

repeatedly. God had no obligation to forgive you. You did not deserve it. He forgave you out of compassion.

- 3) If we refuse to forgive others every time, God will not forgive us. He did not say we would lose our salvation, but we will be tormented by bitterness, hate, revenge, anxiety, unhappiness and a loss of fellowship with God.

#### **b. His application is compelling**

- 1) Our world is full of Christians who are bitter, revengeful, miserable and too proud to humble themselves and forgive.
- 2) If that describes you, it does not have to continue that way. God **can** remove your bitterness, revenge and miserable feeling if you will humble yourself and forgive **from the heart**.
- 3) The solution is to forgive as God has forgiven you – compassionately, undeservingly, yet completely. Forgive every person one-by-one for every sin they have committed against you.
- 4) If you need to forgive someone today, do not leave this room until you have told God that you forgive that person **from your heart**. Confess your unforgiveness and bitterness as sin (1Jn 1:9). God will then restore your fellowship with Him.
- 5) Then as soon as you are able, let the person who hurt you know that you forgave him, even if he or she refuses to admit guilt. If they have deceased, then it may help you to write them a letter stating that you forgive the person, and then destroy the letter. That person cannot read the letter, but it may help to clear your conscience.

**Conclusion:** Unforgiveness is often the root of bitterness, resentment, anxiety, hate, revenge, misery, and unhappiness. Do not let unforgiveness ruin your life and your fellowship with God. If you need to forgive someone, do it today! Do not wait!

If you need to seek forgiveness, humbly do so. If you have not received God's forgiveness and salvation, he is ready to forgive if you will ask Him to.

**Song:** Cleanse Me - 166

# The Unforgiving Servant

*14 February 2021 AM – Matthew 18:21-35 – Parables21 – Scott Childs*

**Introduction:** Sadly, forgiveness is foreign to many homes today, even Christian homes. Parents are critical of others. They constantly blame others for faults. They never admit their own faults. They never forgive others. Bitterness rules. Unhappiness reigns. Unfortunately, this sinful way of life passes on to their children.

**Transition:** As we look at this section, we are going to examine **Peter's Questions, Jesus' Answer** and **Jesus' Application**.

## **1. Peter's Questions**

### **a. Peter's first question is practical (v.21a)**

- 1) We find his first question in the first half of verse 21.
- 2) The previous context reveals what might have roused Peter to ask such a question (v.15-17). In that section, Jesus tells us how to deal with an offence.
  - a) Tell the person his fault and seek reconciliation.
  - b) If he refuses, take 1 or 2 witnesses and try again.
  - c) If he still refuses, tell it to the church and try again.
  - d) If he still refuses to get right, treat him like a heathen or publican – stay away from him.
- 3) Our sinful natures make it so that we cannot live without offending and being offended by others. People are going to **upset you, disappoint you, cut you with their tongue, cheat you, steal from you, mistreat you, and hurt you**. That is part of life in this sinful world.
- 4) Though it may be painful, I want you to think over your life of those who have offended you in some way. It may have been major or minor, intentional or accidental, but it hurt you. The person may not even know he hurt you. The reason is not important, but the offence is.
- 5) **Have you forgiven the offender?**
- 6) Peter ask the Lord, "**How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?**" That is a practical question.
  - a) He likely used the word "brother" here in the sense of his fellow man in general.

- b) Sometimes when we do right, we may offend people who do not like what is right. Peter was not talking about this kind of offence.
- c) He was clearly talking about a **sinful offence**.
- d) Peter was not trying to defend unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred or revenge.
- e) Peter **knew** that he had a duty to forgive sinful offences; he just was unsure how many times he had to forgive the same person.

#### **b. Peter's second question is generous (v.21b)**

- 1) Peter asked the Lord, "If I forgive a person seven times is that enough?"
- 2) Think about what he said. He was prepared to forgive an offender seven times for sinning against him.
- 3) A.T. Robertson states, "Peter thought that he was generous as the Jewish rule was three times (Am 1:6)."
- 4) On the surface, Peter's proposal seems very generous. He was prepared to forgive his wife seven times for cutting him with her tongue. He was ready to forgive his friend seven times for being unkind. He was willing to forgive his neighbour seven times for stealing from his garden.
- 5) How many times have you forgiven those who have sinned against you?
- 6) I believe that Peter's questions were sincere.

## **2. Jesus' Answer**

#### **a. Jesus' answer was surprising (v.22)**

- 1) We read Jesus' answer in verse 22.
- 2) Jesus said that Peter's generous proposal was not sufficient.
- 3) He must forgive 70 x 7 or 490 times. By this, Jesus was not suggesting that Peter keep a record of every time he forgives a person until it reaches 490 times. The principle Jesus was teaching is unlimited forgiving.
- 4) Jesus gave the disciples a similar answer on another occasion in Luke 17:3-4, "*Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to*

*thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*" In this example, Jesus commanded forgiving seven times a day. 5) Jesus was not ignoring the hurt or pain you suffered. Sinful offences can be very emotional and painful. No question about that. Jesus then told a parable to explain.

#### **b. Jesus' parable was shocking (v.23-34)**

- 1) His parable is about the kingdom of heaven – His kingly rule in our lives in the Church Age.
- 2) A king called in his servants for a financial accounting. One owed the king ten thousand talents. The exact amount is unknown and unimportant but it was **several million dollars**. Note the king's order (v.25). The servant then bowed, worshipped and begged for his patience (v.26). The king was compassionate and forgave the entire debt (v.27). Then, the same servant found a fellow servant who owed him 100 pence. This was 100 days wages, **several hundred dollars**. That servant begged for his patience, but he refused and imprisoned the man until the debt was paid. When news of this reached the king, he called in the forgiven servant and rebuked him (v.32). He said the forgiven servant should have had compassion as he had had (v.33). At this, the king sent the man to the tormentors until he paid of the millions he owed (v.34).
- 3) Jesus was telling Peter and the other disciples to think! They must forgive every person every time because God has forgiven them of a greater debt. Forgiveness must look beyond the hurt and pain to the example of our compassionate, forgiving God in heaven. If you know Christ as your Saviour, he has forgiven you your enormous sin debt of an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

## **3. Jesus' Application**

#### **a. His application is convicting (v.35)**

- 1) We must forgive **from our hearts**. It cannot be just empty words, like a boy forced to tell his sister he is sorry when he is not.
- 2) How **can** we forgive from the **heart**? Study the parable Jesus just told until the message sinks in. You have sinned