us. But don't we read in James 2:26 that faith without works is dead, for it is not a faith that is given by God? Remember the focus of this parable: How often shall I forgive my brother in Christ? The answer is: You must forgive him indefinitely, without limitations, for this is what we are called to do based on our appreciation for how much Christ has done for us and how little the offense is by my brother in Christ. The Lord Jesus said in Matt 18:35,

Mt 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Do we love our brethren in Christ? If that is so, why then do we act as if we do not love them? Christ commands us to love our brethren in Christ. If we do not love them we are violating His commands and we show by our actions that our salvation is in question. I did not invent this. God says in 1Cor 13:2-3,
1Co 13:2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

1Co 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Does this not mean that we, in our love for our brethren in Christ, must forgive our brother what he

might have done to us without knowing that he has hurt us? And so, what is the evidence that we have been forgiven? The evidence is that we want to do all those things that are pleasing in God's sight, and that includes forgiving our brothers in Christ.

- **Why Is It So Difficult For Us to Forgive?** (Matt 18:15-17, Eph 4:32, Rom 14:4, Matt 6:14-15)

We are not sure what to do about it. We do not know where to begin. But the Lord tells us here in:

Mt 18:15 ¶ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Mt 18:16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Mt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

And so, because we have an issue with brethren in the church, we get help from the church. And notice the last words of verse 17, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican". And thus from these words we can see that we are dealing with outsiders differently than we are dealing with our brethren in Christ. The Bible speaks in many places about this same thing, that we must be in a loving relationship with our brethren in Christ, especially in our local church, for the saints need this loving fellowship. For example we read in Eph 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you". And thus the main point of the parable is clear. If we experience the forgiveness of God for the sins that we commit against Him, we will surely forgive our fellow saints also. When we experience the wonder that God has forgiven us, then this can only fill us with awe and thanksgiving. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. And His mercy is completely undeserved. God does not need to forgive us. He is not under obligation to forgive us our sins. He could just as well have chosen someone else in our place, someone who is more forgiving than we are. Let us consider these things and be grateful that He did not pass us by when He paid the penalty for our sins. And when we are inclined to pass judgment on someone who is our brother in Christ, let us remember that God said in Rom 14:4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand". And when it comes to forgiving others outside the church, let us remember that the Lord also wants us to have peace in the world, and not be eaten up by grudges against others. God says in Matt 6:14-15,

Mt 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Mt 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This command we have from Him who made us for His glory. Let us then do all things to His glory, and let us forgive our fellow man from the heart. What goes on in our heart is what counts. Not theatrics of the world, not waiting till the other party repents, but forgive them from the heart, and drop it.

Amen. Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.