

REVIEW: THE STORY TELLER—"CHRISTIAN LIVING PARABLES"

- Two Weeks Ago: We are called to be Salt and Light. We live right, and it produces persecution. We don't change who we are, and we don't hide!
- Last Week: The Good Samaritan. We meet needs even for those we don't know or like or those that don't like us.
- This Week: Christian Living leads to relationship amongst believers.
- Which leads to the obvious question, "**What do I do with people who are not easy to love?**"

THE PARABLE THIS WEEK: **Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV)**

1. HOW MANY TIMES DO I NEED TO FORGIVE?

- Disappointment comes from unmet expectations. What are your expectations?
 - A sinful nature, a broken filter, a spiritual enemy...
- If we are going to have relationships between broken people, then forgiveness is essential!

EVERYBODY'S QUESTION: "HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO FORGIVE?"

- Peter is being gracious (*so he thinks*).
- Jesus says, "**Times without number!**"

JESUS IS LAYING OUT A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LIVING WITH THE STRUGGLE OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS.

- We forgive when we don't think it's possible.
- We had a debt that could not be paid back.
- Because our debt was paid, we now can forgive the debt of others.

2. WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

- Beyond the fact that no relationship is possible without it...
- Because God forgave us. It's amazing that God forgives us that way and the devil constantly tries to tell us we have sinned too many times, and that we can't go back to God.
- Personal Importance: God is asking us to do for others what He does for us.
- He expects us to do what He has done for us—there is an accountability.
- Warnings: a lack of forgiveness causes a bitter root that poisons us and those around us.
- An ongoing lack of forgiveness causes a new chain of events that furthers my pain and the pain of those we love.

Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) ¹⁵See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

3. WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE?

- It's a decision that we have to make many times depending on how deep the wound.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

- Denial.
- Forgetting.
- Allowing the hurt to continue.
- Letting go of consequences.

HOW TO FORGIVE:

- Realize the power of the cross (see **1 Peter 3:18**).
- Recall the pain and the people who hurt you (see **Ephesians 5:8**).
- Resolve to forgive (see **Colossians 3:12-14**).

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL STEPS?

1. Follow the teaching of God's Word.
2. Meet with a trusted friend and possibly a counselor.
3. Ask God to help you.
4. Take captive your thoughts (see **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**).

4. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED PEOPLE AND ARE HAUNTED BY THEIR PAST...

- Claim the truth that if you have confessed your sins to God, you are forgiven (see **1 John 1:9**).
- Go and make it right as far as it depends on you. Make it easier for others to forgive you.
- Don't do those that you have hurt another wrong by the way that you ask for forgiveness.
- Let them forgive you on their time.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV) ²³ Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Romans 12:18 (NIV) ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

REMEMBER: YOUR PAST SIN IS USED BY THE ENEMY IN THE LIFE OF THOSE YOU LOVE. SO, SAY "I'M SORRY" AS OFTEN AS NEEDED!