

not even a partial payment; he simply forgave the entire debt (18:25, 27).

This drowning-in-debt servant had loaned a hundred denarii to a fellow-servant (18:28). It was a significant sum, to be sure; a denarius was a day's pay for a common laborer (see Matthew 20:2). However, even a hundred days' pay could not hold a candle to the tens of billions of dollars of debt for which the king had forgiven the first servant.

One might reasonably expect that thankfulness would move the forgiven debtor to exercise the same compassion toward his fellow-servant. Instead, the wretched ingrate had his poor coworker cast into debtor's prison (18:29, 30). When the king heard of it, he became so furious that he turned the unforgiving servant over to the torturers until the original debt was paid in full, which, of course, it never could be (18:31-34).

Go back to Peter's original question: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (18:21). Jesus corrected Peter as follows: "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (18:22). Clearly, Peter needed to raise his debt ceiling! Seventy times seven was not intended as a mathematical equation yielding a product of four hundred ninety. The point was simply this: as many times as the brother sins and repents, you forgive.

In the parable, the king undoubtedly represents God Himself. Our sins put us hopelessly in debt to God. No matter how hard we work, we can never

pay the price for even one sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). God has every right to punish us in Hell eternally. Fortunately for us, Jesus went to the cross and paid the debt for us. By putting our confident trust in him and obeying the gospel, we receive complete forgiveness. God puts no ceiling on how many sins the blood of Christ will wash away. Anyone who thinks, "I have sinned so much that not even God can forgive me," simply has a faulty understanding of the grace of God and the blood of Christ.

Since God places no debt ceiling on us, how dare we place such on other people? Jesus said, "If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). That includes even seven times in a single day (17:4).

The complete number seven indicates again the indefinite frequency with which we are to forgive. Love keeps no tally sheet of sins committed (1 Corinthians 13:5). That is not to say that God is going soft on sin, or that we should. Continuing in sin that grace may abound is not an option (Romans 6:1).

But where there is repentance, forgiveness must follow. That is the way God operates — and are we not grateful that He does? How, then, can we refuse the same compassion to each other? Indeed, we must not!

Do you need to raise your debt ceiling?

Joe Slater is the preacher for the Justin Church of Christ in Justin, Texas.

Why Invite People to Church?

By Phil Sanders



Though 85 percent of Americans call themselves Christians, only 69 percent regard themselves as church members. Only 43 percent will attend church on a given Sunday. Another 22 percent will attend occasionally. Only 22 percent of Americans attend Bible classes on Sunday mornings.

There are now 79 million "unchurched" people in America. Many of these people are "notional" Christians. They claim to be Christians but do not practice their Christianity by church attendance. These are people who need a church home. Why do they need a church home? For the same reasons you do.

- They need the spiritual help and climate going to church provides.
- They need to hear the Scripture preached and to remember the Lord's death in His Supper.
- They need to praise the Lord in song and to pray about their needs.
- They need the Lord's help and teaching from week to week.

They also need a church home, because we all need our brothers and sisters in Christ. Life has a way of handing us surprises. It means so much to have the support of loving brothers and sisters who will pray with us and for us when we need them.

Solomon was right when he said that "two are better than one" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). There is strength in numbers, and brothers and sisters assure our hearts when they walk beside us in serving the Lord. "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

Surely you know someone who needs a church home. Won't you help them? Bring them to the Lord.

Lead Me to Some Soul Today

By Phil Sanders



Will H. Houghton and Wendell P. Loveless wrote a moving hymn, dating from its copyright in 1936. The words of this song ought to remind us of the

overwhelming need to reach out to the lost and bring them to Christ Jesus our Lord:

Lead me to some soul today;
O teach me, Lord, just what to say;
Friends of mine are lost in sin,
And cannot find their way.
Few there are who seem to care,
And few there are who pray;
Melt my heart and fill my life:
Give me one soul today.

What if the Lord has placed within your sphere of influence a soul that needs the saving blood of Jesus? What will you do?

All around us are people whose lives are filled with self and who have forgotten the Lord. Our task is to remind them that the Lord loves them but will

hold them accountable one day. A kind word or deed, a simple invitation, and a little effort can help them to be prepared for that day.

The Lord is depending on you to share the gospel with those you love.

If your heart is touched and tender
Toward a sinner, lost and low,
It might help him to do better,
If you'd only tell him so.

This song reminds us of the need to bring the lost to Christ.



