

# Kingdom Mercy

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Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, everybody. You all doing well? Yeah? Good. All right, we're gonna jump into Matthew 18 as we continue on with our parables that Jesus gave and really manifest it through us.

And oftentimes when we think about God's kingdom, I think we come to it and we think it's this marvelous, spectacular, like powerful displays of God doing stuff. And so we would think of like, man, we're really in the kingdom when we're rocking around and like, boom, raised from the dead.

Bam, somebody gets healed. Or like, we're able to multiply loaves and fishes or something, right? And it really just isn't that flashy.

What we see and what we're learning from Jesus is that actually the kingdom's power is a lot more common than we expect. And consider today's topic, which is kingdom mercy.

It makes itself manifest in just kind of the everyday, unglorious decisions of life, activities of life. It's nothing that's gonna make headlines anywhere or get most people's attention.

[ 1 : 2 8 ]     And yet, even though it's that way, it's still, when we live in kingdom mercy, it makes a world of difference. And so we're gonna unpack why kingdom mercy is necessary, how it manifests itself, and also how it grows in us.

And so Matthew 18, we're gonna begin in verse 21. It says this. Then Peter came up and said to him, Jesus, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

As many as seven times? And Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but seventy seven times, or seven times seventy. 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 10,000 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 8 ]     But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 denarii. And seizing him, he began to choke him saying, pay what you owe me. So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, have patience with me and I will pay you.

And 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.

This is God's word. So Jesus is saying mercy is not an option in God's kingdom. We must be merciful.

[ 3 : 50 ] But first let's consider why mercy is even necessary. Mercy is a necessary thing because of evil and injustice. To acknowledge that mercy exists, that it is good, is to acknowledge that bad things exist and bad things do happen in this world.

And, you know, we have to, for us to acknowledge mercy, we have to first accept the concept of sin. And that sin must be responded to and it must be dealt with.

Now I want to say this. This isn't a parable for how government should deal with the evils of society. The Bible tells us in Romans 13 that the government is mandated by God to punish the evildoer.

Enforcing laws, punishing criminals are in the government's domain of justice. And that's been by God's design. The church at times has misunderstood its role and has failed to protect people when it tries to circumvent the role of government and try to be the role of government by internally dealing with cases such as abuse or endangerment of people and crimes committed.

Things that really they should have reported to the government and brought the government into for them to deal with. And in these matters of sin, those particular ones, the government can actually be an amazing gift and a protection and justice on earth.

[ 5 : 12 ] Now I say that, hopefully you understand that I say that knowing that does the government do it perfectly all the time and do it well all the time? No, of course not. But still, it serves as a common grace to us all.

But I would also say not every matter of sin needs to involve the government. Harsh words, crooked talk, gossip, slander, immature behaviors, lust, unholy attitudes, selfishness, licentious living, divisive behavior, things like these.

These are matters very much in the domain of the church and what we can handle in the domain of the church. We aren't running out to the government to help us solve those type of problems. And as the church, we recognize that justice is a good thing.

The upholding of good, righteous laws is a beautiful thing. And holding people accountable for the behaviors is important. And the mercy that Jesus teaches in this parable agrees with that.

Mercy doesn't excuse sin, nor does it ignore sin. And this can be kind of a misconception we can pick up along the way as Christians, this misconception of mercy.

[ 6 : 21 ] We can mistake mercy for overlooking sin, but it isn't. Mercy is the kingdom process for dealing with sin. Consider the king of the parable that we just read, that Jesus gave to us.

Does he ignore the man's debts? No, he doesn't. He calls him to account for it. He doesn't pretend that they don't exist. In fact, we see that he is getting ready to bring the full extent of the law to punish this man.

Even his wife and his family, they're going to be thrown in jail for the inability to make it right. Mercy is a response to sin, but mercy is a specific kind of response to sin, which means it requires a response from us.

And there are three responses we see in this parable. Those in debt acknowledge it and plead for its forgiveness. That's one response. The merciful king, he forgives the debt.

That's another response we see in this parable. And then we see what the unmerciful servant does. He does not forgive the debt. And at the heart of this parable about mercy, what we see and what we notice are these important actions of repentance and forgiveness.

