

Living on Earth for Heaven: Loving Mercy

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Date: 27 June 2021

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, let's turn to God's Word this morning, and we are in Matthew's Gospel. Turn to Matthew chapter 18, if you have a Bible with you. Matthew 18, and we're picking it up there from verse 15 and reading through to the end of the chapter.
- Matthew 18, and reading there from verse 15. And again, this is Jesus speaking to his disciples.
- Verse 15, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.
- But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.
- And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.
- [1 : 1 4] And whenever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.
- For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Then Peter came up and said to him, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?
- As many as seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. Seven. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.
- When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold with his wife and children and all that he had in payment to be made.
- So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, Have patience with me and I will pay you everything. And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.
- [2 : 3 0] But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. And seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, Pay what you owe.
- So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, Have patience with me and I will pay you. He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.
- When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed. And they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.
- Then his master summoned him and said to him, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?
- And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt. So also, my heavenly father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

[3 : 42] Amen. May God bless to us his word this morning. Well, let's turn for one last time to Matthew chapter 18.

And we're looking today at this last section beginning at verse 21. One of the most striking things in the teaching of the Lord Jesus is that he won't allow us to separate.

I think we're a bit too loud here, guys. Booming around. Is that better? You can hear me. Yeah. Jesus won't allow us to separate the relationship that we have with him from the relationship that we share with the rest of his family.

Look back at the end of chapter 17, verses 25 and 26. Notice he calls his followers all sons of the king. Sons, plural. You can never think of yourself as an only child in the father's family.

Now, the evidence of your parentage is seen in the quality of your relationship with the father's other children, with your brethren. In other words, relationships within the church of Jesus Christ really matter.

[5 : 07] And that's what this whole chapter is about. It's teaching us to live as a family of heaven here on earth. And the answer to the question in verse 1 there, what is real greatness in this kingdom, is very surprising.

Because, first of all, he tells us in verses 3 and 4, do you remember that real greatness means walking humbly? It means knowing that entrance to the kingdom is by the sheer mercy of God.

And the evidence of that humbling will be that we therefore value every other little one that the father has called his own.

Verse 5, welcoming them as we have been welcomed. Not doing nothing ever to harm any of them.

Nothing to make them stumble into sin, as verses 6 to 9 talk about. But rather, as verses 10 to 14 there illustrate, reflecting the father's heart, restoring those who do sin, so that none of these little ones should perish.

[6 : 16] And that means always, therefore, doing justly, acting rightly, when somebody else does sin. It's verses 15 to 20 we saw last time.

It means being a family where heaven's redeeming righteousness really does rule. So we invest time and love and devotion to bring restoration to those who have done wrong, to those who have done us wrong.

And we do so persistently and protectively of them. And prayerfully. Because Jesus says when we act this way, we act as true brothers and sisters of Jesus.

And then we are assured, he says, of heaven's presence and power in our midst. Look at verses 19 and 20. Then it will be done by my father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, that is doing justly, seeking to restore a brother, well there am I in the midst of them. But of course, for the church to really be like this, to be a family where heaven's restoring righteousness is at work powerfully in people's lives, then it must be a place, mustn't it, where forgiveness reigns supreme.

[7 : 37] That's a way of life. Not only must we be people who walk humbly and who do justly, but also we must be people who love mercy.

And that's the point that Jesus drives home here in his conversation with Peter in verses 21 and 22, and then in the parable that follows it.

So we need to look very carefully at his words here. First of all, look at verses 21 and 22, where we have a very plain statement about the extent of true forgiveness.

Peter recognizes something very profound in response to what Jesus says about real and persistent commitment to restoring one another when there is sin in the church.

He recognizes, doesn't he, that it's not just hard and costly for the sinner to humble themselves and to repent and to be restored, but also it's very hard and costly for the one doing that restorative work because that restoration depends absolutely on us having a forgiving spirit ourselves.

- [8 : 52] You can't affect restoration to fellowship and reconciliation in relationships. You can't do that without having a deep spirit of forgiveness.

Without a true extending of mercy. Without that, no attempts to sort out a difficult situation will ever lead to restoration because if there isn't that, the real goal won't really be true reconciliation, will it?

