

GOSPEL PEARLS

Prideful or Merciful?

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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 your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18: 21-35).

Often we forget that each of us is indebted not only to God but also to many brothers and sisters because we, too, are all sinners. The servant in Jesus's parable is evil because he is full of pride. He behaves as if he were entitled to God's forgiveness, almost as if he were equal to God in dignity. Still he refuses to forgive his brother. Thus, he feels superior to and better than him. Basically, the pride of the wicked servant prevents the merciful Blood of Christ from flowing and reaching other children of God. Forgiving doesn't mean forgetting, also because it is not possible to forget by our own will alone. By our own will together with God's Grace let us forgive and avoid thinking we are above our brothers sisters, even when they are our wrongdoers.