

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Living out the gospel with
one another in our homes

Date: 01/14/24

Sermon: Ted Rastatter/Forgiving Generously

Text: Matt 18:21-35

This week's message examines another parable from Jesus to show the kingdom of heaven's example of God's forgiveness and its importance in the life of believers. Following a teaching from Jesus to his disciples about addressing a brother that sins against you, Peter asks "how many times shall we forgive a sin by a brother, up to seven times?" Jesus responds "not seven times but seventy-seven times" and then explains with this parable by equating the kingdom of heaven to a king settling accounts with his servants.

Questions/Discussion:

1. After reading verses 24-26 briefly consider the magnitude of the servant's debt and the king's required payment. Read Ex 3:5-6, Isa 6:1-5, Ex 32:33, Isa 59:2, Rom 3:23 and discuss God's holiness, the magnitude of our sin, the penalty. How often do we truly consider the magnitude of our debt from a kingdom perspective (sin is no small debt)? How does our sin against God stack up against any offense others can do to us?
2. In verses 26-27 the servant pleads for mercy and promises to pay the king back (remember 1 talent equaled 20 years labor for the average laborer) but the king, in his mercy, doesn't delay the judgment but completely erases the debt. Read Eph 2:1, Mat 19:26, Jn 1:14, Rom 5:6-8 and discuss what God has done for us through Christ.
3. Read verses 28-31. Read Mat 6:12-15, 5:38-39. Compare the world's vision for practicing forgiveness: 1. not allowed (cancel culture), 2. requires payback only allowing forgiveness after retribution, with the Kingdom view of forgiveness: 1. surrender your right for retribution, 2. shows the world the enormous generosity of God to forgive - it's about God's forgiveness. 3. forgiveness is about you and your heart. What motivates you to forgive?
4. Read verses 32-35. What warning does Jesus give. What example has he given us, Lk 23:34? What promise, Mat 5:7, 9?
5. Ted's challenge - search to see our own blind spots regarding forgiveness. Are we forgiving as we have been forgiven or are we demanding retribution? Three things to recognize if we are to embody Jesus' kingdom vision for forgiveness to others:
 - Acknowledge we are all debtors (Rom 3:23) God is infinitely holy and our sin is an infinite offense against God going on forever. God takes pity on us, Rom 6:23, Col 2:14, Ps 103:10-12

- No matter how grievously someone sins against us, it cannot compare to our sin against a holy God. BUT (Rom 5:8) While we were sinners Jesus died for us. Jesus, fully man and fully infinite and holy, is the only one who could pay our debt.
- Warning if we don't give grace to others, we nullify the grace of God in our lives. How are you forgiving others today?

6. Applications:

- Think often about the cross – our debt forgiven.
- We should pray for offenders – you may not like them but pray blessings and forgiveness for them, for reconciliation, and that they would know Jesus.