It'll be retribution. It won't be restorative, merciful justice, real righteousness. It'll just be punitive justice.

It'll just be the world's justice. See, when wrong is done, when sin is committed, when relationships are damaged and broken as a result, someone must bear the cost of that.

It's not a cost-free thing. But for there to be true forgiveness, that means that you, as a wrong party, you pay the price for the other person's sin.

- [10 : 08] You must find resolution, wasn't you, for your own righteous anger. And it's a result of that that will liberate the guilty party from their predicament, from the estrangement that they've brought about.

You set them free so that that relationship could be restored. But you see, that true restoration is a very costly thing.

Reconciliation has a price. It's not free. And that price is a real spirit of forgiveness and of mercy that overcomes even righteous anger, even right anger and hurt and profound disappointment in another person.

And it's that, therefore, that is able to truly restore and redeem. Good for Peter. He grasps that, doesn't he? He gets just how terribly hard that is.

And that's why he asked the question in verse 21, just how often are we expected to go on with this? Even as many as seven times? Is that possible? See, the rabbis, they taught that you should forgive once and then you should forgive again and even you should forgive a third time.

- [11 : 31] But after that, well, you've cooked your goose. You just don't waste your time any further. And, you know, that sounds entirely sensible. In fact, that sounds pretty generous to me.

We tend to say one less than that, don't we? Well, three strikes and you're out. But seven times double that, plus one? That's magnificent.

Poor old Peter. Once again, Jesus totally wrong-fits his best intentions, doesn't he? Verse 22, not seven times, 70 times seven.

You're out, Peter, by a whole order of magnitude. Now, you'll see from the footnote the text isn't absolutely clear. It may be it's 77 times, not 70 times seven.

But to get taken up with the exact numbers here is the exact opposite, isn't it, of what Jesus wants us to understand. His whole point is that forgiveness is not to be counted up. It's not to be tallied up in numbers.

- [12 : 34] No, it's to be so extensive that actually even keeping count at all is just out of the question. It's to be limitless, countless forgiveness, he's saying.

There's actually an allusion here to the Old Testament because the Greek phrase that's used here is exactly the same as that that's used in the Greek version of Genesis 4, verse 24.

Don't look it up, but remember, it refers to Lamech, the great avenger. If Cain's vengeance is sevenfold, says Lamech, Lamech's is 77-fold.

You see, what Jesus is doing is taking the natural desire of a man's heart, which is for relentless, limitless revenge on those who wrong us. Think of all Dominic Cummings' recent splurges.

Limitless revenge. And he says, in my family, in my kingdom, it is the very opposite spirit which reigns. Relentless, limitless, indefatigable forgiveness.

[13 : 42] You see, the difference between heaven and earth, between Jesus' family and the world is not just one of quantity, it is one of complete different quality. If it were just one of quantity, then Peter's question would be quite reasonable and right, wouldn't it?

Yes, Christians must do that bit more than the average person. We must be just a bit more forgiving than everybody else. And that probably is the view, isn't it, of many people today of what the Christian church is about.

We're trying to be a bit morally better and help people be a bit morally better than everybody else. And no, Jesus' answer takes us totally out of that whole realm of scales of moral behavior, of goodness that's measured just against our peers.

No, no, no. True forgiveness, he tells us, is not a quantitative thing. Even to ask about what extent we go to is quite wrong. So I get the whole category wrong.

True forgiveness, the attitude of Christ's family, is a qualitative thing. It's a whole way of thinking and living and acting that issues from a heart that has been utterly changed and transformed from within.

[14 : 59] So the true follower of Jesus can't be somebody who forgives but keeps count. Not somebody who forgives but sets limits on that forgiveness.

No, he forgives full stop. Verse 35, down at the bottom, he forgives from the heart. From the heart.

And you see, you will only do that if you've been made like that. And what makes you like that is that you have truly understood the nature of forgiveness yourself.

because you have genuinely experienced forgiveness yourself. That is the forgiveness of God himself. And when you've understood the real nature of divine forgiveness, you can't ask how often must I forgive?

