

GOSPEL PEARLS

Being indebted to God

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13_08_2020



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Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart." When Jesus finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the district of Judea across the Jordan. (Matthew 18: 21-35; 19:1)

It is spiritually very dangerous not to feel indebted to God, otherwise what we say when praying the Our Father "forgive us our trespasses" ends up being meaningless. This can

happen primarily because we do not appreciate His gifts that He gives us daily. We can also make the mistake of believing that everything we have is due solely to our own merits. In this way, we are hard on even our most unfortunate neighbours, demanding from them full entitlement of what is owed to us as our right. Today let us pause and think seriously about the phrase "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", meditating whether we have someone to forgive up to seventy times seven and whether we have managed to forgive him or her completely.