

# The Parable of the King and His Servants

Mt. 18:21-35

Intro: Forgiveness is a topic that is greatly misunderstood in our day . Many people think it is something to be handed out freely without any request for it. Others on the other hand, give it sparingly if they think the person is not sincere in seeking it. Others still see it as not an important part of the Christian life. (Quote R.C. Sproul-Commentary on Matthew p. 552).

## I. The Previous Question to the Parable v. 21, 22

A. Source of the question v.15-20-Jesus had just finished teaching on how to deal with someone who sins against us or another person. He shows how it could even lead to church discipline. In verse 15 Jesus makes a statement that caught Peter's attention. He said if you rebuke your brother and he listens you need to forgive him.

B. Substance of the question-v. 21 Did Peter really understand the nature of forgiveness? No. It is why Jesus replied to Peter the way He did and speaks the parable. Peter was worried more about how much he should forgive rather than the state of the offender.

C. Savior's response-v. 22 Jesus' responds by telling Peter he is not correct. It is seventy times seven says Jesus. Are we to take Him literally? No. We do not keep a notebook on how many times we have forgiven someone. Jesus explains what He means using a parable.

## II. People in the Parable

a. The king-God; he rules the kingdom of heaven v. 23

Jesus is now going to tell a parable that is what the kingdom of heaven is like. Who is king in that kingdom? God or the Lord Jesus Christ rules the kingdom of heaven.

b. The servants-professing Christians (probably not slaves)

The servants, not slaves here are those who profess to be Christians and part of the kingdom.

### III. The Parable Itself

#### A. The servant's dilemma v. 23-27

1. the problem-owed the king an enormous debt v. 23-25

The servant had a big problem. He owed the king an enormous amount of money v. 24-10,000 talents; literally countless talents in the original language: an innumerable amount of money (10,000 talents=20,000 years' salary).

Consequently, he and his family were to be sold into slavery to pay for the debt.

2. the plea v. 26-servant falls to the ground and begs for mercy and the opportunity to repay his debt

3. the pronouncement v. 27-The lord felt compassion on him and forgave all his debt. It is unbelievable that this gigantic debt is forgiven. It must have overwhelmed the servant with gratitude and joy.

What is Jesus here illustrating in this part of the parable?

All men have a debt.

A debt to God (Rom. 3:10, 20, 23). A debt they cannot repay themselves. They are like the servant with no hope of repayment.

As Christians, we have had the debt forgiven because of God's forgiveness of us in Christ. The contemporary hymn writer wrote, **"What riches of kindness he lavished on us, His blood was the payment, His life was the cost. We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford. Our sins they are many His mercy is more."**

The non-Christian continues to have this debt hanging over them and consequently, the wrath of God. Not even being cast into the fires of hell for eternity can repay that debt.

#### B. The servant's demeaning v. 28-30

1. the approach v.28 Look at the contrast in the way he treats this man with the way he was treated. He comes and chokes the man who is asking for time to repay. The debt owed to him was exceedingly small compared to what had been forgiven, 100 denarii or four months' pay versus 10,000 years of pay. Yet he chokes his fellow servant. He is unkind and cruel. He had not been treated that way by the king. What is he doing? What is he thinking? He should not respond this way.

2. the appeal v. 29 His fellow servant pleads for mercy and an opportunity to pay back the debt like his own plea to the king.

3. the answer v. 30 He shows no mercy and casts his fellow servant into prison. Unbelievable! How could the servant treat his fellow servant so cruelly?

#### C. The servant's destruction v. 31-34

1. the report-His fellow servants are troubled by the servant's behavior. They come and report to the king all that has happened v. 31

2. the response of the king-The king then calls in the servant and tells him he is wicked and should have shown mercy to his fellow servant v. 32, 33. He had pled with the king and the king forgave all his debt, yet he could not do the same for his fellow servant

3. the resolution-The king becomes enraged with the servant. He reinstates the debt and hands the servants over to the torturers. v. 34-Torturers here is a different word from prison in verse 30. It speaks of those who beat and tortured men for specific crime. It was to be done until he could repay the debt. It would be for eternity since he could never repay the debt.

#### IV. The Purpose of the Parable

A. Main teaching v. 35-We must forgive others because God has forgiven us. God will treat us as the king did the servant if we do not forgive others.

Remember the king's question to the servant in verse 33, why didn't the servant forgive as he had been forgiven?

Our forgiving is to be a result of the forgiveness given us. We must forgive others since God has forgiven us. It is not often easy to forgive. It can be very difficult if we have been deeply hurt. I am not saying we forgive apart from the Biblical requirements for forgiveness, but we must show mercy because God has shown us mercy. It is a serious matter to refuse to forgive another.

B. We can never forgive and will never forgive the same amount of what God has given us. Compare the debt of the servant to the king with the debt of the one servant to the other. V. 24, 28. Our debt was insurmountable. God forgave us that debt in Christ.

C. We are to forgive as God forgives (v. 33; Eph. 4:32)

- ready to forgive (humble spirit that is willing to be wronged)

- forgiveness is immediate upon repentance (Lk. 17:3, 4)

- limitless v. 22

- full and complete (v. 27; Ps. 103:8-14; Heb. 8:12; 10:17)

- from the heart v. 35

D. Evidence of being a Christian v. 34

The servant is given into everlasting punishment for his failure to forgive. The failure to do so shows we are not truly part of the kingdom of heaven and will result in our eternal judgment.

E. Reminds us of one way that we can love one another (1 Cor. 13:5).

Love does not calculate or keep a record of wrongs. Love forgives and wipes the slate clean. Forgiving one another is one way we love one another.