You forgive from that transformed heart. from a merciful heart. From a heart that's been made that way because it's been filled full of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

[16 : 15] And that's why Jesus says in verse 23, therefore, and goes on to explain what forgiveness really is and where forgiveness really comes from. And, and the very real and present danger that we are in if we don't take this to heart and live its truth.

So let's look at the parable. And remember, it's all part of Jesus' answer to the question about the extent of true forgiveness. And first of all, here in verses 23 to 27, he's focusing on the experience of true forgiveness.

The message of the, of the account of this first debtor here is absolutely clear. True forgiveness flows from a real experience of the vast and infinite forgiving mercy of God.

And in the light of that, anything, anything that we are called to forgive fades into utter insignificance. The story makes two clear points, doesn't it, about, about sin and forgiveness.

First, that God requires of human beings a realistic settling of accounts. and the reality is that the debt of sin that each one of us owes to God is so vast it is simply unpayable.

[17 : 39] That's the truth about the kingdom of heaven, Jesus says here in verse 23. The king will call all his vassals to account, to settle accounts. That is tough forensic language, that is accounting language, there's no mistaking it.

And verse 24 is clear. This servant, look, has a vast, vast debt. 10,000 talents. Footnote tells us one talent was 20 years wages.

So here is 200,000 years of wages. This is debt. I looked up the ONS this week. The average UK income is about 30,000 pounds.

So this is 6 billion pounds in our money. Now I know we've come in recent days to realize that billions of pounds just grow on trees and drop out of the air and can be spent on all the latest crackpot schemes of our government.

But in the real world, where debt actually has to be repaid, 6 billion pounds is an awful lot of money. 6,000 million pounds.

[18 : 48] Apparently the total tax take of Galilee and Perea in Jesus' day was 200 talents. So this sum is 50 times the total tax take of that country.

In other words, what is being said is this is an unthinkable large sum. And for one man, utterly, utterly impossible to pay back, even over 20,000 lifetimes.

So, verse 25, obviously this man and his whole household face utter and complete ruin. They face the full force of the king's justice.

And selling them all into slavery isn't some attempt here to cover the losses. A slave's worth, if he was sold, was one-tenth of one talent. So even selling the whole household wouldn't raise one talent, let alone 10,000 talents.

Now this is an expression of the king's wrath. This is the meeting out of his sovereign punishment.

[19 : 54] And so verse 26, you see, is totally unrealistic fantasy too. Have patience, I'll pay for everything, he says. Well, it's ridiculous. He knows perfectly well. He can never do that, even if he lives for 20,000 years.

So it's not a realistic thing, is it? What is it? It's a cry for mercy. And that's the second point that's being made here, you see, having come to terms with the real calling to account, well, there must be now a recognition and a reception of sovereign mercy as the only possible hope.

hope. A mercy that costs the sovereign very dearly indeed. The only hope, look at verse 27, he knows lies in the master's pity in his compassion for this ruined, hopeless, and utterly helpless servant in his household.

Pity, compassion, the same word Jesus used in chapter 9, verse 36, his compassion, his pity on the crowds who are helpless and harassed like lost sheep. Or in chapter 15, verse 32, his compassion for the hungry crowds on the mountainside that had gone days without any food.

And here, it is the king's compassion, compassion. It's his merciful pity, verse 27, and that alone that forgives this man the vast, vast debt and releases him from the slavery which is caused by that debt.

[21 : 38] And it is a real liberation, isn't it, for him and for his family. You see, there is a real accounting of debt, of sin, and a real work of sheer sovereign grace, freely given to liberate the debtor.

But not without cost to the master, not without vast cost to his exchequer. And that is the cost, says Jesus, of God's forgiveness of you.

Vast. but merciful, sovereign and free to you but at infinite cost to the master.

And your forgiveness, he is saying, for your brother and your sister flows from a real experience of that vast forgiving grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

But the parable doesn't end there, does it? Look at verse 28, let me read on from there. And that servant and all his household rejoiced long into the night. And behold, a fellow servant came to that forgiven debtor and said, I owe you a hundred denarii, just a few weeks wages.

[23 : 04] And the forgiven debtor threw his arms around his fellow servant and said, this is a day for rejoicing in the mercy of our master. He has forgiven me the weight of an infinite unpayable debt.

