

H.E. Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Homily on the 11th Sunday of Matthew St. George Cathedral of Stockholm



Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In today's Gospel reading, our Lord presents the parable of the unforgiving servant. A king wished to settle accounts with his servants, and one of them was brought before him owing the immense sum of ten thousand talents—a debt that he could never repay. When the servant fell to his knees and pleaded for patience, the king was moved with compassion. He forgave the entire debt and set him free.

However, after receiving this extraordinary forgiveness, the servant met a fellow servant who owed him only one hundred denarii. He seized him, demanded immediate repayment, and refused to show him the mercy that he himself had just received.

Saint John Chrysostom emphasizes the great contrast between these two debts; the first was beyond all measure, while the second was relatively insignificant. In the same way, the mercy God shows us is infinitely greater than anything we may ever be asked to show another person.

Forgiveness means that we refuse to allow hatred, bitterness, or the desire for revenge to take possession of our hearts. Saint Basil the Great teaches that we cannot sincerely ask God for mercy while remaining merciless toward our neighbor. By forgiving others, we entrust justice to God and allow His grace to heal our wounded souls.

This truth is expressed every day in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." These words reveal that our relationship with God cannot be separated from our relationship with our fellow human beings.

Saint Maximos the Confessor teaches that love for God is inseparable from love for one's neighbor. When resentment remains in the heart, it darkens our prayer; when forgiveness enters, the heart becomes peaceful and open to divine grace.

Saint Isaac the Syrian describes the merciful heart as one that is filled with compassion for the whole creation.

Let us, therefore, remember the countless blessings and the abundant forgiveness we have received from our Lord. Let us forgive from the heart, so that our souls may be filled with the peace, of Christ. Amen!

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