"FORGIVE AS GOD FORGAVE YOU"

Matthew 18:21-35
8-19-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Shouldn't you be willing to forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)
"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)
"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment"

IV. Compare the <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

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INTRODUCTION:

King Louis XII of France articulated man's fleshly abhorrence toward forgiving others when he said: "Nothing smells so sweet as the dead body of your enemy." (MacArthur, p. 142)

"I don't get mad, I get even" (Clint Eastwood in a film)

The greatest problem in most troubled marriages is unforgiveness.

The underlying problem most counsellors deal with is unforgiveness (old, hardened, fossilized "bones of contention").

What is the cause for most divorces? Unforgiveness (It is interesting that in the next context [Matt. 19:1ff], Jesus speaks to this issue)

The power of a home, the power of a church, etc., is short-circuited if there is unforgiveness.

Most often, how people treat others is a reflection of how they perceive they have been treated in life.

When one truly believes how much God has forgiven them, they will respond in like manner to others.

Eph. 4:32 - *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving (charizomai) one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Col. 3:13 - *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving (charizomai) one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

After teaching "how" to deal with a brother who sins against you (v. 15-20), Jesus now teaches how often and how much to forgive a brother who sins against you.

V. 21

"My brother" - Peter picks up where Jesus left off - The discipline of brethren in the church family (v. 15-20).

It's interesting that Peter speaks of someone sinning against him, rather than him sinning against someone else. Why didn't Peter ask: *"How often shall I sin against my brother and he forgive me?"* "He was sure his brother would sin against him, but not he against his brother" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

"Seven times" - The rabbis said to forgive three times ("3 strikes and you're out") so Peter thought seven would certainly be a generous number. Perhaps he figured that "seven" being the "perfect number" (the number of completion) would be a good limit to one's forgiveness.

Peter asked: "Is seven a good number to put a limit or a ceiling on my forgiveness? Isn't seven a good cut-off point?"

V. 22

"Seventy times seven" - 490. By this phrase Jesus is not really putting a cap on forgiveness, but He is making the point that we should always be willing to forgive.

As a matter of fact, on this same occasion Luke records that Jesus also said this: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive (aphiemi – to send away) him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn against to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."* (Lk. 17:3-4)

V. 23

"Take account" - settle accounts (i.e. straighten out all debts and get the books in order; to deal with unpaid debt; to see who owed what).

V. 24

"Ten thousand talents" – A "Talent" was a measurement of weight.
1 Talent weighed about 75 pounds. 10,000 Talents amounts to 750,000 lbs. of precious metals. In terms of cash, this is a mammoth debt! A multi-million dollar debt!

The practice of selling a servant, his family, and every possession he owned to pay off a debt was a common in the ancient world (Lev. 25:39; II Ki. 4:1). Today, if you own a house and you don't pay your mortgage the banks will take it away from you (same goes for a car, etc.).

V. 26

"I will pay thee all" - What pride and insincerity! By today's (2018) average American Median family income (of $59,000) it would take this man a minimum of over 2,000 years to pay the debt off! His case was hopeless.

The debt was unpayable.

The servant, realizing the predicament he was in and the utter despair of his situation, falls down and begs the king for patience and time. He promises in time to pay the debt (all of it), yet the king--knowing that the debt was unpayable--was moved in his heart by the pitiful plight of this man and released him from the chains that bound him and totally forgave him the debt, saying: "You don't owe me anything."

V. 27

When we forgive someone, we release or free that person from their debt to us.

"We had a debt we could not pay, Christ paid a debt He did not owe."

V. 28

"But" - The king's forgiveness was undeserved, unlimited, and unappreciated.

V. 29

The same exact words which that servant had said to the king (v. 26).

The repeated statement "should have shocked the forgiven slave's memory into a right response, but those familiar words evoked no sympathetic reaction in him" (MacArthur, p. 153).