He set me and my household truly free. He's blessed me beyond earthly dreams. And you, my brother, you must share the joy with me. What he has done for me, I do for you.

How could I do any other? Your trivial debt is forgotten forever. Come, join the joy of celebration with me. God do you do you do you?

Do you do you have it that way by the way? No, mine doesn't either, I'm afraid. But that's what should have happened, isn't it? You see the point, and in fact, you see, Jesus makes the point all the more starkly, doesn't he, by framing the story in the opposite way.

It's one of his necessary negatives that spells out the exercise and the expression of a forgiving heart that is not shown here.

[24 : 16] And he throws it up by way of stark contrast. Because what verses 28 to 30 show instead is the evidence of unforgiveness in this man's heart.

Do you notice that the second debtor is a fellow servant? Verse 28. And that's emphasized several times. Verse 29, his fellow servant. Verse 31, his fellow servants.

Verse 33, again, your fellow servants. You get the point? That is, this man is another one who serves the very same master.

Jesus is talking here all about our relationship with our father, isn't he? Which is one of mercy, which is one of grace and compassion, received from him. And he's talking about our relationships with our brothers and sisters, which demand that we show mercy and forgiveness to them.

It's all about how we deal with our brothers and sisters, isn't it? All the way through this chapter. And Jesus is quite explicit in the last verse there, verse 35. Fellow servants are our brothers and sisters in the church.

[25 : 29] That's what he's talking about. So here it's all very plain, isn't it? This fellow servant, this brother in Christ owes his brother, verse 28, a paltry sum, a hundred denarii, a hundred days wages, a few thousand pounds at most.

It's a paltry sum by comparison. But notice this brother who owes him this debt is nonetheless very penitent.

he's willing to own the debt, isn't he? And he's quite willing and indeed he's able to put matters right. Verse 29, have patience with me, I will pay you.

Unlike the first debtor whose debt was utterly vast and totally unpayable, this man probably could pay it back, couldn't he, in time? It would involve some hardship, but he's willing.

But not only does the first servant not even suggest reducing the debt, far less writing it off altogether, he won't even give him a chance to make reparation.

[26 : 32] Now verse 28, he attacks him, chokes him, and verse 30, sends him straight to the debtor's prison. And his fellow servant had used exactly the same words, hadn't he, that he had used to the master, have patience.

He'd used the same cry for mercy and the same words. And yet his ears were closed, his heart was closed, and there was absolutely no mercy showed at all, none.

And his response simply displays his unforgiveness and his unchanged heart. Now don't get tied in knots, don't try and work out how it all fits together neatly in this story, how somebody can be forgiven by the master and then unforgiven.

No, Jesus is making simple points here in this story. The first point simply illustrates the sheer magnitude, doesn't it, of God's forgiving grace and mercy of helpless sinners who are enslaved by a debt that they can never possibly repay.

But the second point is showing us something different, that it is simply impossible to have truly grasped God's real forgiveness and to have received it and experienced it, liberating joy in ourselves, it's impossible for that to be the case without our hearts being utterly changed, without becoming a lover of mercy and a liver of mercy yourself.

[28 : 10] Because true forgiveness, when it is experienced, when it is received, it does change our hearts, always. God's forgiveness isn't a commodity that can be received in a vacuum.

God's forgiveness is a liberating and life changing power. It involves a great reconciliation in our personal relationship with God himself.

And therefore, it will always involve a great reconciliation in relationships within God's family, with our fellow debtor servants, with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

And the latter, you see, is evidence of the former. The heart attitude of Christ's true family is one of loving and of living mercy.

It is an attitude of real forgiveness to others. But a heart attitude of unforgiveness is the defining attitude not of heaven, but of hell.

[29 : 29] It's this world's attitude, isn't it? Under the sway of the evil one. The attitude that says revenge is sweet.

or as Walter Scott put it once, revenge is the sweetest morsel ever cooked in hell. And that is, according to Jesus, you see, where that attitude of unforgiveness belongs.

And therefore, it is where that attitude inevitably leads, which is the chilling final point that Jesus makes in verses 31 to 35.

