



## Grain

“We need to be emboldened to goodness.” –Diana Butler Bass  
Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, Minnesota

### Field

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”  
Matthew 18:21-35

### Thoughts

Many years ago, I worked for a coalition that helped seniors who wanted to remain in their homes to do so. We engaged with an array of issues, including financial challenges and financial abuse. One person I visited had run up her credit card debt beyond what she could manage, especially after the interest rates on her cards soared. But one financial institution did not raise her interest rate at all. I noticed that same credit union was leading workshops in Spanish to communities vulnerable to predatory lending. I decided to switch to that financial institution as a small action to show my support of a business that was not taking advantage of people even though they could. Within that time frame, I also discovered my mother was giving away money she did not have enough of to a couple of manipulative neighbors. Via the coalition I learned more about scams targeting older adults. Sometimes we could help.

People of all ages are vulnerable to making harmful financial decisions, being fooled, or through a series of events such as illness, personal crises, etc. being cornered by debt. Jesus knew of deceptive systems that seduced people and held them captive financially and socially. Forgiveness was key in personal relationships, but also in larger systems and was connected to justice.

The king in the parable story was positioned to help lift the man out of financial and social bondage. Forgiveness may have only been about the king’s generosity, but more likely was about the king pausing an impossible system in which people could barely free themselves from oppression. One of the layers of the story points to individual spiritual freedom, even though God is present with us regardless of our financial situations. But the story focuses on how we live in community and notice our neighbor. The man whose oppression was relieved did not do the same for another because he did not have to, or didn’t he? Legally, the forgiven was not obligated to help anyone else, but what about spiritually and morally? Forgiveness and graciousness in community mattered to Jesus. Happy Monday!

### Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to [cynthia.crane@elca.org](mailto:cynthia.crane@elca.org)  
All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at [www.loppw.org](http://www.loppw.org)

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy