

**SERMON NOTES**  
**July 18, 2010**  
**Bryan Richardson, preaching**

*Setting People Free: Becoming a Person Who Forgives*  
Matthew 18:21-35

“Lord, how many times . . . ?” (Matthew 18:21)

- **Attempting to summon the strength to forgive presents us with a problem.**

“Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like . . .” (Matthew 18:22-23)

- **We need a revelation.**

“Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” (Matthew 18:33)

- **Jesus leads us to discover where forgiveness begins.**

“[Jesus] breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (John 20:23)

- **Forgiving people is a holy work; it is God’s work through you to people who have no other way of escape.**

*“We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer. The only profitable relationship to others — and especially to our weaker brethren — is one of love, and that means the will to hold fellowship with them. God himself did not despise humanity, but became man for men’s sake.”*

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## Scripture for today's sermon.

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

**21**Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

**22**Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

**23**"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24**As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. **25**Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

**26**"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'

**27**The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

**28**"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded

**29**"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

**30**"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

**31**When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

**32**"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33**Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

**34**In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

**35**"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."