

The Freedom of Forgiveness

Mat. 18:21-35

D.L. Moody who was the Billy Graham of his day, once said, “the one thing that is keeping revival from coming to the Church, more people being saved and God really working in His people is the sin of an unforgiving spirit.”

After 20 years of ministry I can say the same thing.
The greatest revivals I have ever witnessed have been when one Christian decides to forgive.

It is as if the Holy Spirit comes to one of us and calls us to forgive... and until we do he doesn't move on to the other issues, He doesn't move on to the unsaved man, woman, boy or girl next to us... not until YOU forgive.

Today - there is someone in the building, perhaps listening via the internet who has the power to STOP this entire body from experiencing a move of God, simply by refusing to forgive.

In Matthew 18 Jesus is talking about what we've been exploring throughout this series - the Kingdom of God.

So Jesus has dealt with what to do if someone refuses to repent... but look at the concern Peter raises...

Matthew 18:21 (ESV)

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

Peter's concern is not with the brother who refuses to repent... but what if he does repent?

Peter had the courage to ask the question we all want to ask but don't have the courage. HOW OFTEN DO I FORGIVE????

In Greek the word **forgiveness** means to let go or to send away. It meant something like, wiping the slate clean.

Then Peter offered a suggestion - seven times
Now, the going rate was three..

The Talmud which was sort of a commentary on the OT said.

Three times you shall forgive a person then beat your plowshare into a sword and run them through.

So in offering 7 times Peter was being remarkably generous. BUT Peter wanted to draw the line somewhere....**You see Peter recognized that if you say you are going to forgive people then there is a chance that someone will take advantage of your forgiveness.**

Peter saw a possibility that a person may sin against you so many times or in such a way that a line has to be drawn.

For some of you this morning - this is not a hypothetical, it's as real as life. Someone has sinned against you and you have no intention of forgiving. As a matter of fact your un-forgiveness is someone comforting at this point.

- Perhaps it was your spouse
- Perhaps a Parent
- Perhaps a sibling or a child

Do you know where I see the deepest wounds of un-forgiveness? Funerals. It all comes out when the family is together.

- Maybe it's a person in the church.
- Perhaps a former Pastor.

Maybe, like Peter you've said, "I'll forgive up to a point... but everyone has their limits".

Matthew 18:22–23 (ESV)

²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."²³

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants."

Now there it is again - this is all about the Kingdom... one of the ways you know you are in the Kingdom is by expressing forgiveness.

So, let's look at it..

1. The King's Agenda Ought to Motivate You to Forgive.

Think about it, Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He came to eradicate sin and it's effect.

Jesus on the cross prayed, Luke 23:34 ³⁴ But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

It only makes sense that He would pray “Don’t let what they are doing to me stand between them and you!”

Stephen saw the grace of Jesus and in - Acts 7:60 ⁶⁰ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep.

WE ARE GRACE DISTRIBUTORS.

2 Corinthians 5:18–20 (NASB95)

¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the **ministry of reconciliation**,

Our chief goal toward people is to see them in a right relationship with God. It makes sense that if sin is what disrupts that relationship that the sin which is against us should be the first pardon we grant.

Look at the story - Matthew 18:24–27 (ESV)

²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

The Kingdom Agenda out to motivate you to forgive...

2. The Kings Acceptance ought to motivate you to forgive –

This man had borrowed money...

10,000 talents which amounted to about 9 million dollars in our day and time.

HE OWED A DEBT HE COULDN’T POSSIBLY PAY

Sound familiar???

That represents our sin against Jesus

Our sin debt is so great it took the death of Jesus.

ILLUSTRATION: MAN WALKED UP A HILL AND TURNED TO SEE JESUS WITH A LOAD ON HIS BACK. JESUS IS THAT THE SIN OF THE WORLD? NO CHILD THIS IS ONLY YOURS

But this man was not motivated by a Kingdom Agenda or by the Kings Acceptance

Matthew 18:28–30 (ESV)

²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me,

and I will pay you.’³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

Here’s a man who has just be forgiven, but does he forgive?

He wasn’t looking for payment but punishment

If the man wanted the money owed to him he could have sold the slave and got five times his debt.

- This man owed the King 9 million dollars
- the Slave owed him 15 dollars.

WHAT A CHEAPSKATE! You forget that comparing your sin debt to God is like comparing a Mt. to a mole hill.

Sam Jones *I will never get mad or stay mad with anybody until they mistreat me worse that I mistreated Jesus.*

It the Kingdom Agenda does not motivate you to forgive...

Or if the Kings Acceptance doesn’t motivate you to forgive...

3. The Consequences Averted ought to motivate you to forgive

Matthew 18:31–35 (ESV)

³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

The Golden Rule Principal.

It’s sort of like God treats you as if you are totally following the Golden Rule.

“Treat other’s as you would that they treat you”

God say’s give and it shall be given in like manner.

God say’s he who would have friends must be friendly

If you don’t forgive other’s, God will not forgive you. IT IS NOT Saying that you will go to hell if you don’t forgive.. but fellowship with God will be broken.

You won’t have God’s power on your life. You won’t have an audience when you pray, you won’t have a helper when you study.

Mat 5:21-24

If you bring a sacrifice and remember that a brother has something against you leave it and go make it right.

GOD WILL NOT RECEIVE YOUR WORSHIP, YOUR PRAYERS, YOUR SACRIFICE IF YOU ARE AT ENMITY WITH YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER.

Three things you give up

1. The right to use this against you

Archibald heart a Christian Psychologist

"Forgiveness is when I give up the right to hurt you for hurting me."

2. The right to talk to someone else about it.
3. The right to dwell on what happened.

GOSPEL FORGIVENESS - LISTEN, the power to forgive comes from looking at the Gospel and expressing the Gospel to Others.

Jesus absorbed the pain rather than making you feel it.

We absorb the pain rather than punishing others.

ILLUSTRATION: Danielle had been molested by her step father. I told her not to let him continue to abuse her by making her live with an unforgiving spirit.