

Upside Down Kingdom Unmerciful Servant

Community Group Script...

Matthew 18:23-35...

23 *“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

26 *“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ **27** The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

28 *“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.*

29 *“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’*

30 *“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.*

32 *“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ **34** In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*

35 *“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”*

I want to begin by quoting the timeless words of CS Lewis when he said...

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

The number one evidence of being a Christian is our ability to forgive.

Notice in the parable the difference between the first debt and the second debt. The second debt was one-six-thousandth of the first debt.

What that means is the forgiveness we give others pales in comparison to the the forgiveness that God gave you and me.

R.T. France once said, "R.T. France wrote: "If the church is the community of the forgiven, then all its relationships will be marked by a forgiveness which is not a mere form of words but an essential characteristic."

Jesus, in his model prayer teaches us to "forgive our debts and we forgive our debtors."

There seems to be this relationship or connection between our ability to forgive and God's willingness to forgive us. Interesting. Why do you think that is? What are we to make of that connection?

Now, let me say a word about trauma and abuse. As one who has experienced trauma, I see you, I hear you and I love you. I am so sorry for what you have experienced at the hands of another. Whether it is was physical, spiritual, emotional, or spiritual abuse, I am so sorry that happened to you.

What I want you to know is that forgiving is not the same as forgetting. There are people that I have forgiven that I will not let back into my life. Forgiveness means that I have released them to God and trust that God will act accordingly. Forgiveness does not mean pretending like what they did no longer matters or no longer has any consequences. You can set up healthy boundaries and protect yourself, and at the same time forgive. Those two things are not mutually exclusive.

As you study this text, if strong emotions arise, please feel free to share those with your group or tell me or your group leader so that we can connect you with a counselor or other mental health professionals. Be blessed!

Community Group Questions:

1. Why do you think it can be so hard for us to forgive others?
2. What are the benefits of forgiving? What are the detriments of refusing to forgive?
3. In this parable, the servant who owed a large amount of money and was forgiven refused to forgive a small amount of money. How is this similar to what we sometimes do today?
4. In what ways is this story like the Kingdom of Heaven?
5. What does extravagant forgiveness look like? Do you have any examples?
6. Why is it important to be able to forgive yourself? Have you ever struggled with this?