

## The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 406, 281, 306, 411

### THE INTROIT

(Ps.130:1-4)

*P: If Thou, Lord, should mark iniquities:*

**C: O Lord, who shall stand?**

*P: But there is forgiveness with Thee:*

**C: that thou may be feared, O God of Israel.**

*P: Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord:*

**C: Lord, hear my voice.**

### THE COLLECT

O God, our Refuge and Strength, who art the Author of all godliness, be ready, we beseech Thee, to hear the devout prayers of Thy Church, and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

### The FIRST LESSON

**Deuteronomy 7:9-11 (NKJV)**

Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

### THE GRADUAL

(Ps.133:1,3;147:3)

*P: Behold how good and how pleasant it is:*

**C: for brethren to dwell together in unity!**

*P: The Lord commanded blessing:*

**C: even life forevermore. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

*P: The Lord healeth the broken in heart:*

**C: and bindeth up their wounds. Hallelujah!**

### THE EPISTLE

**Philippians 1:3-11 (NKJV)**

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in

knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

**P:** Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:  
**C:** **that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!**

## The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 18:23-35 (NKJV)

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, “Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.” Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, “Pay me what you owe!”

So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.” And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?”

And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

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(Mat 18:18) αμην<sup>G281 HEB</sup> λεγω<sup>G3004 V-PAI-1S</sup> υμιν<sup>G4771 P-2DP</sup> οσα<sup>G3745 K-APN</sup> εαν<sup>G1437 COND</sup> δησητε<sup>G1210 V-AAS-2P</sup> επι<sup>G1909 PREP</sup> της<sup>G3588 T-GSF</sup> γης<sup>G1093 N-GSF</sup> εσται<sup>G1510 V-FDI-3S</sup> δεδεμενα<sup>G1210 V-RPP-NPN</sup> εν<sup>G1722 PREP</sup> τω<sup>G3588 T-DSM</sup> ουρανω<sup>G3772 N-DSM</sup> και<sup>G2532 CONJ</sup> οσα<sup>G3745 K-APN</sup> εαν<sup>G1437 COND</sup> λυσητε<sup>G3089 V-AAS-2P</sup> επι<sup>G1909 PREP</sup> της<sup>G3588 T-GSF</sup> γης<sup>G1093 N-GSF</sup> εσται<sup>G1510 V-FDI-3S</sup> λελυμενα<sup>G3089 V-RPP-NPN</sup> εν<sup>G1722 PREP</sup> τω<sup>G3588 T-DSM</sup> ουρανω<sup>G3772 N-DSM</sup>

Amen, I say to you-all, whomsoever you-all should bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heaven, and whomsoever you-all should loose upon the earth shall be having been loosed in the heaven.

(Mat 18:23) δια<sup>G1223 PREP</sup> τουτο<sup>G3778 D-ASN</sup> ωμοιωθη<sup>G3666 V-API-3S</sup> η<sup>G3588 T-NSF</sup> βασιλεια<sup>G932 N-NSF</sup>  
των<sup>G3588 T-GPM</sup> ουρανων<sup>G3772 N-GPM</sup> ανθρωπω<sup>G444 N-DSM</sup> βασιλει<sup>G935 N-DSM</sup> ος<sup>G3739 R-NSM</sup>  
ηθειλησεν<sup>G2309 V-AAI-3S</sup> συναραι<sup>G4868 V-AAN</sup> λογον<sup>G3056 N-ASM</sup> μετα<sup>G3326 PREP</sup> των<sup>G3588 T-GPM</sup>  
δουλων<sup>G1401 N-GPM</sup> αυτου<sup>G846 P-GSM</sup>

Through this, was made like the kingdom of heaven to a man, a king, who willed to raise up together a word with the slaves of him.

(Mat 18:27) σπλαγχνισθεις<sup>G4697 V-AOP-NSM</sup> δε<sup>G1161 CONJ</sup> ο<sup>G3588 T-NSM</sup> κυριος<sup>G2962 N-NSM</sup> του<sup>G3588 T-GSM</sup>  
δουλου<sup>G1401 N-GSM</sup> εκεινου<sup>G1565 D-GSM</sup> απελυσεν<sup>G630 V-AAI-3S</sup> αυτον<sup>G846 P-ASM</sup> και<sup>G2532 CONJ</sup> το<sup>G3588 T-ASN</sup>  
δανειον<sup>G1156 N-ASN</sup> αφηκεν<sup>G863 V-AAI-3S</sup> αυτω<sup>G846 P-DSM</sup>

And having been moved in His bowels the lord of the servant, that one, loosed him and the gift (debt) sent away (forgave) him.

