



5/6/26

I think it's very interesting that Jesus taught so much through parables. I find that they bring out so many different facets of what He wants to teach. Every time I study one of His parables, I see that He shows me something I didn't see before. I love how He does that. There will never be a day in all eternity where there won't be something new to learn with Him. I pray you and I will be eager students of His today. We won't regret it!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Matthew 18:21-35

Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." What is the motive for my forgiveness and grace toward others? God's forgiveness and grace toward me. It's really only when I see my desperate need for His mercy that I understand that I have no right to be unforgiving toward others. There is no sin anyone has done to me, another sinner, that is greater than the sin I've committed against the Lord who is completely without sin... If He forgives me, how can I hold a grudge against someone else?

O Lord, as I go through this passage, I pray that You'll reveal any resentment or unforgiveness in my heart, so that I can repent and seek Your help to release the debt anyone has against me.

Vs. 21-22 ~ I gotta love Peter. He said so many things that he thought were brilliant and were totally wrong! I love that about him because it gives me hope for myself!!! There have been so many times I was convinced I was right in the way I was thinking, and God showed me how wrong I was. That's just another reason I'm so thankful for God's forgiveness and grace.

Peter went to Jesus thinking he was so generous in his question to Him. He probably thought, "People will think I'm so awesome just for my generosity to be willing to forgive." He asked Jesus, "How often should I forgive my brother for sinning against me... for missing the mark... for falling short of how I deserve to be treated? Should I forgive him SEVEN times???" Seven! That's a lot, right? Seven is God's number of perfection and completion. I imagine Peter

had a very proud look with a deep smile on his face. "Jesus is going to tell everyone what incredible kindness I have for asking this."

Peter's face probably fell a little when Jesus answered, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven." Whoa! Some translations say seventy-seven times... like... 11 times more than what Peter said. But the actual meaning would be like 490 times!!! So... is Jesus saying I should have a little place on my wall where I can draw a line every time I forgive someone until I get to 490 lines? No... He means that I'm not to keep score. How many times would I want Jesus to forgive me before He drew the line and said, 'No more'? I have no clue of how many lines Jesus would have to place on the wall in ONE DAY for me!!! I praise Him that He says in Psalm 103:12, "as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove my transgressions from me." And Hebrews 10:17-18 says, "the Spirit adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.' Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin."

So... if that's Jesus' forgiveness for me, what should my forgiveness for others look like? In vs. 23-34, Jesus gives us a picture of forgiveness.

A master decided to settle accounts with his servants. I don't know why any of them owed him money... Maybe he was really benevolent and loaned them money whenever they needed it. He probably was very generous since Jesus was comparing this master to the kingdom of heaven.

Well, it came to the master's attention that one of his servants owed him the equivalent of around \$250,000,000. Basically, this is a debt that could NEVER be repaid... kind of like the debt of my sin against God. It's crazy for me to think I could ever earn enough to pay my debt to Him. Not even Elon Musk has enough money in the world to pay the debt of his sin.

How did that servant ever incur that kind of debt??? I can be sure of this... it wasn't by being a good and faithful servant. I think it's really important for me to see how unholy I am apart from God. Truly, "I am more like the worst sinner than I am like Christ" (Garrett Higbee).

The servant, like me, couldn't pay that debt. He knew it! The punishment would have been for him and his whole family to be sold into slavery until the debt could be paid!!! That's how slavery worked. Once a slave paid off the debt, he would be free. But slaves didn't get paid that much. This debt would never be paid! There was nothing the servant could do but beg for mercy. He fell on his knees and begged the master, "Please be patient with me! I will pay you every last cent!!!"

The master knew there was no way this guy could pay that debt. He didn't put him on pay schedule. He didn't even reduce the debt to something more possible to pay. The master was compassionate and released the debt and forgave the servant entirely.

Let me not miss this... forgiveness is not free. It always costs someone, because that debt still has to be paid. When the master forgave the servant, the master paid the debt. It may have

been free for the servant, but it cost A LOT to the master. When I forgive someone's debt against me, it costs me. But it will never cost me anywhere close to what my debt cost Jesus.

I don't think that servant understood what had just been done for him, because he immediately left his master's presence and found another fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii... about 3 months wages. (I would bet the money he owed him was given to him from the money the servant took from the master. It wasn't even really HIS money to begin with!)

100 denarii is not a small amount but compared to the debt he was just forgiven of, it's a pittance. Did the servant forgive his fellow servant's debt? No! He began to choke him!!! He told him to pay up now!!! The man fell at his feet and begged him to have patience and he would pay.

The servant refused and put him in prison. Whoa! Let me not miss this. The first servant was forgiven so much. The second servant was willing to do whatever it took to make it right. Both servants were. There was the appearance of repentance in both men. But true repentance will lead to a gratitude that holds no grudges against others... just as true forgiveness does.

The other servants were having none of it. They were shocked and distressed. How could someone forgiven of so much be so cruel to others??? It must be that he didn't realize how desperate his own need was... as though he was ENTITLED to the master's forgiveness of his debt.

Well... the master did not think that the servant was entitled. He called for the servant and said, "Clearly, your repentance was not real. Otherwise, you would have forgiven the other servant's debt, which was MUCH smaller... even payable if you had given him a chance. How could you who were given so much mercy not have mercy for him?" The master ordered that the servant receive the same punishment he inflicted on his fellow servant. He threw him into jail until he could pay his debt that would be impossible to pay.

Here's the thing. The kingdom of heaven is way more than just a get out of jail free card. Also... the one who incurred my debt had to pay my punishment. There was no forgiveness of the debt without someone having to pay. That's Jesus. O Lord, please help me to understand what a huge thing You've done for me!!!

When someone sins against me, please help me to remember what You've done for me, and help me to be ready to restore the relationship. A relationship can't be fully restored without genuine repentance, but if I remember what You've done for me... I will pray for that person to repent. I will do as much as it depends on me to pursue peace with the person. I won't use their lack of repentance as an excuse for me to resent them and hold a grudge.

In vs. 35 Jesus said something that many scholars struggle to explain. He said, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." The big question people ask is... does this mean loss of salvation if I refuse to forgive

someone? I know from the whole of scripture that it doesn't. My salvation is secure. But is that really the point? "As long as I know I'm going to heaven, let the chips fall where they may"? No. The big focus needs to be... I am desperately in need of my Savior! If He forgave me of SO MUCH, how can I possibly hold a grudge against someone else??? O Lord, let THAT be my focus. Let me remember YOUR forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Let me remember the price YOU paid to redeem my debt, by nailing it to the cross. Let me love and forgive others because You love and forgive me. Let my heart be wholly repentant and wholly forgiving out of gratitude for Your love for me. And when someone is NOT repentant, let it grieve me... not give me reason to resent them. Let it lead me to pray for them... and continue to show grace to them as You have shown to me. Praise Your name.