

Matthew 18:15-35

“The Kingdom & Restoration & Forgiveness”

Pastor Robb Oram Mobil Ave campus

subject: restoration & forgiveness in the kingdom of God

objective: restore relationships & forgive sin

I. God wants us to restore relationships (vv. 15-20)

A. go & tell him his fault between you & him alone (v. 15)

Discussion Question: Why might it be difficult to confront a brother/sister in Christ about his/her sin?

1. the goal is always restoration of relationship

B. take with you one or two more witnesses (v. 16)

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)

C. tell it to the church (v. 17)

D. let him be to you like a heathen & a tax collector (v. 17)

“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.” (Romans 16:17)

E. why restoration is so important

1. sin separates

“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death & cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).

2. purity is important

“Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:6-7).

F. the church is given authority to confront sin (bind), and recognize God’s forgiveness & restoration of the repentant (loose)

G. Jesus is uniquely present where there is unity among believers

II. God wants us to forgive sin (vv. 21-35)

A. God is compassionate & willing to forgive His children

B. as His children, God commands us to forgive one another

C. forgiveness is evidence of truly being forgiven

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

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Intro

Subject: restoration and forgiveness

Object: receive God’s forgiveness and forgive others who repent

Context: Love for the least and the lost as evidence of faith in Christ

A. Restoration [15-20] [Dealing with a Sinning Brother] **Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. ¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

1. Confront a sinning believer to encourage repentance and restoration [15-17]

“Moreover” [15] refers to the lost sheep [1-14] and continues the theme of restoring the lost. If a “brother” [fellow believer] sins against you address the issue privately with him or her [15]. Don’t gossip, because you are forcing people to choose sides and dividing the Body of Christ.

If he receives, you've helped to restore your brother. The goal is to restore people not win arguments. The goal is restoration and unity while avoiding division. We are to communicate, not avoid conflict. If the sinning brother will not receive correction then take one or two spiritually mature people to help witness, address the wrong and seek to restore [16]. If the person refuses to repent then tell it to the "church" referring initially to leaders [17].

Why might it be difficult to confront a sinning believer?

Gal. 6:1 If a man is overtaken in trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one with a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Eph. 4:15 Speak the truth in love.

a. Repentance means to change your thinking about God and your sin, and results in changed behavior. Repentance is more than remorse (e.g feeling bad or sad).

2. A believer who refuses to repent should be restricted from fellowship [17-18]

If the offender still refuses to repent then they are to be removed from the fellowship of the community [18] [1Cor. 5, 2 Tim. 2:23-26, 2Th 3:6-14]. The church is given authority to confront sin [bind] and recognize God's forgiveness and restoration of the repentant [loose] [18].

3. Confront sin and seek restoration to maintain unity [19-20] Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

The Greek term translated "agree" [19] is related to our English word "symphony." There is harmony in restoration. Christ is uniquely manifest or present where there is unity among believers [20]

B. Forgiveness [21-35]

1. Unlimited forgiveness is available to the repentant [21-22]

²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Peter is moved by Jesus' teaching about restoration and asks about how often he is to forgive [21]. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught a model prayer whereof the repentant disciples learn that we are to forgive others, as God has forgiven us [Mt. 6]. The rabbis of Jesus day taught that Jews were to forgive three times (derived from Amos 1 & 2 where the nations were judged for their 4th offense). Peter felt generous proposing seven times [21]. Peter assumes there must be a limit to forgiveness. You can't reduce mercy to math or love to logic. Jesus replies 70 times 7 [22]. Jesus is not suggesting that we forgive up to 490 times, but is instructing on the unlimited forgiveness of the repentant.

1Cor. 13:5 Love keeps no record of wrongs

a. Forgiveness results in not wanting revenge, but doesn't imply full immediate restoration of trust. Trust is like credit: it generally takes a while to earn it, but it can be damaged quickly. And may take time to test the fruit of repentance before full restoration of trust.

2. The importance of forgiving [23-35] The parable of the unforgiving servant

a. The forgiveness of God is available through faith in Christ [23-27]

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

A talent [24] is the largest measure of weight in the ancient world. The king’s servant had embezzled 10,000 talents (presumably of silver). It would take 20 years to earn one talent. The annual tax payment of Palestine to Rome was 8,000 talents, per the Jewish historian Josephus. *The point: The debt was impossible to repay.* The king ordered the servant, his wife, his children and his possessions to be sold to repay the debt [25]. The servant begs for patience and promises to repay [26]. The king was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave the debt [27].

i. God has forgiven our debt (sin) because He is compassionate and merciful. We could not pay our debt. But through faith in Christ, who paid the debt, we are free.

b. The forgiven of God forgive others [28-33] But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ ³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

The forgiven servant found his fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii (three months wage for a typical worker), a relatively small debt compared to what he had been forgiven [25]. The fellow servant begs for the same patience [29,26]. But the forgiven servant refused to forgive his fellow servant and threw him into prison [30]. The fellow servants were grieved and told the king [31]. The king characterizes a lack of forgiveness as “wicked” [32]. The king rebukes the unforgiving servant for receiving mercy from the king, but failing to forgive his fellow servant [32-33].

c. Those who refuse to forgive may not have received God’s forgiveness [34-35]

The king delivered the unforgiving servant to be tortured and pay his debt [34]. Jesus concludes the parable of the unforgiving servant with a solemn warning that God will likewise judge the unforgiving [35]

Matt. 6:14-15 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Study Guide Qs

- 1. How do you confront with gentleness and speak the truth in love?**
- 2. What are some potential adverse consequences of not confronting sin (especially significant sin)? Consider consequences to the one who is sinning and others he or she influences.**
- 3. How do you forgive someone who sinned against you and hurt you?**
- 4. What are some of the potential benefits for the one who forgives and the forgiven?**