

## Keeping Score

Luke 17:3-4 Matthew 18:21-35

In this Luke passage we get Jesus' cliff notes teaching on forgiveness. In the Matthew passage we get the "Jesus story" that leads to this teaching.

**We are a people who love to keep score!** Ex: girls soccer, Fantasy football  
Keeping score allows us to know how far ahead, or behind, we are!

**We often try to apply this same score keeping tendency to the Christian life!**

It is true that one day we will all stand before God & give an account of our lives, but if we think we might be able to stand based upon our own score we are mistaken! **The only score that matters for eternity is Jesus - won, Satan - 0.**

But Peter here in this passage is fixated on numbers, on keeping score! So Jesus responds with some numbers of His own, but they are not for score keeping!

The issue that Peter is inquiring about is forgiveness! But Peter doesn't just ask Jesus the question, he offers an answer that he thinks is a generous one.

**The Rabbinic teachers of the day taught to forgive a person up to 3x.** But Peter doubles that acceptable number & adds one more for good measure - 7.

Peter must have thought, **"Surely my score-keeping tally sheet is Christ-like!"** Jesus gives a surprising answer. He gives a number, but an inconceivable one.

Jesus then tells Peter the parable to help him understand the dangers of keeping score! He tells of a king settling accounts with a servant who owes him 10,000 talents. It's as if Jesus is saying, "Ok Peter try to keep score on this one!"

"Murias" - the number 10,000, was the largest numerical term in the Greek, & it was used figuratively to represent a vast, uncountable number.

That number could never be repaid, and the consequences of such an unpaid debt would be devastating -vs. 25. **But the servant pleads for mercy!**

The specific words of this servant's plea are very interesting. He owes an insurmountable debt, but he says **"Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything."** This is a man a lot like Peter, trying to keep score!

But the king, knowing the extent of this debt, chose to not keep score, and forgave the man's debt completely! **This was extravagant grace/mercy - Vs. 27!**

The king did not release him to give him the chance to earn & pay back what he

owed, he released him to simply free him from his unpayable debt.

But what did this man, whose debt was forgiven, immediately do? He found another debtor, who owed him money, and demanded payment from him!

**This man who received such mercy, is now refusing to show it to another!**  
The man who had his score settled is keeping score again against his brother

At this point we may want to proclaim, **"How could this man be so..."** But before we do that, we ought to look in the mirror and ask, **"Is this me?"**

This Jesus' story was told to Peter to show him that there is a lot of this man in Peter himself. **If Peter is going to keep score, then he too is playing the fool!**

Peter, & all of us, have been the recipients of extravagant grace & mercy, how could we ever keep score with others & put a limit on forgiveness?

**God has willingly chosen to not keep score with us, but to accept Jesus' sacrifice as our debt paid in full!** That must be our response to one another!

God's inflow of mercy to us must coincide with our outflow of mercy to others.

**But what if we are unwilling?** What happens if we don't heed Jesus' words to forgive up to 77 times? This "Jesus story" also answers that question!

Just like in the story, God (our King) will hear about it and there will be consequences. But be careful how you read it - remember God is not like us in keeping score - **Vs. 34-35!**

**The King/God does not go back on His Word & undo the forgiveness he already granted this man!** His initial debt has already been forgiven. The debt this man must now repay is the debt of not being willing to forgive.

It's not about crunching numbers on a score board, it's about the softening of our hearts and the forgiveness we ought to offer to others in response to the forgiveness we have received from God in Christ!

Which one of these descriptions best describes you & your heart condition?

- **Easily provoked & easily pacified!** Your loss is canceled in your gain!
- **Hard to provoke & hard to pacify!** Your gain is canceled by your loss!
- **Hard to provoke & easy to pacify!** **You are a true follower of Jesus!**
- **Easily provoked & hard to pacify!** You are a fool with a wicked heart!

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