V. 30

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4)

They are very concerned that others are stringently dealt with according to the Law. They are rigid, unbending, bitter, "prune-faced." People who are anxious to see judgment executed on others, but fail to see their own need (ILLUS: the woman caught in adultery - Jn. 8:3-11)

V. 31

It grieves others to see unforgiveness.

How we treat others will always get back to God (Deut. 15:9, 24:15).

V. 34

This verse is used to prove:

1) "Purgatory
- a place of payment (there is no such teaching in Scripture)
(Note: This servant pays while he is alive, not dead)

It's either eternal life or eternal damnation; Heaven or hell (Mt. 25:46; cp. Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29).

This verse is also used by some (who don't hold to eternal security) to prove:

2) A believer can lose his salvation.

--Beware of pressing every detail of a parable into your theological scheme.

--The payment mentioned in v. 34 refers to payment in <u>this</u> life for how you did not forgive others. Proof: The word ***"till"*** marks a point in time when the penalty would be fully paid. The payment of those who go to hell will never be paid off.

Rev. 14:11 -*"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."*

II Pet. 2:17 -*"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."*

Jude 1:13 -*"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."*

V. 35

"From your hearts" - God expects our forgiveness to be real, genuine, sincere.

Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

"Forgive" – In the Bible "forgiveness" is a transaction, not a mere feeling of emotion. It is a transaction of releasing someone from their obligation to repay you and removing their indebtedness to you. You end up bearing the consequences of their sin, not requiring repayment but instead you shower gracious blessings upon them.

There are 3 major Greek words in the New Testament translated "forgive":

1. "Apoluo" – To release one from their debt or obligation to repay you. (v. 27 – he "loosed him"); to remove a debt and its consequences.

2. "Aphiemi" – To send away (the word is used of someone sending someone away ("send her away" - Matthew 15:23) When used of "forgiveness" it has the idea of "to acquit one accused of a crime and set him at liberty" To "send away" a debt. (v.27 – "forgave him the debt")

3. "Charizomai" – To shower with grace. Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another (showering one another with grace), even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (showered you with grace). Charizomai is the popular modern day Greek term used in forgiveness.

"Everyone" - Every child of God must be willing to forgive (no matter how high and mighty you are; no matter what your brother did against you); if he requests forgiveness, all of us must grant it.

"His brother" - This ties in with the word ***"fellow-servant"*** (v. 28), showing that Jesus' primary point of emphasis is toward His children (saved people).

(Note: The parable was about the ***"kingdom of Heaven"*** [v. 23] which refers to God's program among His children.)

The **"King"** in the parable is illustrative of God.

God is our pattern for forgiving others. He requires repentance in order for reconciliation to take place.

God's forgiveness is offered to all, however, God requires the unsaved to repent before His forgiveness to establish relationship is granted:

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)
"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)

"But Peter said unto him (Simon the Sorcerer), Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts 8:20-23)

Paul was "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)

Even for the believer, God requires the saved to repent before His forgiveness to restore fellowship is granted:

"If we confess (to honestly admit) our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

However, whether or not someone ever requests our forgiveness, we should have a willingness to forgive; a desire to forgive.

In the parable (Matthew 18:21-f), it must be observed that the King forgives because the servant recognized his indebtedness and desired to have his debt removed. He desired to be forgiven ("thou desiredst me" v. 32). The servant should have forgiven his fellow-servant because he also recognized his indebtedness to him.

"Trespasses" – (paraptoma) to sin by overstepping a moral boundary. To cross the line into an egregious error or flagrant sin. Many times we will irritate each other. We will annoy each other. Such sin does not necessarily require an admission of guilt in order to be "forgiven" and relationship to be restored (reconciliation). We need to simply overlook trivial slights. For "love covers a multitude of sins"
However, when someone egregiously sins against us, we owe it to them to confront them in love to seek reconciliation and restoration of relationship (note previous context – v.15).

Luke 17:3-4 – "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and <u>if he repent, forgive</u> him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I <u>repent</u>; thou shalt <u>forgive</u> him."

