

## The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

<sup>21</sup> Then 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?”

<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup> “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

<sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

<sup>25</sup> Since 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.

<sup>26</sup> “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ <sup>27</sup> The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

<sup>28</sup> “But 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.

<sup>29</sup> “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

<sup>30</sup> “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

<sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

<sup>32</sup> “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

<sup>35</sup> “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

### QUESTIONS:

**1. Summarize what Jesus had taught his disciples in the first 20 verses of this chapter in your own words.**

*Jesus used the occasion of the disciples arguing over greatness and rank in the kingdom of heaven to tell them that what mattered to God was our humility. Jesus wants his disciples to understand that they need to be humble, forgiving, patient, seeking after the lost, helping to discipline, correct and teach new disciples.*

**2. What does Peter ask Jesus about? Why do you think he asked this? What is Jesus’ answer?**

*He asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who sins against him. Jesus had just told the disciples about dealing with those who sin against them, about grace and forgiveness and patience to help new disciples learn. So Peter asks if there is a limit to how many times he was expected to do that. Peter offers a generous number of seven times, Jesus hyperbolizes that to say that there really is no limit, its just what you are to do.*

**3. Jesus offers a parable to explain why he wants Peter to always be ready to forgive. He says that a man owed his master, his king, ten thousand bags of gold. What do commentators say that would amount to today?**

*How much is 10000 talents worth in the Bible?*

*\$457,600, is the rough value of a talent in today's currency. The servant had to pay the king 10,000 talents. This is \$4,567,000,000. Four and a half billion dollars.*

**4. When the man could not repay the king, what did the king order be done to repay the debt?**

*Since 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.*

**5. What did the man who could not repay do in response to the king's decree?**

*At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'*

**6. How did the king respond to this man's plea?**

*The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

**7. What does Jesus say the forgiven man doe when he encounters someone who owes him a debt?**

<sup>28</sup> *"But 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.*

<sup>29</sup> *"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'*

<sup>30</sup> *"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.*

**8. What did the master, the king, do when he heard how the forgiven man treated one of his debtors this way?**

<sup>31</sup> *When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> "Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*

**9. What does Jesus say this parable means?**

*“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”*

**10. What do you think Jesus expects of his followers regarding forgiveness of others?**

*Jesus expects that because we have been forgiven all our sin by God that we in turn should be gracious to others in forgiving them.*

**11. What does Jesus say about forgiving others in the prayer that he taught us to pray? (The Lord’s Prayer)**

*He taught us to pray that we ask God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. If we cannot forgive others, why should God forgive us?*

**DISCUSSION:**

**12. Why do you think Jesus gave the disciples (and us) this parable about forgiveness?**

**13. Are there limits to what God expects us to forgive of others?**

**14. If we forgive others, then does that mean they get away with their offense without consequence?**

**15. What benefits do we derive from forgiving others?**