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SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

The apostle Peter came to Jesus and made an inquiry in Matthew 18:21, “**...Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?**” That seemed like a fair question; after all, if the person that did the sinning did it over and over, isn't seven times enough before you say, “enough is enough?” Yet the answer Jesus came back with was 70 x 7. That is 490 times. Some scholars have said it is to be done that many times a day. Seeing that there are 1,440 minutes in a day, that amounts to forgiving nearly every three minutes. There would have to have been a lot of sinning to account for that many times.

Jesus goes on to tell Peter the story about a King that took account of the “books” and found a servant that owed a considerable amount of money. He was going to sell the man, his wife, and all that he had to pay the debt. Still, it would not have been enough. The man begged for mercy, and the King had compassion on him and forgave him the entire debt. That is supernatural debt cancellation. This man that was forgiven goes out and sees a man that owed him a few dollars and demanded that this man pay the debt. The second debtor asked for mercy but there was none given. He threw him into prison. He would have to stay there until the debt was paid.

Some of the second debtor's friends went to the King and told him what happened. When the King found out what the man did, he was angry. He took the man that had been forgiven and put him into prison where he would be tormented and would have to stay there until the debt was paid. Unfortunately, there was no way to pay the debt being bound in prison. Jesus goes on to say to Peter that this would happen to everyone that doesn't forgive others.

Forgiveness not only releases the one that sinned, but it also releases the one that gives forgiveness. When we don't forgive, we put ourselves into an extremely dangerous position. We become bound and there is no way out. We become tormented and may not understand why, but it is because of the lack of forgiveness.

God forgives us our sin when we repent. It releases us from a future in hell. Without forgiveness we would all be lost. We must show God's love by forgiving others, no matter how big or small the sin is. We must forgive.

Are there those that you haven't forgiven? Do not take the chance of missing heaven because of it. Make things right now. Ask the Lord to forgive you for holding on to unforgiveness. By doing this you are set free. Giving this gift to someone that does not deserve it is showing grace and mercy. How often must you do this? 70 x 7.