

Message Title: Forgive, As the Lord Has Forgiven You

Message Text: *Matthew 18: 21-35 [The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant]*

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-seven times."^[g]

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[h] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since 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.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[i] 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 cancelled 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."

Introduction

In Matthew 18, we see Jesus and His disciples were having conversation about the kingdom of God. Jesus highlighted what we need to do & how we ought to respond when a brother or a sister sins (verse 15). He spoke on how forgiveness & love should be the central characteristic in us.

As Jesus was saying this, (verse 21), Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

- What was Peter emphasizing here?

²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Jesus is asking Peter to forgive like how God forgives mankind & keep offering forgiveness to the offender.

Opening

Forgiveness is definitely not an easy subject to discuss and despite of us being in the church settings for many years, I believe we still struggle with this topic.

As we look at the question Peter asked Jesus, do we struggle with this question(s)?

- How many times should I forgive someone who has done something wrong to me and keep coming back for forgiveness?
- Do I forgive someone who has betrayed my trust and keep allowing them into my life when I know they will keep hurting me?

Let's reflect on the passage again and meditate on what God is speaking to us through this parable.

King settles accounts with his servants

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since 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.

Matthew 18:23-25

Points to reflect:

- The parable is about a king who is settling accounts with his servants. One by one servant was brought before the king to settle their accounts and soon a servant who owed ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.
- In Greek the ten thousand bags of gold are called ten thousand talents.
- 1 Talent is equal to 6000 denarii, the Greek & Roman silver coins and a denarius was a standard silver Roman coin and equal to a day's wages.
- The servant owed the king such a huge debt and it's incalculable.
- Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and every single thing that he had be sold to repay the huge debt.
- Our God is the King of Kings. He is holy and righteous, and He loves us so much. As much as He loves us, He hates sin and cannot tolerate the sin we commit.
- In **Romans 3:23** it says, ²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
- We are all sinners and all of us have sinned and disobeyed God one way or the other.
- Our sins are like debt that we owe God and the debt we owe is great. There is nothing we can do to cancel the debt on our own.
- It's written in **Romans 6:23**, *"For the wages of sin is death...."*
- There is punishment due for this debt.
- God in His righteousness will judge and condemn us to eternal separation and we have to agree that His judgement is right and deserving.

The King's mercy

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. **Matthew 18:26-27**

Points to reflect:

- The servant knew there is no hope for him and the king's order is absolutely right and final
- The servant humbled himself and fell on his knees and begged the King. He asked the king to be patient and promised to pay him back everything
- The King's heart moved when the servant begged him, and he had compassion and mercy on the servant. He cancelled all the debt and let the servant walk free.
- The king's forgiveness came at a cost & God does the same to us too.
- Our sins are great, and we deserve the punishment reserved by God for us.
- However, in our brokenness, when we seek God, when we humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness, He will have mercy and compassion on us. Our debt will be cancelled, and we will be freed.
- It's written in **Micah 7:18**, "*Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*"
- It's also written in **Colossians 2:13-14**, ¹³ *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you^[a] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*
- God's forgiveness came with a cost too – It came in the form of the cross.
- It's written in **Hebrews 9:22**, ²² *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*"
- And in **Ephesians 1:7**, ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace"*
- God's forgiveness came at a cost. He sent His only Son to die for our sins on the cross of Calvary, that through his death, our sins (debt) will be cancelled.
- Our God is merciful & His mercy is huge. It simply means His patience is available for each one of us right now.
- Our sins are great, but His mercy is greater.

Unmerciful servant

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[b] 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." **Matthew 18:28-30**

Points to reflect:

- The servant found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins (in Greek it's referred as hundred denarii), he grabbed and choked him and asked him to pay the debt
- What is owed by the fellow servant is relatively small compared to the debt the servant owed the king
- Despite the fellow servant doing the exact same thing, the unmerciful servant acted the opposite:
 - *Unmerciful servant: Fell on his knees, begged and promised to pay the amount (verse 26). The King responded by forgiving the servant & cancelled the debt and let him go (verse 27)*
 - *Fellow servant: Fell on his knees, begged and promised to pay the amount (verse 29). However, the unmerciful servant refused to forgive and threw the man into prison until he could pay the debt (verse 30)*
- The servant began to treat his fellow servant harshly and acted out of anger. He threw the man into prison until he could pay the debt.
- We too treat our brothers and sisters who sinned against us the same way the servant treated his fellow servant. We will be harsh, angry, we will never let go the offender and we will keep punishing them. We will keep rehearsing the wrong they did to us in our mind, we keep the "wound fresh" in our heart & will keep holding on to the hurt they caused us. All these takes place simply because our heart has been hardened due to our unforgiveness.
- Sometimes we struggle to forgive the offender. Most of the time it's our misconception of forgiveness. Here are some of the common misconception we might have to help us understand better:
 - Forgiveness is not a feeling (We should never wait until the feeling to forgive comes upon us before we forgive someone).
 - Forgiveness is not condoning what the person did to you (Sometimes we feel when we forgive someone, we are letting the wrongdoer getting away with the offence).
 - Forgiveness is not trusting the offender (Forgiveness does not mean you immediately allow the person back into your life or heart. In some cases where physical and sexual abuse has occurred, forgiveness is needed but we don't have to trust and allow the offender back into our lives immediately).

King punishes the unmerciful servant

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 cancelled 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." **Matthew 18:31-35***

Points to reflect:

- The other servants saw what the unmerciful servant did to his fellow servant. They were very angry and informed their king everything that had happened
- The king expects the servant to show mercy and compassion to his fellow servant. When the servant didn't forgive, the king was angry and summoned the unmerciful servant.
- He was handed to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed.
- In **Matthew 6:14-15** it says, *"¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*
- God warns in **James 2:13**, *"because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment."*

Conclusion:

- God has given us many relationships and God takes special attention on how we treat each other, especially our Christian brothers and sisters.
- Forgiveness is a must as it's an act of obedience towards God.
- Jesus Christ is our perfect example.
- **John 1:11** says, *"¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."* Everyone rejected him and even the disciples left him
- He is all powerful and has every authority under Him, yet He didn't use his power to punish them but He forgave them.
- It's written in **Luke 23:34**, *"³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'"*

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God will soften our hearts to forgive those who have offended us
- Pray that we will be able to live in peace with our brothers and sisters
- Pray that forgiveness and love will be the main characteristics within churches today

Church

- To be steadfast in our pursue of God's call over our lives
- To meditate the Word of God and seek to have an intimate relationship with God
- Ministries: Life Explorers, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline Youth, Worship Team & Church Leadership
- Families / Individuals in Life Church: Strength and direction for those facing challenging situation
- God would open doors for the church to reach out to the nearby communities
- We will be ambassadors of God in our workplace / schools / colleges and anywhere else God has planted us

Healing

- Aunty Rachel (Tabitha's mom)
- Carrie (Praise God for healing)

Covid19

- Healing and deliverance
- Pray for frontliners - protection, strength & family
- Vaccination roll out plan to reach everyone soon
- Economy: Businesses closing down, unemployment, financial problem & etc
- Mental health of everyone

Nation

- Leadership & good governance – political situation in Malaysia
- Racial reconciliation
- Salvation
- Churches in Malaysia to grow spiritually and reach out to people around.