



“Our Forgiving King”

Matthew 18:21–35

The Authority of the King

Intro: The main theme of today’s message is...

The foolishness of withholding forgiveness from those who have sinned against us.

So let’s start by looking at:

The problem of forgiveness (vv.21–22)

“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’” (v.21)

There are actually two mistakes in Peter’s question.

1. Peter doesn’t include his own sin against his brother.
2. Peter asks for limits and measures.

Jesus addresses this subject in...

Luke 17:3–4 – “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

We can learn a couple things about forgiveness from Jesus’ words.

1. Forgiveness begins with honesty about the harm done to you.
2. Forgiveness takes place in the context of relationships

“Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” (v.22)

Jesus explains the solution to the problem of forgiveness in a parable (vv.23–35)

- Scene 1: The slave and the king
- Scene 2: The forgiven slave who is unwilling to forgive
- Scene 3: The forgiven slave and the king

Scene 1: The slave and the king (vv.23–27)

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.²⁴ When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.” (vv.23–25)

“So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’” (v.26)

We shouldn’t hold on to grudges.

Paying back this amount of money would be impossible.

The slave's situation is hopeless.

“And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.” (v.27)

A few questions...

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Scene 2: The forgiven slave who is unwilling to forgive (vv.28–30)

“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’²⁹ So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’³⁰ But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.”

It's one thing to experience forgiveness...it's another thing to have it in your heart.

Scene 3: The forgiven slave and the king (vv.31–35)

“So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.³² Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.³³ Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.³⁵ My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

How could this recipient of mercy, grace, and forgiveness have so little to give to others?

Ephesians 4:32 – “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other; just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Is there anybody you need to forgive?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In your own words, what is the main point of this parable?
2. What character trait does the king show when he forgives this huge debt?
3. What character trait does the slave show when he doesn't forgive?
4. How might a lack of forgiveness manifest itself in our lives?
5. How might we act toward someone if we do not forgive them?
6. Does forgiving mean forgetting?
7. Does forgiving guarantee reconciliation has occurred?
8. Does forgiving mean you immediately and completely trust the person again?
9. Is there anyone you need to forgive?