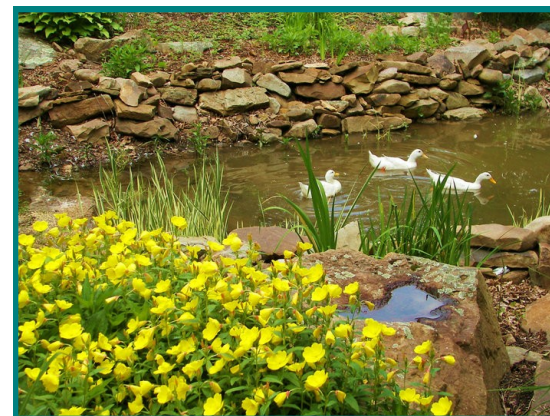
Thank You The 2008 Ford van has arrived. We would like to take this time to say Thank you to all of you for agreeing to purchase this van for us. We are looking forward to using it to continue the Lord's work. Our last van lasted for 12 years with 208 thousand miles. The Lord blessed us with it in 2000 just when Roger needed a handicapped van to be able to get around. Here it is 2011 and the Lord has blessed us again. When you realize how hard it is to find a used van that meets all of your handicapped needs you understand how much the providence of God is at work in your life. Most vans are built around the individual and their wheelchair.

This van was build for a heavy weight individual making it the right van for me. We thank God and all of you for blessing us with this van. We want everyone to know how much we love each of you and appreciate everything that this congregation does for us. We pray that God will bless us with another 23 years of service at Rich Creek.

Prayer List: **Cancer:** Kenneth Dunn; Al-len Mooney; Rhonda Bogus; Rick Campbell; Debbie Boggs; Johnnie Blaylock Lewis Blaylock; Lowell Crumfield & Barbara Hill and; Tammy Hodges; Barbara Francis Don Hill. **Health Problems:** Virgil Steele; Donald Rife; Eugene Holdren; Patricia Rotenbury; Steve and Pam Poorman's-daughter; Glenna Dempsey; Marlin Harles; Hazel Farr & JR Farr; Jean Walden; Sonya Radford; Kara Christian; Gary Durham; Arnold Dempsey; Ken McWilliams; Gene Booth; Wanda Rowe; Diane Haleston; Billy Myers; Zack Holland; Mini Mills; Calvin O'Donnell; Larry Scott; Darlene Myers; Rex "Jimmy" Backus; Dosie Branscome & Katie Hensley **Strokes:** Richard Clement; Amanda Lance. **Other:** Tony & Robin Hodges-personal problems; Brandon Grove-back broken; Shelby Lindsey-fibromyalgia; Beth Kosinar-baby—needs intestinal surgery; Kenny Asbury- symptom of Parkinson's Disease and problems with his neck Kyle Hockenberry-lost both legs above the knee, one arm, broken back and broken arm. Susan Burdette's son Jeff Wiley Hamilton has cancer; Gary Server-leg taken off. Betty Bailey-not eating; The Brooke family, Ken McWilliams friend Wolf - eye problem; Hazel Asbury-a tear in stomach; Debbie Jones's father Junior Taylor-is not doing well; Darrell Fletcher's Father-aneurysm in his brain; Emma Steele-recovering from knee surgery. **Alzheimer's:** Zella England; Mary Lou Thomas, & Leo Hamby . **Nursing home:** Peggy Barie is in the Loving Hands Adult Care; Ethel Pitzer- Country View Assisted Living; **Military:**

TURN, TURN, TURN
Ladies Day October 8, 8:30-1:00
West Side church of Christ
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Register by: calling: 540-389-9139 or
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Church of Christ



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Do you need to raise your debt ceiling?

by Joe Slater

When Peter asked Jesus how many times he

should forgive a brother who sinned against him, the Lord responded with the parable of the two debtors (Matthew 18:21-35).

One debtor owed the king ten thousand talents (18:24). If Jesus meant for us to think of talents of gold, this would be a staggering sum — in the tens of billions of dollars at today's prices!

Even if silver talents were meant, this servant was hopelessly in debt. Despite his protest to the contrary, there was no way he was ever going to pay it off, regardless of how much more time he was given (18:26).

His creditor had every right to sell him and his entire family into servitude for the rest of their lives. Fortunately for him, the king had compassion. He required

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Sunday:
Bible Study: 9:30 AM
Worship: 10:30 AM
Bible Study: 6:PM
Wednesday: 6:PM

Serving Communion:
Don Hill
James Asbury
Gary Jones

TV Programs on Sunday
In Search of the Lord's
Way 7:30 am
INSP Channel

The Gospel of Christ
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