[ 7 : 32 ] And repentance is important, and we're going to get to it later on. Because for the sinner, once we are aware of our sin, it's made known to us, we cannot receive forgiveness without first repenting of it.

Now, having said that, I would also go on to say, man, what good is repentance for us if there wasn't forgiveness that followed on? Like, what good would we have if God came to us and said, you are wrong, how dare you?

And we repent, and that's all there is. There's nothing left on the other side. We would continue in our guilt and our shame no matter what we had done. So when we think of mercy, we have to understand this.

Forgiveness is the primary way God's mercy manifests on earth, both in his mercy to us and in our mercy to others. Because without forgiveness, there is no chance for reconciliation.

There is no chance for that relationship with God to be closed and to have union with him and be restored once again. Which is the ultimate goal of the gospel? The chasm between us and between God was too great for us to try to close.

[ 8 : 41 ] And we needed something beyond ourselves for that to happen. And it can only be closed by God's forgiveness and us receiving his forgiveness. We cannot earn it.

We cannot demand it from him. Forgiveness for you and me is a free gift. And it is a gift. And what we do is we have to receive it. But as much as it is a free gift for those who receive it, you know what?

It is very costly to the one who gives it. Think about what Jesus had to do. He came. He humbled himself. Stepped down from heaven. Put on our flesh.

Endured the shame and the suffering of the cross. And being mocked by his very creation, by the very people he was dying for. And he did that. And he endured the cross and the wrath of God for our sins so that we could be forgiven.

To make a way so we could be reconciled to the Father as his sons and his daughters. And the mercy of that forgiveness, the mercy of God's forgiveness, it is unfathomable.

[ 9 : 41 ] But it isn't cheap. Forgiveness means you are going to lose something. Primarily, it means letting go of things like vengeance and retribution.

And the need to even the score. And even though it looks like losing, I would say, actually, what we are doing when we practice forgiveness is we are stepping into real freedom.

And forgiveness is a gift that sets us free. You and I, we have two pathways we can choose to live in life. Two ways to walk.

One yields freedom. And the other is a trap. Either we can be a people of mercy practicing forgiveness or we can live to even the score.

And when Jesus tells Peter, hey, buddy, seven times of forgiving your brother, that does not even come close. It's seven times 70.

[ 10 : 42 ] He's eerily close to quoting someone else in Scripture. And I think he did that on purpose. I think he's wanting us to call attention to what this other guy said. Because he's making a point that goes far beyond just quantity of the amount of times you need to forgive.

Genesis 4.23 says this. Lamech, this descendant of Cain, said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech. Listen to what I say.

I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold or seven times, then Lamech's is 77fold, 77 times.

Lamech is this descendant, the fifth in the line from Cain, the Cain who killed Abel. And God, his punishment on Cain was you are being sent away from your family.

You are going to be a restless wonder, a nomad. And Cain says, oh, this is too much for me to bear. Someone's going to come across and kill me. They're going to take vengeance on me.

[ 11 : 50 ] And God says, no, if they do that, if anyone kills Cain, a sevenfold, a seven times vengeance will come upon that person. And it seems that this vengeance, this idea of sevenfold vengeance was too small by the time it came to Lamech, five generations later from Cain.

And that's all we know of the lineage of Cain. Lamech's the last guy mentioned. And what began in violence with Cain killing his brother and in retribution, it only grew from there until it reached Lamech.

And here's what I think Jesus is trying to get us to see. It's a principle. Acting vengefully, acting with vengeance begets more vengeance.

But Jesus says, here's a better way. Here's a better promise. Why don't we let mercy beget more mercy? You know, we live to even the score.

And it comes so naturally. We like to do that because it seems like such a righteous thing to do. To try to bear up under injustice doesn't seem a thing that we should have to undergo.

[ 13 : 04 ] And so we justify evening the score, don't we? But in the end, you know what that does? It enslaves us in all kinds of unrighteousness. Forgiveness, on the other hand, offers us a pathway to be set free from that.

Here's a beautiful example in the not-too-distant past. Nelson Mandela, I know he wasn't a perfect man, but you know what? He was a great man of his time.

And when South African apartheid finally fell in the early 1990s, many around the world and in that nation held their breath for what might come next.

As the ANC was coming into power as the new ruling party of South Africa, and many feared that there would be a bloody retribution to even the score for decades upon decades of abuse, injustice.