(Mat 18:35) ουτως<sup>G3779 ADV</sup> και<sup>G2532 CONJ</sup> ο<sup>G3588 T-NSM</sup> πατηρ<sup>G3962 N-NSM</sup> μου<sup>G1473 P-IGS</sup> ο<sup>G3588 T-NSM</sup>  
επουρανος<sup>G2032 A-NSM</sup> ποιησει<sup>G4160 V-FAI-3S</sup> υμιν<sup>G4771 P-2DP</sup> εαν<sup>G1437 COND</sup> μη<sup>G3361 PRT-N</sup> αφητε<sup>G863 V-2AAS-2P</sup>  
εκαστος<sup>G1538 A-NSM</sup> τω<sup>G3588 T-DSM</sup> αδελφω<sup>G80 N-DSM</sup> αυτου<sup>G846 P-GSM</sup> απο<sup>G575 PREP</sup> των<sup>G3588 T-GPF</sup>  
καρδιων<sup>G2588 N-GPF</sup> υμων<sup>G4771 P-2GP</sup> τα<sup>G3588 T-APN</sup> παραπτωματα<sup>G3900 N-APN</sup> αυτων<sup>G846 P-GPM</sup>

In the same way also the Father of Me, the heavenly, will do to you-all if not should forgive you-all each the brother of him from the hearts of you-all the side-falls of them.

## Matthew 18:23-35

— “Was Made like the Kingdom of Heaven to a Man, a King”

### INTRODUCTION

- I. WAS MADE LIKE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO A MAN, A KING
- II. HAVING GONE OUT, THAT SLAVE FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOW-SLAVES
- III. FORGIVE YOU-ALL EACH THE BROTHER OF HIM FROM THE HEARTS OF YOU-ALL

### CONCLUSION

## The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 406, 281, 306, 411

Matthew 18:23-35

— “Was Made like the Kingdom of Heaven to a Man, a King”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The sermon text is the Gospel reading appointed for the Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity, Matthew 18:23-35,

**Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, “Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.”**

**Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, “Pay me what you owe!”**

**So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.” And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.**

**So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.**

**Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?”**

**And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.**

**So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth chapter of Matthew is a masterpiece in the display of God’s grace to us all in the body of Christ. In this chapter the Lord Jesus sets the record straight, over and over again, regarding what it truly means to be a child of the kingdom of heaven. Repeatedly the disciples show the unwillingness of the old nature to hear the Gospel by which life is restored. In response, the Lord Jesus repeatedly corrects the fallen mindset of his disciples and declares to us all the life that is ours in the kingdom of heaven. In this chapter the Lord declares to us the fullness of the meaning of evangelism. In our text today we encounter a stark contrast between the view of evangelism that we would define for ourselves and the true definition of evangelism as the LORD Himself defines it. It truly is a clear description and contrast. When we perceive the

kingdom of heaven rightly, it is a more beautiful life than we even imagine and the work of evangelism comes to life within us purely on account of the beauty of this kingdom into which we have been born anew.

## I. WAS MADE LIKE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO A MAN, A KING

Matthew records for us in the beginning of our text these words from the Lord Jesus:

**Through this, was made like the kingdom of heaven to a man, a king, who willed to raise up together a word with the slaves of him.**

Following the exact word order of the text, we gain a deeper insight into the meaning of what our Lord Jesus is saying. It truly is a marvelous thing that our Lord declares to us.

However, in order rightly to understand this, we need to realize that Jesus shares this in response to the rest of chapter 18. The chapter begins with the disciples asking their Lord regarding who is greater in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord Jesus holds a little toddler in front of them and warns them that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is through being converted to be as the children. Then He warns them against doing anything to snare one of the little ones, saying, **“But if anyone should scandalize one of the least of these, the ones believing into Me, it is profitable to him that should be hung a millstone turned by an ass upon the neck of him.”** He goes on to explain that the purpose of the Church, the very definition of the Church, is repentance unto forgiveness, explaining that members in the kingdom of heaven are filled with the life of forgiveness so that they seek out their brothers who sin against them in the Church and lovingly confront them so as to call them to repentance so that forgiveness may be given and received. Then Jesus repeats the promise of the office of the keys that is entrusted to all in the kingdom of heaven. To this, then, Peter asks regarding how many times he will forgive his brother.

Jesus could not let this arrogant and blasphemous inquiry go uncorrected. How could Peter even ask such a thing? First the arrogance of the disciples to ask who is greater in the kingdom shows that they were not thinking of the kingdom at all, but of themselves and their own selfish desires for recognition and power. Then, Peter, the rock-headed one, comes up with this demonstration of lack of faith.

