

Matthew 18.15-35 - Sermon Notes - September 12, 2021

GETTING ALONG IN THE CHURCH

- technology at our fingertips can be a wonderful thing - instant news, instant research and information
 - I love having hundred of books and commentaries on my computer
- my guess is that most of you here today spend a lot of time on your electronic devices
 - according to recent surveys, Americans spend an average screen time of 5.4 hours on their mobile phones daily. Currently, there are 294.15 million smartphone users in America. Social media is responsible for 2 hours and 24 minutes of global internet time spent online by an average user daily. 13% of millennials spend over 12 hours on their phones daily
- riding down the street, how many people do you see on their phone while they are driving!
- even walking down the street, people are always looking down at their phone while they are walking
- unfortunately, many people can't set through a church service without getting on their device
 - if you aren't using your device to follow along with a Bible app, try turning your phone off!
- we have become the most connected people of all time, yet there is more loneliness and isolation than at any other time
- one of the downsides of all of our social media is the hatred and anger that is so readily expressed about other people
- we are much more prone to say something negative about a person on social media than we ever would in talking face to face
- it is very popular today to attack and point out someone's mistakes or problems, and think that we are doing everyone a favor by passing on juicy information
- there's got to be a better way!
- having dealt with the subject of humility and greatness, Jesus now moves on to talk about dealing with sin and the importance of forgiveness

DEALING WITH SIN IN THE CHURCH

(15) BE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER

- it is important to look at this in the context of what Jesus had been teaching - going after the person who has strayed
 - this isn't really about how to get someone out of the church, but with loving grace, addressing those who have erred
- this should be a private matter at first, not a public disclosure
- it is essential that you go to the offending person privately, always with humility, with the goal of restoration, not judgment
 - some people that judgment and criticism are gifts of the Spirit
- just learn to talk to each other
- notice Jesus said that if he hears you - not necessarily if he agrees with you
 - remember, there is always another part of the story
 - we are to be longsuffering, and may after hearing everything, the issue can be resolved, and the relationship is restored
- the key = speak the truth in love ([Ephesians 4.15](#))

(16-18) WHEN TO GET OTHERS INVOLVED

- sometimes a person just refuses to listen, so there may come a time to get other people involved
- when we get others involved, it is not to "gang" up on a person, but rather to be witnesses to the discussion
 - David Guzik = It is also true that the one or two more, after hearing both sides of the story, may resolve the issue by assigning responsibility differently than the first offended person had thought. *The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him.* ([Proverbs 18:17](#)) The goal must be the restoration of relationship more than proving one's self right.
- if the person doesn't want to hear, the last resort is to bring the situation before the church
- this principle of binding and loosing must be looked at in the arena of addressing sin in the church and forgiveness and restoration if there is repentance

(19-20) PRESENCE OF JESUS IN THE CHURCH

- there is real power in agreeing with someone in prayer
- there is also a power in the presence of Jesus
- in the context of dealing honestly with a sinning brother or sister, the unrepentant person misses out, and is excluded from the power and presence of the Lord

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS

- in the light of an offending brother, Jesus talks about the necessity of forgiving

(21-22) NO LIMIT ON FORGIVENESS

- Peter got what Jesus was saying, and asked a legitimate question = how many times do I need to forgive my brother

- the Rabbi's taught that 3 times was the limit, so Peter thought he was going well beyond what was required

- Warren Wiersbe = "Peter wanted a rule to obey, which shows he was not in the spirit of what Jesus taught."

- by using the number 70 x 7, Jesus was actually teaching us that forgiveness should be without limit

(23-24) THE STORY OF AN IMPOSSIBLE DEBT

- to illustrate the necessity of unlimited forgiveness, Jesus tells the story of the king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants

- one servant in particular owed him 10,000 talents

- the Greek word here is the one we get our English word "myriad"
- the idea is that is an amount that can't be numbered

- it was a debt that would have been impossible to repay

(25-27) COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS

- because he was unable to repay, the king commanded that he be sold, along with his entire family to repay the debt

- the servant asked the master to be patient with him

- isn't that the way we wish people would be with us

- the master was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave the debt

(28-30) REFUSING TO BE FORGIVING

- after being so graciously forgiven, the servant found one of his buddies who owed him a hundred denarii

- a denarii was the equivalent of a day's wage, so this would be the equivalent of about 1/3 of a year's wages

- he grabbed him by the throat

- be honest, aren't there a few folks that you would like to lay hands on!

- this man responded in exactly the same way that his buddy had responded earlier

- he refused to treat his friend the same way he had been treated and demanded payment

(31-34) UNFORGIVENESS BRINGS JUDGMENT

- the failure to forgive is wickedness
- unforgiveness brings torment and judgment
- Warren Wiersbe = When you have an unforgiving spirit, you put yourself in prison spiritually and emotionally; you pay dearly for the luxury of carrying a grudge. Is it worth it?

(35) FORGIVENESS FROM THE HEART

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