And these things were done by the whites on the blacks in South Africa. Nelson Mandela, he was elected in 1994. He was in prison for 27 years.

[ 14 : 10 ] He saw and lived under more injustice than very few of us will ever come close to recognizing. And understanding in our lifetime. In his book, A Long Walk to Freedom, he recalls the day his prison doors were open and he was free to walk out of his cell in that prison on Robben Island.

And he said this, As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.

He also went on to say, Forgiveness liberates the soul. It removes fear. That's why it is such a powerful weapon.

Nelson Mandela understood that there was something way more powerful than taking revenge on your enemies. That was mercy. That was kindness. And the guy lived it out.

One of his honored guests at his inauguration as president, one of his honored guests was one of the white men, one of his white jailers.

[ 15 : 16 ] He didn't let vengeance have the last word. He let forgiveness have the last word. And the truly miraculous what was followed during the years of his presidency, because it shows how forgiveness beget forgiveness, and mercy beget mercy in that nation.

And it produced, to a degree, healing and peace and steps towards reconciliation and restoration. Mercy, forgiveness, these are powerful weapons of the kingdom.

More powerful than vengeance. Living to even the score, it will only enslave you to bitterness and hatred. And often what happens is you end up becoming exactly like the people you were seeking vengeance on.

What did Lamech do to the man who wounded and struck him? He didn't turn the other cheek. He didn't wound the guy back or struck him back. He took an even greater revenge upon him.

His response to evil was a more severe evil. And living to even the score, what it does, it traps us in a degrading spiral that just leads to greater and greater destruction.

[ 16 : 35 ] Jesus' way of mercy through forgiveness, it offers us a way out of this. And you know what? It looks weak. It looks like losing.

And in a way it is. You're gonna have to give up the last word. You're gonna have to give up throwing the last punch. You will have to let go of what you believe you are owed.

But in doing that, what you're gonna do is you're gonna gain newfound freedom. Freedom from bitterness. Freedom from hatred. Freedom to release your enemy's debts.

So that you don't come to them demanding their pound of flesh. You can come to them with the freedom to truly love your enemies, as Jesus calls us to do. Now, anyone who's ever been sinned against in any terrible way knows how high a bar is being set here.

It seems impossible to live this way. And you know what? You and I cannot do this on our own.

[ 17 : 42 ] If it was just up to us, we would not live this way. This is uncommon. This is unnatural to the human condition. And that we can only live this out because of God's grace.

As God's grace comes to us. And we have to receive that grace from him. What's helpful to understand when it comes to forgiveness is that forgiveness is a kingdom mercy, but it's a kingdom mercy that we receive and that grows in us over time.

So take a breather. Because you probably stink at forgiveness. That's okay. You probably stink more than you realize, but don't give up.

You know, Jesus didn't fire Peter. He didn't unapostolize him. And don't go look that word up in the dictionary. He didn't fire Peter because Peter wanted to just forgive his brother up to seven times and then call it quits.

What did Jesus do? He just corrected the number. He said, sorry, Pete. You put the bar way too low. It's way, way, way up there, buddy. And for us, there's going to be little corrections from Jesus along the way.

[ 18 : 51 ] As we learn to practice forgiveness, as we grow in this forgiveness. And to be sure, forgiveness is a practice. It is not a moment. You know, we often think of forgiveness at the, of the, hey, when somebody says they're sorry, and I say I forgive you, and that's what forgiveness is, and then it's all done.

And that's just a very immature way to understand forgiveness because it isn't just an action. It isn't just a moment. It isn't just the thing you say. What did Jesus say at the end of that parable?

God's going to hold us to account that we didn't say you're forgiven to our brothers. He said, man, we need to forgive our brothers from the heart. It isn't an action.

It's a heart condition. It is. And because it's a condition, that means it can change. That means this condition of forgiveness in our hearts can be increasing in us, and it can be decreasing in us.

So how can we make sure that this heart of forgiveness, the heart condition of forgiveness, this heart condition of mercy is growing in us and not decreasing? Well, I think here's some helpful truths for us to wrap our minds around.