So Jesus responds, **“Through this, was made like the kingdom of heaven to a man, a king, who willed to raise up together a word with the slaves of him.”**

I wonder whether the disciples caught on to this. Not likely. They probably did not understand until after the resurrection and perhaps not even until after Pentecost. **“Through this . . .”** Through all that Jesus had been explaining to these dunderheads, through all that God was working on behalf of the Church, the kingdom of heaven was made like a man, a king.

Have you caught on to what Jesus is saying? Who is this man whom the kingdom of heaven has been made to be like? Could it be the promised Seed of the woman, the one born in Bethlehem?

Of course! And this man, this king, willed to raise up together a word with the slaves of him. He took on the form of a man in order to speak with the people He had created. He came to preach repentance through the power of the Gospel. He came to proclaim release for the captives

and healing for the dying. He came to confront sin and to offer forgiveness in its place.

This message He has entrusted to His Church on earth. The purpose of the Church is to confront sin and to offer forgiveness in its place. This is what the King has done. This is the great power of the evangel. This is the work of evangelism. Show sin for what it is and wash it away with the Gospel comprehended in water. Nourish the newborn faith with the blood of forgiveness and life. Do this for all who come in the repentance that the Holy Spirit works through the preaching of the Gospel.

This is what the kingdom of heaven has been made to be like. It has been made to be like the king who became a man in order to confront sinners and to bring them to their knees in order that they might receive from Him forgiveness and life forevermore.

## II. HAVING GONE OUT, THAT SLAVE FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOW-SLAVES

This King began to deal with His slaves. As each one was called before Him, He dealt with each one according to the gift that had been entrusted to that slave, the gift that had been misused and abused. Each one was dealt with according to his own unfaithfulness. Each slave was treated impartially.

One of these slaves had received far more than most. This slave had been given authority over a vast portion of the kingdom. In fact, this slave had been given power to rule over 10,000 talents. A talent is equal to 6,000 denarii. Since a denarius was the common daily wage, this slave had been entrusted with 60 million days' wages, or nearly 200 thousand years' wages.

The king confronted him with this enormous debt. The slave had misused it all and had absolutely nothing to show for it. The man had not realized it yet, but by his misuse of the office that had been entrusted to him by the king, not only did he bring disaster to himself, but to his entire household. The slave's wife and children and all of his possessions were to be sold to repay the debt. When the man begged for patience from the king, instead, the king was moved to loose the slave and to divorce him of the debt.

The full significance of this is realized when we remember that this is the exact same word for *loosed* that Jesus uses in verse 18, where He says, **"Amen, I say to you-all, whomsoever you-all should bind upon the earth shall be having been bound in the heaven, and whomsoever you-all should loose upon the earth shall be having been loosed in the heaven."**

This declaration is made first of all to the apostles, then to all pastors, then to all heads of households, then to all members of the kingdom of heaven. This is the great gift entrusted to all baptized children of God. At each level of authority in the kingdom the gift is magnified. Thus the warning is given to the apostles not to look upon their own greatness, but upon the one to whom all authority is given, namely Jesus. For Jesus is the great one who takes the sin of the world and thereby looses all sinners from the condemnation of sin and forgives them the debt that they have incurred by misusing the life that has been given to them.

Those who have received this gift of forgiveness are changed by it. This is the meaning of *metanoia*, i.e., repentance. Repentance is a change of thinking, a change of heart. Repentance is the change that forgiveness works in a person's heart, mind, and soul. The person receives a new heart, a heart like the heart of the king who became man. The person is moved in his bowels regarding his fellow-slaves.

Fellow-slaves. This is the way that the King approaches us. He counts us as His fellow-slaves. He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He came not to condemn but to redeem. His will has always been to confront us sinners so as to be able to restore us to that which we have thrown away.

Yes, Jesus is the slave who having gone out from heaven comes to His fellow-slaves in order to redeem them and set them free. This is what the kingdom of heaven has been made to be like, like Jesus. This is what the preaching of the Gospel works for us.

### III. FORGIVE YOU-ALL EACH THE BROTHER OF HIM FROM THE HEARTS OF YOU-ALL

Now, if we have been loosed of our bondage so that we are free to live a life of forgiveness, what will we do and how will we act? This is what Jesus explains in the preceding verses of this chapter. If Jesus has taken upon Himself the burdens of each of us, will we not turn to one another with same heart and mind? Will we not take note of whatever errors our brothers fall into and go to our brethren and confront them so as to be able to loose them both on earth and in heaven?

