

## Story of Justice, and Acceptance

Matthew 18:23-35 (MSG Version)

*"The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.*

*"The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.*

*"The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!'*

*"The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.*

*"The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."*

In this parable of Jesus we find that God defines injustice as not affording to others the same Grace, Mercy, and Love that God has afforded each of us. When you come to Breakfast in the Basement, a Community of Christ, a Community of Sharing, you are accepted unconditionally in the spirit of God's Love and Grace. God's justice therefore requires each of us who are part of this Community of Christ to extend the same to others who are present, and further, to our neighbors who are not. It is sometimes easy for us to forget that God's Grace is not an entitlement, but that God gives it freely as an act of Unconditional Love and Acceptance. Is it too much for God to ask that we do the same for those who come into this Community?

And to go further, is it too much for God to ask that we extend the same Love, Acceptance, and Hospitality that we receive here at Breakfast in the Basement to those we meet every day in our lives as we leave this place?

Last time we met we concluded our topical study with these words: If you want to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and make the Kingdom real in your life, begin with **Empathy** and **Acceptance**. Today, I ask you for a time of self-reflection. It is our goal that you find a community of Love, Hospitality, and Acceptance, but that can only happen as long as we all take part. Today I ask you to consider what you have received. Further, I ask you to commit to share what you have received with others, here in our Community, and outside.

I ask you to fill out the prayer below and place it in the basket on the prayer table as a sign to God of your desire to show the same Grace and Acceptance you receive here to all those around you.

*Oh God, Gracious Mother and Merciful Father, this is \_\_\_\_\_ (name), your child. Thank you for the Love and Grace you have shown to me, and for the acceptance I have received in this place. From this time forward, I want to share these gifts with others. Help me in my efforts to be faithful. Help me in my shortcomings, when I let fear and anger get in the way of the Unconditional Love you have provided to me, and let all those who I meet know You better through what I share with them. Amen.*