



Parkway Fellowship

FAMILY GAME NIGHT • SORRY! • MATTHEW 18:21-35 • 4/19/2020

MAIN POINT

God desires for you to understand and experience true forgiveness. Only then can you have the relationship with God and the relationships with others that you desire.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

In any given week, how often would you say the words, "I'm sorry"? How many of those times would you say you genuinely mean it when you say those words?

Is it easy or hard for you to apologize? Why?

When you apologize, does it take you a long time or do you tend to take care of it quickly?

Forgiving others is difficult. Any time we seek to forgive someone else, we are taking some kind of cost upon ourselves. But that's just what God did when He forgave us; He took the cost of forgiveness upon Himself in Jesus Christ. When we understand the extent of how much we've been forgiven, we will be willing and able to extend that forgiveness to others.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 18:21-35.

In the Jewish tradition, a person was supposed to forgive another three times. Jesus blew both the tradition and Peter's question out of the water.

What do you think Peter expected Jesus to say when he asked if someone should forgive a brother seven times (v. 21)?

Read vv. 24 - 26 again. Why do you think the servant showed such humility before the king in the moment?

“And out of pity for him, the master of the servant released the servant and forgave him the debt” (Matthew 18:27). The king did three things before forgiving the debt. He: identifies with him, releases him, and forgives him.

Which of the three would have been most difficult for you to do if you had been the king? Why?

How did the king, who represents God in this parable, answer (v. 27)? What does the king’s response reveal about the king’s character?

Peter expected Jesus to be satisfied with his suggested number of times for forgiveness. Jesus explained how often a person should forgive by telling this parable about settling debts. One particular servant owed ten thousand talents, and each talent was about twenty year’s worth of wages for a laborer. The amount of debt was astronomical. Of course, this amount is miniscule compared to the price of salvation.

The first servant owes the equivalent of 6 billion dollars, but refuses to forgive 12,000 dollars. How could the first servant be so blind as to the difference between what the king had forgiven him and his lack of forgiveness towards the second servant?

What do you think keeps us from having a heart full of mercy and compassion?

Do you think we harbor a sense of entitlement? Does God “owe” us His forgiveness? Explain.

After being forgiven, the servant went to a second servant who owed him money, 100 denarii, and began to assault him. He owed 100 day’s wages. The second servant fell on the ground and pleaded with the same words the first servant had spoken before the king. However, the first servant did not relent; he did not forgive or show mercy. Instead, he had the second servant thrown in jail. The first servant failed to understand the forgiveness he had been given by the king.

In what ways does this parable depict the Gospel?

As Christians, we forgive because we have been forgiven. Forgiveness places a burden on the person who is forgiving; it is not always easy and it is not always pleasant. However, when we

take a step back and see how hard it is for us to forgive someone, we gain a beautiful understanding of how much God had to give up and take on Himself in order to forgive us of our sins against Him.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In this week's message, we learned the following points of application: 1. I need to create an environment of genuine forgiveness not fake apologies. 2. When tension is high, my emotions must be calm. 3. My choices determine my outcome.

Which of those points stands out to you the most personally? Explain.

To what relationship do you most need to apply the truths of this parable? What keeps you from it?

When is the last time you felt overwhelmed by the mercy God showed in forgiving you? How can you make that a more frequent part of your life?

PRAYER

Praise God for the forgiveness you have received in Christ. Thank Him for sending Jesus to die for your sins so you could have new life. Pray that you would model the forgiveness you have received from Him in your personal relationships.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 18:21-35

18:21-22. Peter spoke for the Twelve. His question could easily have sprung out of Jesus' teaching on church discipline (18:15-20). Peter may have wondered how long he should forgive his sinning brother before casting him out of the church, especially when the sin was against him personally. According to some Jewish tradition, a brother was forgiven three times for the same offense. The fourth offense, however, need not be forgiven, because it would be evidence that the brother had not repented. Peter thought he was being generous in forgiving up to "seven" times. There is some debate over whether Jesus' response should read "seventy times seven" (490) or seventy-seven, but the exact number is not important. The numbers involved are presented for emphasis only.

18:23. “Therefore” was Jesus’ way of introducing the parable to illustrate the principle he stated in 18:22. He told the disciples first they were going to learn something about the kingdom of heaven (18:1-4), and he set the scene by introducing the characters (a king and his servants) and explaining the king’s desire “to settle accounts with his servants”—to collect from them what they owed him. The king represents God, and the servants represent fellow believers.

18:24-25. It was not uncommon for servants and indebted free men to be sold as slaves to cover debts they could not pay (Lev. 25:39; 2 Kings. 4:1). In Israel, these slaves were freed every fiftieth year, in the year of Jubilee, in accordance with the Mosaic Law. In some cultures, even their families and possessions were sold if the debtor did not bring enough money to cover the debt. Such was the case with a certain servant of this king. He owed a large amount. No slave could ever hope to repay this amount in a thousand lifetimes.

18:26. The servant “fell on his knees before him” (8:2; 9:18; 15:25), displaying humility and desperation and casting himself on the mercy of the master. The servant’s plea for patience and his promise to “pay back everything” were so unrealistic that they could only be the words of a desperate man. His promise might be compared with a factory worker today pledging to pay off the national debt of the United States by himself. It could not be done. The issue is brother-to-brother forgiveness.

18:27. The “servant’s master” felt his heart going out to the man. He “took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.” The servant was undeserving, but the king acted with mercy (withholding punishment that was deserved) and grace (giving a great gift that was not deserved). So it should be among brothers and sisters in God’s family.

18:28. The word “but” contrasts the first servant and his relationship with a second servant. The two were alike in only one way—the debt each owed gave the creditor power over the debtor’s life. But in every other respect, the situations were opposites, highlighting the contrast between the first servant and the king. The servant had not understood family principles; but he was about to learn. The amount the second servant owed the first was insignificant when compared with the debt the first servant had just been forgiven. One hundred denarii was one hundred days’ wages. The first servant had owed more than half a million times as much to the king! Rather than imitating the mercy of the king, the first servant mistreated the second servant (“began to choke him”) and demanded repayment of the debt.

18:29-30. The actions and words of the second servant were almost identical to those of the first servant in 18:26. This servant also “fell to his knees” in humility, asking for patience and offering to repay the debt. But the first servant refused to give the second servant a chance to repay the

debt. We tend to forget our King's grace, often refusing to forgive even the most trifling of offenses against us.

18:31. The other servants of the household recognized the cruelty of the first servant toward the second. This grieved them deeply. These servants reported the matter to the king.

18:32-33. The angry king held one more audience with the first servant, this time to bring him to account for failing to follow the merciful king's example. God the Father values His children for different reasons. Like this king, the Father does not want any of His children harmed or taken out of His service through mistreatment by others.

18:34. The king was so angry at the first servant's mistreatment of the second that he rescinded his previous order to release the first servant and forgive his debt. He imprisoned the servant and "turned him over to the jailers to be tortured." The parable reveals the anger of the king and his refusal to tolerate an arrogant lack of forgiveness among his family. But notice there is nothing said here about eternal damnation. These are family issues. Family forgiveness restores what was lost (relational intimacy) and is unrelated to what can never be lost (imputed righteousness and therefore eternal salvation).

18:35. Jesus' closing application was sobering. "Each of you" brings the focus to the level of individual responsibility. We can imagine Jesus scanning the faces of the disciples as He closed His discourse. We can also imagine Him looking out through the words of Matthew into our hearts with His warning lingering in our conscience. Jesus insisted that His servants be characterized by forgiveness.