

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?



In today's reading, we come across a particularly intense Jesus. He compares forgiveness to a king condemning slaves to torture until they forgive their debtors just as their own debts have been forgiven.

So much for gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

And yet, perhaps the reason why Jesus' imagery is so direct and startling is that this is one of his hardest teachings. Or it is for me, anyway. In my mind, I often see a spiritual ledger. On the left side are my debts—my mistakes, faults and sins—which have been met with compassion and grace. I think of friends, family and coworkers who have given me another

Matthew 18:33

chance and continued the conversation, even when I didn't really deserve it. And then, embarrassingly, on the other side of the ledger are the times when I've failed to extend that same measure of compassion and grace to others.

Although we've had our debts forgiven, we are lording over others what is owed to us. Jesus' message is stark and simple: forgive others' debts as yours have been forgiven.

Today's readings

Psalm 25:3–10 | Song of the Three Young Men (Apocrypha) 2–4, 11–20a | Matthew 18:21–35

Can we identify moments when we have received grace and compassion? When have we struggled to extend the same to others?