



Matthew 18:21-35
New International Version

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.

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him **ten thousand** bags of gold was brought to him. 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.

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“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.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister **from your heart**.”

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.” C.S. Lewis



Sermon Notes

PARABLES: GLIMPSES OF A NEW REALITY

The Parable asks “**Do you really understand forgiveness?**”

“Forgive and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37

“Bind on earth and it will be bound in heaven” Matt 18:18

“Blessed are the merciful for they receive mercy.” Matt 5:7

Don’t underestimate your **Debt of Evil**

Do you know how much you owe?

Self-observation is the first step toward maturity.

Don’t **justify** your response.

Forgiveness produces a reaction

GRATITUDE

o

ENTITLEMENT

Story of the 10 lepers

“off the hook” (Rm 6:1)

Maturity and wisdom

Immaturity & uncaring

Gratitude is the second level of maturity.

Don’t **IGNORE** the impact of your decision.

The Judgment of Hell is your own **LIFESTYLE**

A world of power, rights and debts.

A world with penalties, absolutes and legalism.

LIVING WORD



The Essential Ingredient

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Matthew 6:14

In Philip Yancey’s book *What’s So Amazing About Grace*, he describes forgiveness as an unnatural act. I could not agree more. He writes, “I never find forgiveness easy, and rarely do I find it completely satisfying. Nagging injustices remain, and the wounds still cause pain. I have to approach God again and again, yielding to him the residue of what I thought I had committed to him long ago. I do so because the Gospels make clear the connection: God forgives my debts as I forgive my debtors.”

Forgiveness makes little sense, as long as we are the ones being asked to forgive. It goes against everything we feel inside when we are the wronged party. And being the flawed humans we are, we do have our limits. However, when we are the ones in need of forgiveness, well, isn’t that quite a different story? C.S. Lewis wrote, “To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

Let us always be mindful of our own deep and endless need for forgiveness, and grateful for the limitless forgiveness that is extended to us through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Let us be grateful that He did not wait for us to make the first move. “For God demonstrates his great love for us in this; while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8.)” He initiated forgiveness of our sins, and in doing so, released its healing power into the lives of all who accept.

Find a purpose to serve, not a lifestyle to regret.