If forgiveness means to release, you must always have a willingness to release. However, the full transaction of release cannot take place in the life of someone who sees no need for release. You can't fully release someone who does not see their need to be released.

> *For example, if someone is handcuffed and you say: "I release you from your handcuffs" The person may respond with an attitude of "denial" ("I have no handcuffs; What are you talking about")*
> *The person may also respond with an attitude of "defiance" ("get away from me; I like my handcuffs! I will spit in your face, now get away from me")*

Question: Can you release someone who does not want to be released?
Yes and No. Yes, you can have a heart desire or willingness to release them; but the real transaction of release occurs when it is requested and granted. Where there is real forgiveness there should be reconciliation. Reconciliation is impossible when the offender does not acknowledge his/her transgression.

We should be like God, in our heart's desire and willingness to forgive!

***Shouldn't you be willing to forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

You have been forgiven far more than you will ever forgive!

Do you realize how many times the average person sins in a day? How many selfish or lustful thoughts he entertains? How many covetous, envious, jealous or angry desires he has?

If you sinned just seven times a day (either in thought, word, or action), you have committed 2,555 sins in one year; 76,650 sins if you are 30 years old; 178,850 sins if you are 70.

If one sin separated Adam from God, and one sin violates God's whole law (Ja. 2:10), how great is our sin in God's eyes!

The psalmist recognized that if God held our iniquities against us no one would stand a chance (Ps. 130:3-4 - *"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared")*

God, however, is of great mercy and ready to forgive.

David said: Ps. 86:5 - *"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."*

Daniel said: Dan. 9:9 - *"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him"*

Record keeping is not the occupation of a loving Christian. *"Love keeps no records of wrongs"* (I Cor. 13:5)

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)

"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

V. 24

"Ten thousand talents" – a talent was a measurement of weight equaling roughly 75 pounds in precious metals.

1 Talent = 75 lbs.
10,000 Talents = 750,000 lbs.

If these 10,000 talents of precious metals are valued in <u>gold</u>:
As of August, 2018,
1 ounce of Gold = $ 1,200.00
1 pound of Gold = $ 19,200.00
1 Talent (75 lbs.) of Gold = $ 1,440,000
10,000 Talents of Gold = $ 14,400,000,000 (14.4 Billion Dollars)

The median household income in the USA in 2018 = $ 59,000.00
It would take 244,000 years to pay off the debt (or over 3,000 lifetimes of 80 years).

If these 10,000 talents of precious metals are valued in <u>silver</u>:
As of August, 2018,
1 ounce of Silver = $ 14.69
1 pound of Silver = $ 176.28
1 Talent (75 lbs.) of Silver = $ 13,221
10,000 Talents of Silver = $ 132,120,000 (132 Million Dollars)

The median household income in the USA in 2018 = $ 59,000.00
It would take 2,240 years to pay off the debt (or roughly 30 lifetimes of 80 years).

V. 28

A ***"pence"*** (denarius) was equal in metal value to 1 day's minimum wage.

Value of a denarius (a "pence") in the Bible
A denarius (or "penny") was what an agricultural worker typically was paid for one day's labor (Mt. 20:2)

Minimum wage in most states of the USA as of 2018 is $7.25 per hour
An 8 hour day's minimum wage would amount to: $58.00
100 Day's Wages = $ 5,800
(23,000 times less than 10,000 talents of silver)

"An hundred pence" - Amounts to pocket change compared with what he owed the King.

It's a ratio of approximately 23,000 to 1.

It's easy to understand how someone could refuse to forgive others who has never experienced God's forgiveness, but such unforgiveness held onto by a blood-washed saint is unjustifiable and unfair.

One reason why some find it extremely irritating and difficult to forgive the sin of others is because they themselves do not see the enormity of their sin against a holy God.

When we see God and His perfect standard, we see how far short we fall (Rom. 7:13; Job 42:6; Ezra 9:6). The more mature you become, the more you see the sinfulness of your own heart. The closer you get to God, the more aware you are of your own depravity. When men like Isaiah, Job, Peter, John saw the holiness of God they were shockingly struck with a keen awareness of their own wickedness.

