

KINGDOM FORGIVENESS

SEPTEMBER 25, 2016

INTRODUCTION

We have been looking at the Kingdom of Heaven as explained in the parables of the wheat and tares, mustard seed, yeast, and treasure. In Matthew 18, Jesus speaks about the Kingdom in the parable of the unforgiving servant. Forgiveness is the core message of the Gospel. Does your life reflect your embrace of God’s forgiveness?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would you do if all your debts were cancelled?
2. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Jesus told the parable of the unforgiving servant in response to a question from Peter. It was rabbinical custom to encourage forgiveness at least three times for a recurring sin. I imagine Peter thought he was being generous by upping the amount to seven. What do you think Peter assumed Christ’s response would be?
3. Jesus’ answer to Peter’s question was “seventy times seven” (the NIV and ESV translate this as “seventy-seven”, but many versions translate it “seventy times seven”). If God is not encouraging us to keep a record of someone’s wrongs until they reach 490, what does this mean?
4. There’s some debate on exactly how much debt the first servant owed (some estimates are up to \$3 billion), and how he would have ever accumulated that much debt. The point of the amount is that it would be **impossible** for someone to pay that back on their own. Our indebtedness to God for the forgiveness of our sins is insurmountable. Consider the following verses and write what you learn about God’s forgiveness:

Psalm 103:12 _____

Isaiah 43:25 _____

Isaiah 44:22 _____

Micah 7:18-19 _____

Acts 3:19 _____

Ephesians 1:17 _____

Colossians 1:13-14 _____

5. God has forgiven us a debt that could **never** be repaid. In light of this, note what the following verses have to say about forgiving others.

Study Questions for Community Groups

Matthew 6:12,14-15 _____

Mark 11:25 _____

Luke 6:37 _____

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 _____

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 _____

Ephesians 4:31-32 _____

Colossians 3:12-13 _____

6. Read Matthew 18:34. The king turned the unforgiving servant over to torturers. The MacArthur Study Bible notes that “this pictures severe discipline, not final condemnation.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

7. Forgiveness is not optional...and how we forgive is noticed by others (see Matthew 18:31). How will a life lived with radical forgiveness of others influence those around you?

APPLICATION

Are you allowing unforgiveness and bitterness to imprison you? On Sunday, Pastor Joe shared three things to do to break down the walls of unforgiveness: 1) Realize that you have been forgiven an incredible debt by God; 2) release the grip of punishment (it's not your job to see that the person who wronged you is punished); and 3) renew your heart and mind daily (by doing steps 1 and 2 again and again).

Memorize and reflect on Colossians 3:12-13. Spend time in prayer asking His Spirit to give you the strength to live a life of forgiveness and freedom.

SCRIPTURE

²¹Then 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?” ²²Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³Therefore, 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. ²⁶At 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. ²⁸But 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. ²⁹His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ ³⁰But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³²Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)