

May 10 “Forgive” Bible Studies for Life

What makes forgiveness difficult?

- someone really hurt you
- they “did me wrong!”
- you don’t *feel* like forgiving
- you might be able to say “I forgive” but the memory of the hurt is still there
- you get caught up in telling others about it
- you don’t want to forgive

Today’s Point: Relationships grow deeper with forgiveness.

- Forgiveness restores and strengthens relationships.
- Peter wanted to know more about forgiveness
- Today we look at Jesus’ answer and His further teaching on the subject

Jesus told a story to His disciples to emphasize the importance forgiveness plays in the lives of those who seek to follow Him. Even in the best relationships, we can hurt or disappoint others. Maybe we say the wrong words, give our opinion one time too many, or don’t give understanding to another person. Just as Jesus forgave us, we are to forgive others.

Matthew 18:21-22

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” ²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.

What question did Peter ask Jesus? Why did he ask this?

- How many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?
- As many as seven times?
- Peter may have had his own ideas about how many times he should forgive. Some rabbis taught that you should forgive 3 times for the same offense.

What answer did Jesus give Peter?

- Jesus said 70 times 7 = an unlimited amount of grace
- basically “just keep on forgiving”

Jesus explained to Peter that believers must practice forgiveness, no matter how many times others sin against us. Do not confuse this with abusive behavior or relationships. Being in a destructive relationship may not be safe. Hopefully it will bring peace to the forgiver if they are able to forgive and make peace in their heart.

What might be wrong with going to someone and saying “I forgive you for offending me?”

- they might not even know you were offended

- that statement is an accusation, could cause offense in itself

How do you handle an offense by the other person that they don't even realize?

- be the bigger person and let it go
- if someone offends or hurts you, go to them in private, explain how you feel but, don't attack them
- ask them to please not do it again

To forgive and keep forgiving can be a tough task. We must remember that God forgave us. Jesus used a parable so His disciples would understand the spiritual truth about forgiveness. Jesus used a parable or a story to make a comparison between a familiar life experience and a lesson He wanted to teach them about God's kingdom.

²³“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

Jesus told His story about a servant's accountability to his king. A king in Jesus' time had absolute authority over his subjects. The king wanted to settle the servant's account or the debt he owed the king.

Jesus began this parable stating “The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...” What is the significance of this parable being a parable of the kingdom?

- the kingdom of God is the realm where God rules
- God is sovereign
- God's sovereignty includes His choice to forgive

How large is the indebtedness described in this parable? 10,000 talents

- A talent was worth about 6,000 denarii.
- One denarion (a Roman coin) was the daily wage of common workers in Jesus' time.
- there would be no hope of *ever* repaying such a debt

How was the king prepared to get the large amount of money owed him by the servant?

- sell the man, his wife, and his children into slavery
- the king would only recover a small portion of the debt
- his incredibly large amount of debt still would not compare to the debt we owe Jesus Christ.

What did the servant do?

- fell on his knees before the king
- recognized the authority of the king
- begged for patience
- promised to pay back everything

How did the king respond to the servant's desperate plea?

- had compassion on the servant
- forgave the debt
- let the man go

Jesus is speaking to an issue that is more than our interpersonal squabbles. What is the implication for us of the huge amount owed by the king's slave?

- our sinfulness is a big offense against God
- it is a "bill" which we cannot ever "repay" or work off
- just as hundreds of years of work cannot repay a debt, we can never do enough good works to pay for our sinful nature

How does this illustrate God's attitude towards our sin debt?

- He is loving, forgiving
- He wants to forgive those who repent of their sins
- He loved us so much that He paid the debt with the life of His son
- We don't deserve the forgiveness, but He seeks us out, offering the forgiveness

Forgiveness is costly and sometimes can be difficult, but we must forgive because God forgave us. Jesus used the next story to teach us that God's compassion toward us is not complete until it transforms our relationships to others.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' ³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.' ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

How is this story the same as the first one?

- one man owes another money
- the servant owed 100 silver coins = about 3 months wages
- the servant demands his money
- man does not have enough money to repay the other
- the servant fell to his knees and begged him

How did the behavior by the servant contrast with his experience with the king?

- he was forgiven a debt that he would never be able to repay
- his fellow servant had a debt that *was* repayable
- he was not willing to forgive, or even allow the man time to repay the debt

What point does Jesus make with the parable?

- we have all been forgiven an unpayable debt – our sinfulness
- God has graciously, mercifully forgiven us
- we have no right to withhold forgiveness for offenses against us

We have been forgiven so much, why are we often unwilling to forgive?

- we may not see it as the same thing
- we take God's forgiveness for granted
- we easily forget about God's forgiveness when we are confronted by someone else's offense against us

Why is forgiving others actually an act of worship?

- we choose to act in the same way God acted toward us
- the gift of forgiveness should change our lives
- we should follow Jesus' example
- we are acting in obedience ... God told us to forgive as we are forgiven
- we are declaring that God's attitude and actions towards us are part of our value system also

Matthew 22:34 – 40 We cannot claim to belong to God on the basis of grace when we keep a record of others wrong doings. True forgiveness leads to both gratitude and transformation. We are to share the gift of grace we have received with others. The servant ended up spending the rest of his life in jail. The unbelievers have rejected Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in hell. Jesus Christ has forgiven us. When we accept Him as our Lord and Savior, we will be forgiven our sins and we will spend eternity in Heaven. When we forgive others, we set them free, but we also set ourselves free to enjoy God's grace and the loving fellowship of His family.

Application

Evaluate.

- Consider your current relationships.
- Spend time identifying areas of unforgiveness in your heart.

Take a small step.

- Make an effort to extend forgiveness in a relationship where you've been wronged or slighted.
- Take the first step even if you've done nothing wrong.

Take a large step.

- Identify a relationship in which you need to be forgiven—one where you've contributed to bad feelings, or even where you're completely in the wrong.
- With humility, make an effort to bridge the gap.