[ 20 : 00 ] First, forgiveness is a process, not a moment. We kind of already started talking about this. Think about this, though. The more severe the sin against you, or the more often it has happened in an unrepentant way, and the length of time it's being carried on by another, the greater the debt that is being incurred, and typically the bigger the debt, the longer the forgiveness journey.

You can forgive someone and release them from owing you anything, but I want to give it to you honest.

That doesn't necessarily heal the wounds that you carry from it. It doesn't heal you from the dark thoughts you might have toward that person that you're struggling with. Now, I want to say, can God heal us like that if he wants to?

He can, and he does from time to time, but many times over, the healing is a process. It happens over time as we faithfully journey with him, as we come to him and set those things at his feet.

And I want to say this. There's going to be setbacks in that journey. You're going to have dark thoughts towards people you're trying to be forgiving towards, and some days you're going to wake up, and it's going to be an amazing day, and you're going to go to bed thinking like, boom, I got this thing figured out, and then some days your memory's going to trigger, and then you're going to spiral back into thinking about, oh, gosh, if somebody could just come and, you know, that's going to happen.

[ 21 : 29 ] And that doesn't mean that you've started back at ground zero on the forgiveness path. It's just another day of you walking in forgiveness and growing in forgiveness. Anyone who says otherwise, I dare say don't listen to them.

They are worthy of being ignored. That is not biblical wisdom. When you read the Psalms, when you study the life of David, you see that, man, forgiveness is a process that he had to walk out.

Joseph, it was a process that he had to walk out and grow in. You read these Psalms that these guys wrote, there's some honest conversations being had about their enemies.

And yes, they're honest, but they aren't nice. They aren't saying nice things all the time. But that is part of the journey of forgiveness. You and I have to learn that we can bring those things to God.

He's the place to bring those dark thoughts to. When we're struggling with our thoughts towards one another and struggling with forgiveness, because we have to learn to be angry with God. Not just at God, not just at somebody.

[ 22 : 37 ] We got to learn to be angry with him. And so we take our laments and our anger and we bring it to God because you know what? He knows how to be angry in a way that is still righteous. We don't. He can be angry and he doesn't sin.

We don't necessarily know how to do that very well. And so we need to learn to be angry with God in the manners that he offers it to us. We can lament the injustices done to us, the unfair things that we are sitting under.

And we can come and we can leave vengeance and justice to his discretion and to his timing, knowing that he is wise enough to carry these things out properly and perfectly and he knows better.

This is what it means to walk in forgiveness in a process. This is some of the things we need to learn to know how to do. These are the things that help us to grow in forgiveness. But here's another one.

This might surprise you, but forgiveness doesn't require a restored relationship. Sometimes forgiveness might lead to a relationship being restored and praise God and amen to that when that happens.

[ 23 : 47 ] Reconciliation is one of the core tenets of the gospel. And when we see that happen, it is a miraculous thing, but it doesn't always happen. Sometimes it can't work out that way because when you're talking about relationship, it takes two sides, doesn't it?

You can come to the table, but if the other person does it, what do you do? So sometimes forgiveness might lead to relationships being restored. Sometimes it doesn't. And I'm gonna say a third thing that might shock you too.

Sometimes it shouldn't. Think about those who've been seriously abused. Or people you know who've proved themselves untrustworthy time and time and time again, lying, deception, thieving, taking advantage of you and your kindness again and again and again and again.

You know, there are situations where forgiveness doesn't require you to put yourself back in harm's way. I've heard a pastor say this, forgiving someone of their debt doesn't mean you should continue to lend them more money.

The path of restoration and the path of reconciliation, it should be traversed with wisdom. It should be navigated with wisdom. Too often that what the church has done and made some mistakes is it's enabled abusers to continue to take advantage of the people they are abusing in the name of mercy and forgiveness.

[ 25 : 22 ] What I wanna say is that we have to be wise. One of the ways we traverse forgiveness wisely is look at somebody's life and am I seeing fruits in keeping with repentance here?

That's the thing. To not do that is not being merciful, to not consider someone's life and looking at their fruits in keeping with repentance, that's not mercy, that's folly.

And often unwittingly what we do is we promote a weak and meaningless kind of repentance as we allow those things to happen. Look at the king in Jesus' parable here. He considered that unmerciful servant's lack of fruit in keeping with repentance, right?

