



THE STORY OF THE DEBT

Have you heard of the case of a particular man who stole a great deal of money? In fact it was so great that if he worked ten thousand lifetimes he could never pay it back. The crime was committed against a Great Ruler and Judge. His Law flowed from His very character, and was so perfect that, if broken, nothing could get around the fact that perfect justice demands perfect judgements, the balancing of the scales in punishment and restitution. This would follow the breaking of the Law as surely as night follows day even if there was a delay. During one such delay, this man, ignorant of the impending judgement upon him, lived enjoying his ill-gotten gain in unrighteousness. Although his conscience was an unwelcome companion along life's journey reminding him of the moral standards planted in his heart, which he had rebelled against. The Man had a friend, a father figure of sorts. He convinced the man that it would be much better for him if he invested his wealth, but was far too young to manage it himself, so therefore must hand control over to him. This, the man did because the friend always used subtle, enticing words of flatteries and temptations because the man's heart was wayward and foolish. In fact so much so that, even when it was clear to all around him that the friend had stolen his money and pressed him into slavery, the man denied it. Compassionate people who boldly spoke the truth to him, warned him about his state and condition and that he owed a great debt that he couldn't pay back and that one-day the Ruler would come to balance the books and settle His accounts. Yet their message was not a bleak and hopeless one but one overflowing with good news at its core. The reason for this was that even though the Lawgiver and Law were perfect and the Law was good and the Ruler loved it, and consequently hated the breaking of it, there was a way that the man could escape the punishment, and the requirements of the Law still be satisfied. This was in the form of a great redemption. Another had paid the debt, and acceptance of this would bring full pardon.

However, amazingly, the man found their pleadings unwelcome and found offence in the message. Disbelieving, the man continued in his way in a sort of stubborn stupor and apathy, full of pride and denial. He carried on as if everything would be all right and that a bowing of the knee to a clearly merciful and loving Ruler was an unnecessary distraction from the business of continuing in

a life lived purely for selfish gain. This, being the case, added to the growing mountain of guilt stored against this individual, and the wilful aspect of the crime became worse as he had now even spurned the free offer of forgiveness. The truth is, though, conscience can never truly be bludgeoned into submission and always comes back eventually to snap at your ankles, and this was the case with our poor subject. Unable to silence this unwanted witness of his, this unexplainable pest of conscience, the man attempted to deal with his problem instead of just ignoring it, but at the same time keeping his pride and self-respect intact. This he attempted to do by working to repay his debt. Now, as we have already stated, this was outside of any man's capabilities, least of all this man's, who was by now a wretched specimen of humanity. But he continued in this, compounding the problem and being encouraged by his friend in this hopeless task, also blinded by his lack of faith in the good news brought to him earlier. As far as we know he still continues in this course, punishment looking an ever more likely outcome to a tragic life.

Anyone reading of such a case will no doubt shake their head at such ignorance; apathy and stubborn behaviour. But wait, dear reader, before such pride and self-righteousness take up residence in your heart. For the Man I speak of is Mankind himself, and the debt owned is our very lives lived in sin and rebellion against God our Creator. Does not the conscience bear witness to the fact that there should be a Judgement Day for men who by nature are deeply flawed morally? Do we not all have a responsibility to God? Do we not all owe Him a debt? Have we not all been as foolish as our subject? The debt is real, and surely it is apparent, so also is the delay. As sure as it is that God is the Judge of all the earth, so to, as sure as night follows day, that the debtor's prison awaits all those that have that price on their heads. Surely they will not get out until they have paid the uttermost penny. The greatest transaction ever done was that carried out on Calvary's cross. There a debt was cancelled for countless multitudes. A price paid for poor and needy sinners, past and future. Are you one of them? Will you wisely acknowledge your need of forgiveness? If you will, then the Great Ruler and Judge of the universe is faithful and just to give you free pardon and new life. The simple fact is that with God your crimes will only be punished once. Will you bear it or Christ? Amongst the questions you must answer are:

- Will Christ be your Saviour or your Judge?
- Will you trade this brief span of life for an eternity owning an outstanding debt against an eternal God?
- Can you repay a debt beyond your capabilities, one getting bigger every day and one that on the first day it was notched up was already impossibly large to repay?
- Will you continue to shut your eyes to the all seeing God, and hope to pull the wool over His eyes, the omniscient One!?

It is most reasonable to believe, so come to Him in prayer. Prayer is not a magic power, and God is not a gene. He is the One who can still that conscience, and bring an end to that which wars in your soul. Speak to the King of Creation, and bring trembling words before the Almighty, pleading the merits of the eternal Son alone. Then you shall only be a debtor to mercy alone.