How serious is our brother's sin? Jesus says that such a one has fallen to the side. He says,

**In the same way also the Father of Me, the heavenly, will do to you-all if not should forgive you-all each the brother of him from the hearts of you-all the side-falls of them.**

Here the Lord Jesus declares that our brethren who do wrong are in need of forgiveness from the side-falls that they have encountered. When a brother chooses the way of compromise in any of its forms, he falls to the side. Through Baptism the Lord sets us side by side in the kingdom of heaven, walking together as one body. But along the way, someone may become distracted and fall to the side. Shall we not notice this? Shall we not notice that our brother has become separated? Shall we ignore fact that our brother has started to go another way even though he comes and sits in the same pew every Sunday or perhaps has even stayed with an entire group of fallen brethren?

What will we do? Jesus says that we will go to the side-fallen one and confront him in love. If the brother repents, all is restored. If not, then we pursue the matter with witnesses, so that the brother may hear that the concern is not just the overreaction of one individual. If he repents, all is restored. If not, then the brother is confronted in the congregation so that all may confirm the validity of the concern. If he repents, then all is restored. If not, then he is pronounced as one who has refused to hear the call of the Holy Spirit through the Church and is declared to be one who has chosen to stand outside of the kingdom of heaven. All of these steps, even the last one, is done with the intention of calling the one who has fallen to the side to be restored again.

We need to remember that the Lord Jesus told this in direct response to the blasphemous question of Peter. The Lord just finished declaring to His disciples the wonderful authority that was entrusted to them and to the Church on earth to evangelize their brethren, continually forgiving one another in the name of the LORD, and Peter immediately asks,

**Lord, how often will be without a share into me the brother of me and will I forgive him? As many as seven?**

The word for “to sin,” *hamartano*, is to be without a portion in or to cut away from communion with. This is, after all, what sin does and is. To sin is to cut oneself out of the Holy Communion of God. And to be cut out of God’s communion is to be cut out from the communion of the saints.

Now this is a critical point. The communion is God’s communion, not ours. We imagine that forgiveness is a hard thing when we imagine that we are the one’s from whom the person has separated. We imagine that we are the one’s who have been wronged when someone sins in a way in which we are hurt. But as the parable clearly reminds us, we are merely co-slaves with those who do wrong to us. Therefore, we have no right to hold anything against the slave of our mutual Lord. Forgiveness is easy because it has already been accomplished. It is not work for us to forgive our brethren. It is as the Lord Jesus promises us. Forgiveness is merely declaring on earth what is already accomplished in heaven. What we in the Church loose on earth is already having been loosed in heaven. This is why the holy absolution can be spoken with absolute certainty. It is not based upon our wisdom and ability to see into the heart of another. It is based upon the will of God that Jesus has accomplished and which is brought forward by the power of the Gospel. The Gospel converts the soul so that repentance is born in the person’s heart and mind. Forgiveness is nothing more than acknowledging what the Lord has accomplished by the means of grace.

This is why Jesus warns that if we refuse this to anyone else, we reject it for ourselves. How can we possibly refuse to someone else what God has freely bestowed upon us and promised to all? The only reason for binding people to their sin is for the joy of their repentance! This is what has been done for us, therefore it is what we earnestly desire for all.

#### CONCLUSION

How good the LORD our God is, is manifested in this miracle declared unto us and worked among us daily. As we gather into the name of Jesus, He shows us what we cannot see for ourselves. He shows us what He has worked for us, even though according to the old nature of the flesh we fight against it. Forgiveness rules in our lives. Just as we have received freely, so also we rejoice in giving what we ourselves have received. When the Holy Spirit changes our hearts and minds so that we return to the LORD and beg His forgiveness, He does not give us a list of things to do nor does He scold us nor does He require anything whatsoever of us. He simply absolves us, directing us to the merits of Jesus so that all of our doubts are removed from us. He looses us and forgives us the debt that burdens our hearts. He says,

**“Look Child! Look upon My beloved Son. I have baptized you into His death and raised you to live in Him. I have provided for you the Holy Supper of Communion in His body and blood. Believe Me that all has been done for you. Your sins truly are forgiven you. Now, eat and drink, and be renewed for the life that I have given to you. Rejoice in My forgiveness and in the Communion that I have established for you all in the body of My Son. Look to your brethren and see how freely My forgiveness flows among you as together you gather for this very purpose! This is what My kingdom is like, dear Child! Feast to your heart’s delight and share in My love with your brethren.”**

Yes, beloved! This is what is ours together in the kingdom of heaven. This is what we have been loosed to enjoy and to share. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.