

Christian Character – Forgiveness Mt. 18:21-35

Introduction:

Col. 3:12-14 - Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; { 13 } bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. { 14 } But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

I. Notice the setting of this parable of Christ.

- A. This is a chapter that deals with sin and forgiveness.
 - 1. Jesus begins by saying that we must become as little children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (**18:1-5**).
 - a. The idea is that we must humble ourselves.
 - b. We also must have that innocence that a young child has.
 - 2. Jesus warns of causing others (and ourselves) to sin (**18:6-9**).
 - 3. Jesus tell the parable of the lost sheep (**18:10-14**).
 - a. This teaches us of the value of one lost sinner in the eyes of God.
 - b. Great rejoicing occurs when one sinner turns to Christ.
 - 4. Jesus teaches us how to deal with a brother who has sinned against us (**18:15-20**).
- B. Now Peter has asked Jesus a question (**18:21-22**).
 - 1. The question is simple (**18:21**).
 - a. “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”
 - b. Peter is putting a limit on the amount of forgiveness that he has to show.
 - 2. Notice the immediate response of Jesus (**18:22**).
 - a. “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”
 - b. Jesus is not giving Peter a set amount of forgiveness, but He is saying that we should always forgive others.
 - c. Since seven is a perfect number, this forgiveness would be perfect, or complete, as often as it is needed, without limit.
- C. This entire chapter deals with sin and forgiveness; and now Jesus is going to tell a parable that sums up the main idea of this chapter.
 - 1. Jesus opens this parable with the word “therefore.”
 - 2. He is connecting the question of Peter and His answer of forgiveness to the parable He is about to tell.
 - 3. This thought, along with **18:35**, tells us the main idea of this parable.
- D. Notice the parable and then notice two main points that we learn about forgiveness (**18:23-35**).
 - 1. The three main characters are the king and two his servants.
 - 2. The two servants both had debts that they could not pay.

- a. One servant owed the king 10,000 talents (\$10,000,000).
- b. The other servant owed his fellow servant 100 denarii (\$15).
3. The king was willing to forgive the servant who owed him money.
4. However, this very same servant was not willing to forgive someone who owed him a little money.

II. We all need forgiveness.

- A. The only character in the story who did not need forgiveness was the king; and he owned everything.
 1. One servant owed the king almost \$10,000,000.
 2. The other servant owed his fellow servant about \$15.
 3. The fact of the matter is that they both needed forgiveness of something.
- B. We must realize today that we need forgiveness.
 1. We have all sinned against God.
 - a. **Rom. 3:23** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 - b. **I Jn. 1:8-10** - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
 - c. **Gal. 3:22** - But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
 2. We also understand that there is a great penalty for our sin.
 - a. **Rom. 6:23** - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - b. **Js. 1:14-15** - But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. {15} Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
 - c. **II Thes. 1:8** - in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. We all need the forgiveness of God.
 - a. We deserve to spend eternity in hell.
 - b. However, because of the forgiveness of God, we can spend that eternity with Him.
 - c. When God forgives us, He completely forgets what we have done.
 - 1) **Heb. 8:12** (in speaking of the New Covenant, God says...) "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."
 - 2) **Heb. 10:17** - then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

III. In order to receive forgiveness, we must forgive others.

- A. Notice the forgiveness that did and did not occur.
 - 1. The king forgave the servant who owed him 10,000 talents (18:24-27).
 - 2. However, this same servant that was forgiven would not forgive a fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii (18:28-30).
 - 3. Following this servant's actions, the king came and demanded that payment be made to him (18:32-34).
 - 4. The main point of this parable is found in 18:35.
- B. Notice exactly what forgiveness is.
 - 1. Remember that when God forgives our sins, He will "remember [them] no more" (Heb. 8:12, 10:17).
 - 2. We do not have that ability; but we can forgive.
 - a. When someone asks for our forgiveness, we do not hold that sin against them any longer.
 - b. This does not mean that there are no consequences to be paid, but the sin is done away with.
 - 3. While someone's eternal salvation is not dependent on whether we forgive others or not, we must have the attitude of forgiveness.
- C. Today, if we are going to be forgiven, we must be willing to forgive others.
 - 1. Jesus teaches us this lesson on several occasions.
 - a. Mt. 6:12, 14-15 - And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. {14} For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. {15} But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
 - b. Mk. 11:25-26 - And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. {26} But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.
 - c. Lk. 6:37 - Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.
 - 2. Jesus teaches us by His example how we should forgive others.
 - a. Lk. 23:34 - Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
 - b. No matter what the situation, we should be willing to forgive others.

Conclusion:

The great forgiveness that we need is found only in the blood of Christ.

Eph. 1:7 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Col. 1:14 - in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

This forgiveness comes only through baptism.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.