

The Secret to Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

I. v21-22 - What was the Situation?

- A. Asking for forgiveness is implied here.
1. This question may have been in response to **Lk 17:3-4 - So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him."**
 2. When Peter asked this question, he may have had in mind 7 times a day.
 - a. The Talmud, the religious authority used at that time, said only 3 times.
 - b. **v22** - The Lord's answer was 77 or likely 490 times.
 - c. Whatever the number, the Lord is talking about unlimited forgiveness here!
- B. Is unconditional forgiveness even emotionally possible?
1. Normal Christian response: "I'll forgive you this time, but I'll not forget. Don't let it happen again!"
 2. But with the power of the Holy Spirit you can forgive unconditionally.
 - a. **ILL: Corrie ten Boom in Munich.**
 - b. **ILL: The Family Response to In Ho Oh's Murder.**
- C. The secret seems to be related to the "Pride vs. Humbleness" issue.
1. Peter's question, though generous, was legalistic.
 - a. Pride, not humbleness, is fostered in legalism.
 - b. Islam: "We are right, everyone else is wrong. You don't deserve to live unless you agree with us".
 - c. Some Churches of Christ: "We are the true church".
 2. **v21** - This question rose from self righteousness - "I am the offended party!"
 - a. **ILL: The Pharisee & the Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14).**
 - b. How the Lord must have wished that the question was, "How can I be reconciled to a brother I have sinned against?"
- D. What is the Lord's answer? - The Golden Rule!
1. We all fall short of God's standards for us! - **Rom 3:23 - . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .**
 2. How often would you want God to forgive you? Only 7 times? 490?
 3. What are the consequences of this type of forgiveness?
 - a. **Matt 6:14-15 - For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**
 - b. **Col 3:13 - Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

II. v23-27 - What is the Right Attitude About Forgiveness?

- A. **v23-25** - The Reckoning.
1. **v23 & 25** - These servants were the king's stewards, managers of his property.
 2. **v24** - A talent was 600 denarii. A denarii was a day's wage. So 10,000 talents = 60 million denarii!
 3. **v25** - **Sold** (πιπρασκω) = carried across the sea for the purpose of selling (usually slaves).
 4. This was merciful because the alternative would have been debtor's prison where torture could be involved.
- B. **v26** - The Reaction.
1. "I will pay back everything!"
 2. This was impossible & everybody knew it. He would have had to be a genius on Wall Street & obviously money management wasn't one of his gifts!

C. **v27** - The Response.

1. **v27** - **Took pity** (σπλαγχνίζομαι) = compassionate, was so overcome emotionally it made him sick.

2. The king suspended the sentence & pardoned the debt in full!

D. Before God you stand condemned for your sins! However, because of the your acceptance of the cross, you are considered “not guilty” before God!

III. v28-35 - What is the Wrong Attitude About Forgiveness?

A. **v28** - The Reckoning.

1. Where the king only commanded - this steward grabbed by the throat!

2. What was owed? 100 denarii - a repayable amount.

B. **v29** - The Reaction.

1. This response was identical to the steward’s response except he didn’t use the word “all”.

2. This man didn’t promise what he couldn’t deliver!

C. **v30** - The Responses.

1. **1st response**: in **v27** the king suspended the steward’s sentence & pardoned his complete debt.

2. **2nd response**: in **v30** the steward dragged the other servant by the throat to court & threw him violently into debtor’s prison.

3. **3rd response**: in **v32-34** notice how the king felt when he found out about it!

IV. The Message of This Parable

A. God is the king.

B. God wants you to be like the king - like God in your attitudes towards others.

1. One of God’s purposes for you is to become a carbon copy of Him - “created in His image & likeness” (**Gen 1:26-27**).

2. God wants His light to shine through your godly attitudes so He could be honored through you. **Matt 5:16** - . . . **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

Honor God by forgiving others as
He was willing to forgive you!

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