Look, he's speaking there, isn't he, about the end of unforgiveness. And it's a very stark end indeed.

Verse 34, the first servant is delivered to the jailers, literally to the torturers, until he pays all his debt.

[30 : 35] all 20,000 years of labor, which of course is utterly unpayable. And in any case, in prison, he could never earn anything ever to pay it, even if he lived 20,000 years.

The master is quite clear, look at verse 32, this man's wickedness is exposed. He had clearly scorned and despised the master's merciful heart, hadn't he?

The forgiveness that was offered to him so freely and wonderfully had not changed him one little bit. So it's quite clear, isn't it, that he has never understood his master. He's never really loved the master, he's never wanted to be like the master.

master. And so, says Jesus, he brings judgment on himself. And we can't avoid, can we, the full frontal piercing gaze of the Lord Jesus Christ looking straight at Peter and looking straight at every one of us in verse 35.

When he says, so also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. That is 70 times 7.

[31 : 56] Persistently, without limit, infinitely. It's either that, it's either the true attitude of my heavenly kingdom, says Jesus, or, or it's hell, it's the place where unforgiveness belongs forever.

It's pretty stark, isn't it? What do you think Peter made of that? Certainly make him think twice before asking another question, I think.

What do you make of it? What do you make it if you're sitting here this morning actually seething in your heart with anger about one of your brothers and sisters?

Jesus is telling us, you see, that our experience of forgiveness offered by God tells the truth about God, that he is infinitely merciful, that he loves mercy. But he's also telling us that our expression and our exercise of forgiveness, or the lack of it, tells the truth about us.

If we exercise mercy, that's evidence of our reception of mercy, because God has changed our hearts truly. Whereas, if we exercise unforgiveness, then I'm afraid it shows our hearts are not changed.

[33 : 27] And only changed hearts says Jesus can enter the kingdom of heaven. Verse 3, remember, unless you turn and become like children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

See how Jesus holds two things together here as absolute truth. First, you see, he's telling us that we must have experienced true forgiveness from God in order to exercise that true forgiveness.

But he's also telling us that we must exercise true forgiveness if we're to receive it from God. Because if we don't, there's no evidence that we've really received God's mercy, but rather there's clear evidence that we haven't.

It's forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, as he told us to pray, or, it's verse 35 here, isn't it?

It's forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, or we have no place in his kingdom. Let me say a few things just in conclusion then to this chapter.

[34 : 43] First, relationship breakdowns in the church due to sin are a very dangerous thing, aren't they? Jesus says, sin leads to judgment, both temporal and eternal.

The offending brother, in verse 15, is at risk. If he strays, if he's not restored, he risks judgment. Verse 14 is clear, perishing.

Ultimately, and even now, Jesus says there in verse 17, to be treated as an outsider, as a Gentile, as a tax collector. The offending brother is at risk. brother, the one who has sinned against, is also at risk.

If he won't forgive from the heart, verse 35, then he too is at risk of judgment, forever. So a relationship breakdown like that in the church due to sin is dangerous, isn't it?

Eternally dangerous. So secondly, that means, doesn't it, that we must all be searching our hearts continually. As Paul says to the Corinthian church, examine ourselves to see whether indeed we are in the faith.

[36 : 00] Will I be in the kingdom when the master comes again? It's easy to sing the old song, isn't it? When the role is called up yonder, I'll be there. But what do we base that on? Is it on the basis of some decision we made in 1955 at the Kelvin Hall with Billy Graham or 1995 or 2021?

Jesus doesn't, of course, erode true gospel assurance, but Jesus does sweep aside an awful lot of false assurance. Matthew 7.

It's not those who sing Lord, Lord when the role is called up yonder, but it's those who do the will of my Father who will enter the kingdom of heaven, he says.

And chapter 18 here is very clear, isn't it? We've seen it. You cannot enter his kingdom unless, verse 5, you have been truly humbled by God's grace.

And the evidence of that humbling is that you share the Father's heart. And what comes out of your mouth reveals what's in the heart, as he said back in chapter 15.

[37 : 09] What does come out of my heart? And what does come out of my mouth? Is it mercy and forgiveness?