Because he goes right out and he shakes another servant down and he throws him in prison. And the very thing that he was forgiven of, as much as we should grow in forgiveness, there's got to be an equal expectation to grow in repentance.

Because repentance is another major way God's mercy manifests among us. And often out of compassion and a desire to restore the sinner, what we do is we demand less of them and expect way more from those that have been sinned against.

[ 26 : 35 ] And Jesus set a high bar for both. We have a kingdom responsibility and a high bar to walk into forgiveness and grow in forgiveness and we have a kingdom responsibility and high bar to walk in repentance and grow in repentance.

And this understanding of repentance helps us grow and particularly in that forgiveness doesn't release a sinner from their responsibility to repent.

Just prior to this parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus gives this teaching on repentance. Matthew 18, 15, it says, if your brother sins against you, ignore it.

No, he doesn't say that, does it? Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens, you have gained a brother. But if he doesn't listen, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

If again, he refuses to listen to all of that, tell it to the church. And if still he refuses to listen to even the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

[ 27 : 51 ] Let him be to you as one that you look at and you say, man, I don't think this guy gets the kingdom. I don't think he understands the forgiveness that he has received, the mercy that he has received. And you treat him that way and you continue to call that person to repentance.

And that may look harsh, but in fact, it is a mercy just like forgiveness. Calling people to take responsibility for their sin is in fact an act of kingdom mercy.

And in Jesus' parable, consider this, neither of the servants in that parable deny the debt that they owed. They both recognize their responsibility to repay it. And you will see these things in true repentance, an acknowledgement of the sin, accepting responsibility for it, not making excuses for it, and a desire to make it right.

Those are manifestations that mean God is at work at repentance in this person's lives when we see those things. Because oftentimes what we do is we say, we give it, oh, you know, I'm sorry I kind of did that thing.

We don't, but you know, I wasn't my best that day. Or like, I'm sorry you got hurt. I really didn't mean it. Well, that's not really repentance. I heard it called Apollo excuses.

[ 29 : 07 ] Making excuses along with your apology. We have to grow in godly repentance. And that's gonna help us grow in forgiveness too when these things happen.

Now, I wanna say this. There is such a thing in a time as overlooking small offenses. There is. But I wanna say a follow-on to that. If you can, if you tried that, you're just, I'm gonna just overlook that.

If you can't forget the offense, if you're three, five days down the road, two weeks down the road, and you still can't forget that thing, and you're starting to notice you're just getting more bitter towards that person, then you just gotta be honest with yourself.

And say like, and this overlooking thing just ain't working on this one. And you know, I wanna say this to you, that is not a sign of immaturity. Too often we deceive ourselves that we can overlook an offense when we actually can't and probably sometimes shouldn't.

And we don't address it because we're afraid to address it. And in the end, it doesn't help you out. You're just stuck in bitterness, growing in you.

[ 30 : 15 ] And you know what? It doesn't help your brother and sister in Christ out either because, you know, we all need loving correction coming our way from time to time so that we can grow as disciples of Jesus too.

Today's scripture, it teaches us that there is this beautiful interdependence between repentance and forgiveness. You know, when we understand the depths of our own sin, then we can appreciate fully, more fully, the forgiveness of that sin.

And that changes how we live towards others. The unmerciful servant proved how little he had appreciated what he'd been forgiven. Like his denarii, I mean, 10,000 denarii, the other guy just had like a few bits of denarii.

In comparison, it wasn't even close. That unmerciful servant proved how little he understood what he'd been forgiven and brings us to the final point for how we can grow in forgiveness.

Forgiveness grows the more we understand what we've been forgiven. You know, it is really tempting and really easy to obsess over other people's sin.

[ 31 : 24 ] Especially when it continues to go on without any kind of repentance or resolution. Often what happens in our hearts, we become more and more like Lamech.

The bitterness grows, the desire for vengeance and getting even begins to grow. But here's the thing. You don't know if that day of reckoning will ever come.

You don't know when it is, you don't know if it will ever come in this life. Maybe you have a relationship that you've necessarily had to create physical distance because of how toxic it was or dangerous it was.

And maybe you're sitting hoping that man, I want, one day it's gonna come into the light. Everyone's gonna know what I know about them and that'll show them. can that really give you any kind of healing?



