

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Peter's Proposal

A. The Maintenance of Unity

B. The Mathematics of Mercy

II. Jesus's Parable

A. A Colossal Debt

B. A Compassionate King

C. A calloused Response

D. A Confinement of Torture

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, November 04, 2018

Passage: Matthew 18:21-35

Memory Passage: Matthew 18:21-22

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 18:1-35.** The account of the unforgiving servant is obviously a parable. According to Matthew 13:10-17, what is the two-fold purpose of a parable? In this case (Matt. 18) to whom is the parable directed, and what is its intended result?

(b) What might have prompted Peter's question in verse 21? (Hint: read chapter 18 in its entirety for context)

(c) Why do you think Peter suggested "seven" as the number of times to offer forgiveness?

(d) Depending on which translation you are using, Jesus' answer to Peter is either "seventy times seven" or "seventy-seven times." In either case, what is the point that Jesus is making?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 18:21-35.** In verse 23, Jesus says that *"the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants."* How is the kingdom of heaven comparable to the story of this parable?

(b) In the parable, the servant is said to owe the king 10,000 talents. Just ONE talent would be equivalent to about 20 years wages for a common laborer! On the other hand, the second servant's debt amounted to about a third of a year's wages. How do these details of the story help to highlight and reinforce the main point of the parable?

(c) Notice the king's initial response to the servant in verse 25. Since the servant could not possibly hope to repay the full amount of the debt, what would have been the purpose of selling the servant along with his wife, children and their possessions?

(d) Read Luke 17:1-4. In this account Jesus mentions "repentance" on the part of the offender. Is it appropriate for us to require repentance from someone who has sinned before extending forgiveness toward them? Why or why not?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 18:21-35.** It is important to keep in mind that when the king decided to forgive the servant's ten thousand talent debt, he was not simply letting the servant "off the hook;" he was also choosing to personally absorb the cost of that debt. Are there lessons we can learn from this as to the way in which God forgives us? If so, what?

(d) Notice the way the servant who had been forgiven treats his fellow servant (v.28-30). What possible impact could his actions have made regarding the servant's ability to repay the debt? What should we learn from this when we are tempted to "make someone pay" for a wrong that has been done to us?

(d) Notice Jesus' statement in v.35: "so also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." What does it mean to forgive from the heart? What exactly is it that "my heavenly father will do to everyone of you" if we refuse to forgive from the heart? (see also Matt. 6:14) Explain your answer.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 18:21-35.** What message concerning an unforgiving attitude is implied by the statement in verse 34: "And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt"? (Note: The word translated as "jailors" in the ESV has a literal meaning of "torturers" in the Greek text).

(b) In verse 34, is Jesus speaking of some sort of "imprisonment" or "torture" in this life, or in the life to come? Explain your answer.

(c) Write a short paragraph explaining how the parable in verses 21-35 relates to Jesus' teaching in verses 15-17 of this same chapter.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 18:21-35.** Many of us have no doubt heard the statement that we should "forgive and forget." Is this a Biblical principle? Why or why not? Use scripture to support your answer.

(b) How is "forgiveness" related to "reconciliation?" Is it possible to have one without the other?

(c) When someone asks us for forgiveness, does that mean we should treat the offender as if nothing had ever happened? Again, support your answer from scripture.

(d) How should we treat those who have clearly sinned against us, yet consistently refuse to acknowledge any wrongdoing on their part?

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Forgiving and Being Forgiven