Persistently? Patiently? Or is it unforgiveness? Is it hardness? Is it revenge? Well, friends, if it's the latter, I shall not be there no matter what blessing.

Because doing the Father's will means, verse 33 here, look, loving mercy. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?

Cutting, isn't it? When we think of all the tiny things, all the trivial things that so often we refuse to forgive in others, that we allow to fester, that we harbor, that we soften the light to make us bitter.

All as nothing compared to all that debt that the Master has forgiven you. But Jesus' point is even stronger than that, isn't it?

[38 : 23] Because even the big things, even the huge wrongs that sometimes people may have heaped on us or done to us, even these are nothing compared to all that vast debt that we owe.

As a mere hundred denarii to ten thousand talents. And if we are truly forgiven people, then we'll forgive even these, won't we?

From our hearts, because our hearts have been changed. And that's hard. Listen to what C.S.

Lewis says on this. There's no use talking as if forgiveness were easy. For we find that the work of forgiveness has to be done over and over again.

We forgive, we mortify our resentment. A week later, some chain of thought carries us back to the original offense. And we discover the old resentment blazing away as if nothing had been done about it at all.

[39 : 25] And so we need to forgive our brother and sister seventy times seven, not only for four hundred and ninety offenses, but for the just one offense. Isn't that right?

How hard, how costly real forgiveness is. if we are sinned against. By a spouse, perhaps, who hurts us, who sins against us.

Perhaps he's unfaithful, even abandons us. Forgiveness is anything but easy in that circumstance. The cost is deep, it's painful. Like tearing off a limb.

Remember verse eight? Better to enter life crippled like that, says Jesus, than to let unforgiveness take you on the road to hell.

Or maybe you're sinned against by a parent, badly let down, disgraced, perhaps. Maybe even abused. Abandoned altogether.

[40 : 38] What a cost forgiveness is there. Remember verse nine, better enter life maimed from the agony that feels like the plucking out of an eye, than to let unforgiveness and bitterness destroy you, shut you out of the kingdom of heaven.

How can I forgive things like that, you might say? It just, it just goes against all natural justice. Well, you can only forgive these things through the experience of God's abundant mercy to you.

Only that, only that will ever change your heart to be able to forgive like that. but it will change it. And it must change it.

Only if you learn to love God's mercy, can you learn to live God's mercy. But one final thing.

Real forgiveness is not soft, it's not sentimental. We're not being told just to sweep aside and overlook sin. No, verse 15 is so clear, we saw that last time.

[41 : 58] We must be faithful. We must confront sin. We must confront all attitudes of sin. And Jesus there is telling us too, isn't he, to be realistic. Forgiveness may not be received, even if that forgiveness is persistently offered.

And relationships may not always be restored. But we're to listen to Jesus and we're to ensure that it's not ourselves who are the ones who cut that off.

We are not to be the ones who withhold mercy. Now for our part, we are to offer forgiveness again and again and again.

Seventy times seven. Seven thousand times seven. Indeed. We are to be those who have indefatigable forgiving hearts.

And that's hard. That is costly. But that is living on earth for heaven. That is being the church, the family, the household of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[43 : 12] Christ. We are to be a people who do justly in all of these things. Who love mercy. And therefore who walk humbly before our God.

And that can only begin, Jesus says here, when we turn, when we come to Jesus like helpless little children to receive from him that heart of his. Heart full of mercy.

And it will only go on if we keep coming to him. To receive from him. Fresh grace and mercy. Day after day.

After day. You will not find that mercy anywhere else. But do this. Says Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do this and you will be great. In the kingdom of heaven. May God help us all to help one another to live on earth.

[44 : 15] For heaven. Let's pray. O God of love. Who has given a new commandment through thine only son that we should love one another even as thou didst love us.

The unworthy. The wandering. And gave us thy beloved son for our life and salvation. We pray thee Lord.

Give to us thy servants. In all time of our life here on earth. A mind forgetful of past ill will.

A pure conscience and sincere thoughts. And a heart to love our brethren. For the sake of Jesus Christ thy and only son.

Our Lord and only savior. Amen. Amen. Amen.