

FORGIVENESS

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

INTRO: Our subject is forgiveness. We will look briefly at Peter's question, Jesus' answer, & Jesus' parable. We will note 3 things Jesus contrasted in these verses, and then 2 related matters.

- I. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PETER'S NUMBER & THAT OF JESUS, vs 21-22.
 - A. There can be little doubt that Peter thought he was being quite generous. How many of us find it difficult to forgive even one time? How many would find it easy to forgive the same person repeatedly for the same or similar offense? 7 times?
 - B. But Jesus taught unlimited forgiveness. Even the most devoted literalist recognizes that Jesus did not mean for us to count & keep records till we reach the magic number 490. Jesus meant that we are to forgive unceasingly.
- II. THE CONTRAST OF THE TWO DEBTS, vs 23-28.
 - A. The first debtor owed the equivalent of almost \$10 million. In a lifetime, he could never repay that debt. According to Neil Lightfoot, it was more than the annual taxes of the Roman province of

Judea, Idumea, Samaria, Galilee & Peria
all combined.

B. The fellow servant owed about 3
months wages.

C. These 2 debts represent the difference
between the enormity of our sins
against God & the relative smallness of
the sins others have committed against
us.

III. THE CONTRAST OF THE CREDITORS, vs
26-31.

A. The master was merciful, representing
the mercy & grace of our Master. We
may say, "I will pay all" & we may have
good intentions, but the Master knows
we can never pay the debt & survive the
penalty.

B. The servant was merciless & hardheart-
ed toward his fellow servant, impatient,
demanding, unforgiving.

IV. THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT GOT IN
TROUBLE AFTER HE HAD BEEN
FORGIVEN.

A. Unlike the slave-master in the parable,
God is not going to dig up & reinstate
the debts He has already forgiven. But
one problem remains: even after being

forgiven we continue to sometimes sin,
1 John 1:8, 10.

B. When we harden our hearts against our fellow servants, when we withhold mercy & forgiveness from those who sin against us, we simultaneously shut out the forgiveness & mercy of God. This is the primary lesson of the parable.

James 2:13, For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.

Mark 11:25-26, And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

V. FORGIVENESS DOES NOT ALWAYS TAKE AWAY ALL THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR SINS.

A. This lesson is not found in our text, but is reflected in many other passages.

1. David was forgiven for his sin with Bathsheba, but there were consequences to be suffered as long as he lived.

2. Moses & Aaron were forgiven for their sin at Kedesh but the consequences were still severe.

B. But the greatest, most dreadful, most far-reaching consequence of sin, the condemnation of the soul, is averted when we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus has paid the enormous debt so that we may be free from sin's most hideous consequence.

C. When 4 men brot their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed, Jesus did much more for him than heal him physically: Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). Unlike the scribes & Pharisees & perhaps even some of our own number who probably would have told him with regard to his sins, "You've made your bed, now you'll have to lie in it," Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your bed, & go to your house" (Mark 2:11).

CONCLUSION: Be assured that God longs to forgive your sins & put your deeds of lawlessness out of His memory forever, Heb 8:12. Tho your sins are like scarlet, they can white as snow, Isa 1:18. Your transgressions He can remove as far as the east is from the west, Psa 103:12. Jesus died so that your sins could be forgiven, MT 26:28. Believe, repent, be baptized for the remission of your sins, Acts 2:36-38; Mark 16:15-16.

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