LYRICAL DEVOTIONAL · DAY 175

The meaning of forgiveness

> *Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*
>
> MATTHEW 18:21–22

Written by Bill Perkins

When someone wrongs us,
we feel they owe us something—
a debt we try to collect
with coldness,
harsh thoughts,
silence.

Every bitter replay
is an attempt to collect.
Every disrespectful thought
an attempt to collect.
Every fantasy of their downfall
a small attempt to collect.

Unforgiveness is the heart
trying to make the offender pay.

But Jesus teaches that forgiveness
is not about counting offenses (Matt. 18:21–22).
It is about releasing the debt.

You may not know this about Jesus,
But He didn't only pay for our sins.
He paid for the sins committed against us (Isa. 53:5–6).

The debt we try to collect
has already been covered
by His sacrifice.

Whether the offender accepts His forgiveness
or rejects it,
the payment has been made (John 1:29).
The debt isn't ours to collect.

Forgiveness doesn’t deny the wrong,
or minimize the betrayal,
the slander,
the abandonment,
the abuse.

These wounds are real.
God doesn’t call them small (Ps. 34:18).

Forgiveness is not reconciliation.
Reconciliation requires repentance and trust (Rom. 12:18).
Forgiveness is the release of the debt.

Jesus says:
“Be merciful, as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

Not because they deserve it,
but because Christ extends it
and commands us to extend it (John 13:34).

To forgive is to agree with God
about what Jesus has done.
To step down from judgment (Rom. 12:19),
entrust justice to God,
and replace thoughts of harm
with prayers of blessing (Luke 6:27–28).

This is what it means
to be children of the Most High (Luke 6:35).

Where am I still trying to collect a debt
Jesus has already paid?

When I remember the mercy I’ve received,
and the command of Jesus,
forgiveness becomes possible.

Not easy.
But possible.

Father, thank You that Jesus paid for my sins
and for the sins committed against me.
Teach me to bless those who wounded me,
and to walk as Your child.
In Jesus’ name,
Amen.