Can man give you any kind of healing? And to live that way and to have that hope and set your hope and that expectation of like, man, if I just get that, everything's gonna be good.

[ 32 : 37 ] You know what? That is living captive to bitterness and anger. That's the lineage of Lamech. You can only, when you can only see the debt that others owe you and that perspective will grow until it dominates your life so that others' debts look so much worse and so much greater than your own.

We start to act like that unmerciful servant, totally blind to what we've been forgiven. And that's what this parable is encouraging us to realize.

All that debt that we've been forgiven. When it comes to our sin with God, that debt is miles greater than the debt anyone could ever owe us. It's like, boom, and everyone else's debt towards us is just, you know, it's so small, it's so ridiculous.

And knowing that is helpful. It will make us more humble. It will make us more merciful people. Jesus said this to Simon the Pharisee as a prostitute washed his feet.

Simon was judging her because he couldn't see how great his own sin was. And Jesus said to him, therefore I tell you, Simon, her sins, this lady, this prostitute washing my feet, her sins are many, but they're forgiven because she loved much.

[ 33 : 56 ] For he who is forgiven little loves little. And he wasn't trying to point out that she had so much more sin than Simon did.

What he's trying to point out to Simon is she actually gets how much she sinned. You are blind to yours. She has lavished me with love and you are sitting in judgment and arrogance and pouring out very little love, if any, to anybody.

When you and I, when we take time every day to survey our own hearts, to consider what we have been forgiven in Christ, when we practice things like the Lord's Prayer, which brings us into every single time, there's a line that says, forgive us our as we forgive those.

Yeah. Is it a wonder that Jesus put that in his prayer? When we practice things like that or maybe at the end of the day you practice the prayer of exam which is a review of your day and you're giving thanks to God and noticing all the ways he was with you and bless you along the way but you're also taking time to notice all the ways that you didn't exercise grace, that you didn't show mercy, that you were short with someone, that you maybe lied a little bit or cheated a little bit in some way.

You go to God and you say, oh Lord, in these ways and I see you at work, thank you for the ways that you have blessed me and helped me but in these ways, man, I want to own up to them, I don't want to repent and Lord, help me tomorrow, lead me so that I may not do those things again.

[ 35 : 41 ] You sit and when you have daily practices of stepping into his mercy and forgiveness over you, you will grow in forgiveness and you know what, you're going to grow in giving it to others.

In this kingdom mercy, you will find that it ain't as impressive as some of like, like raising someone from the dead or anything like that but you will find that it is nevertheless a powerful, powerful weapon at your disposal every single day.

It's a weapon that sets you free and it's a weapon that sets others free. Amen. As the band comes up and we look to respond, in a moment, we're going to take communion and I want to say to you, if you're not yet a follower of Jesus, before you come to the communion table, you have to come to one that communion points at.

You have to come to Jesus first. Taking communion does not save you. There is no way that you can earn this salvation. Salvation is a free gift but it's a gift that begins with you recognizing your debt that you owe the king in heaven because of the sins that you have done.

Salvation means that you come to him and you plead for his forgiveness and believe that his sacrifice was actually the sacrifice to pay for your debt that is owed and it is enough and salvation means you stepping into that, believing that, receiving his forgiveness that Jesus has on offer for you today and there's going to be a prayer for you to pray if that's you.

[ 37 : 13 ] That will be up on the screen in a moment here. Now, if you're already a follower of Jesus and as we look to respond by coming to the communion table, we remember that we're coming to partake of that sacrifice, that great act of mercy that God subjected himself to in our place to pay all our debts.

Before you come, just pause and consider all that that means. All the mercy, all the debt that God has forgiven in your life.

just let that, let his mercy flood over you. Receive that from him. Let me pray and then we can go to the table nearest to you when you're ready.

So, Father, we come to you great and merciful, Father, great and merciful Savior. some of us are coming to you for the first time and asking for your forgiveness that leads to salvation.

Many of us are coming to you, coming to your table. We're going to take communion. We're going to take the thing that reminds us of your grace and your great mercy, your body that was broken for us.

[ 38 : 43 ] And the cup that represents the blood that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We thank you for that great mercy, Lord. Help us to understand and know the fullness of what that means.

Amen. Amen.