

Forgiveness

Genesis 4:23-24 (great, great, great grandson of Cain)

"I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Matthew 18:21-35 (forgiveness)

"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?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 'Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 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. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 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.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 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. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'"

Greek: Forgive-Aphiemi-Release/let go

77 times/70 times 7—hebdomēkontakis hepta

I think, in Jesus' mind, He is saying that we should be as eager to forgive as Lamech was to take vengeance. Just as Lamech wanted the punishment to far exceed the crime, we should want our forgiveness to far exceed the sin. We should be the opposite of Lamech, making our goal to forgive as extravagantly and completely as possible.

-Lois Tverberg

Talent = 16years/100 denarii = few days-months

We want to get even/releasing the debt is crazy

We can have normal emotional responses. Jesus says, "if you refuse to forgive."

When I see myself as someone who has been forgiven, it enables me to forgive them.

Matthew 18:15-20 (reconciliation)

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Matthew 18:15-20 ESV

Forgiveness is not:

- ignoring or forgetting
- condoning or excusing
- tolerating or allowing further abuse
- reconciliation or restoration
- making things go back to how they were
- letting the offender escape justice or consequences

Lewis Smedes, The Art of Forgiving

What is forgiveness?

Change in our Heart of how we think of them (combination of feelings and will)

“I know man of seventy who says he was once cheated out of a promised retirement bonus fifteen years ago. He knows for sure who did it. The new vice president in charge of personnel. Everyone who has spent more than fifteen minutes with him knows the story. Every taxi driver who is driven him more than two miles knows it; the post man knows it; the woman at the checkout counter knows it. His rage has become his very being. He has become his bitterness. He breaths it, sleeps in it, and will probably die in it. In fact, he may die of it; the poison has splattered his organs, and an ulcer now bleeds on the lining of his once healthy stomach. He has waited too long. If he now forgave the man, he would not know who he was. He could still do it, and maybe he will, but his postponements have made it dreadfully hard.”

Lewis Smedes, The Art of Forgiving

Nursing the grudge dehumanizes us.

(Matthew 18:18)

We need to learn to release the debt on our behalf.

Because Jesus paid our debt as well as theirs, and He calls us to do the same.