Every time we sin against people, we sin against God (Ps. 51:4).

V. 30

Unforgiveness accomplishes nothing at all. What good would this imprisonment be to the servant he owed money to? How did he benefit by throwing him into jail? All he got was revenge; all he got was a "pound of flesh."

It is so sinful to demand that someone "pays" for what they did to you, when you yourself were let off the hook by God. He released you of the *"wages"* you owed for your sin.

"How absurd for one forgiven <u>so much</u> to refuse to forgive <u>so little</u>" (Blomberg, p. 242).

III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)

"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment" (Dr. Jim Binney)

It <u>costs</u> to forgive (when you forgive, you have taken upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and freed him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)

Illustration: John Taylor and his 7 year old son, Greg. The Train.

What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common?
Answer: The desire to forgive at great cost.

It is <u>not</u> difficult to forgive children, and most people, especially their parents, do it almost instinctively. We understand that children are uninformed, inexperienced, and immature. We expect them to do some things that are inconsiderate, but we tend to tolerate those things and forgive them, even when they hurt us deeply" (MacArthur, p. 142).

When we realize that adults, too, being depraved, often *"know not what they do."* and are propelled by the same selfish nature children have, then we will be more forgiving.

IV. Compare the CONSEQUENCES of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

"Perhaps he had the legal right to thrown the man in prison, but he (having been forgiven) did not have the moral right. . . The servant exercised justice and cast his friend into prison. 'So you want to live by justice?' asked the king. 'Then you shall have justice! Throw the wicked servant in prison and torment him! I will do to him as he has done to others'." (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Justice is now executed. This man now reaps (v. 34) exactly what he sowed (v. 34) (Gal. 6:7).

The punishment he exacted on his fellow-servant now comes back (like a boomerang).

He gets hit with the same penalty which he required of the other man.

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Lord Herbert once said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass" (MacArthur, p. 155).

"The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart. . . Some of the most miserable people I have met in my ministry have been people who would not forgive others. They lived only to imagine ways to punish these people who had wronged them. But they were really only punishing themselves" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Compare the consequences of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness: (by Jim Binney)

1. Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)
   vs. answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)

2. Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)
   vs. freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)

3. Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
   vs. receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit

4. Hurting others (Heb. 12:15)
   vs. being a blessing (Eph. 4:29)

5. Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)
vs. intimate fellowship

6. Physical ailments
vs. health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)

(they say that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger affects you physically)

Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).

A man's *"glory is to overlook a transgression"* (Prov. 19:11).

Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

CONCLUSION:

Six "Don'ts" regarding forgiveness:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself" (God expects loving confrontation. Mt. 18:15)

2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")

3) Don't play the "waiting game" (i.e. "When you give in and apologize, I will")

4) Don't "fight fire with fire" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)

5) Don't practice "character assassination" (don't attack the person rather than the problem)

6) Don't dig up "old bones" (don't bring up the past)

Test of Forgiveness
By Dr. Jim Binney

1) Can I thank God for the lesson(s) I learned through the painful experience?

2) Can I talk about it (the conflict) without angry resentment or feelings of revenge?

   Faith in God's sovereignty and love is a key to overcoming anger and bitterness. When anger and resentment are resolved by faith, the desire to show forgiveness will happen automatically! People need to mourn to God and trust Him. Mourning = grief + faith (Scott Berry)

3) Have I accepted my part of the blame? (Prov. 13:10)

4) Can I reward them who hurt me and pray for them?

5) Can I grant forgiveness from the heart and verbalize it?

Who do you need to forgive?

Someone who…

- Stole from you
- Took advantage of you
- Gossiped about you

Your spouse – unfaithful
Your parents (Mom or Dad) unresolved conflicts with parents
Your neighbor
A Relative (sibling brother or sister)
A Fellow-believer
Etc.