Level 2 Lesson 9

FORGIVING OTHERS
By Don Krow

Today we're going to look at the subject of forgiveness from Matthew 18:21-22: *"Then came Peter to him* [Jesus], *and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven"* (brackets mine). I think Peter thought he was being very generous to ask how many times he should forgive someone who sinned against him, "seven times in a day, do you think?" Jesus said, "Peter, not seven but seventy times seven." That's 490 times, but it doesn't mean that after 490 times you don't have to forgive. What Jesus said was an impossible number of offenses that would happen to an individual in a day. He was saying forgiveness should be continual, that it should go on and on. Forgiveness should be the real attitude of a Christian. Jesus said in Luke 23:34, *"Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."* And also Stephen the martyr, in Acts 7:60 said, *"Lay not this sin to their charge."* Not all people will receive forgiveness, but the attitude in the heart of a Christian should be always to offer it.

Jesus tells a parable about forgiveness when He continues in verse 23 of Matthew 18, *"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of* [make a reckoning with] *his servants, And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.* [*The Living Bible* says that is like ten million dollars.] *But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all"* (brackets mine). Now, here's the situation: There is a man who actually owes ten million dollars to his master. There is no way he can pay it—he knows he can't and the master knows he can't. In those days, you couldn't claim bankruptcy like you can in the United States—they'd sell you, your wife, your children, and everything you had, and you'd go into slavery. You would be sent to prison until everything was paid, and if it never was, you'd stay in prison all your life. This man did the only thing he knew to do: He got down on his knees and cried for mercy, "O master, please be patient with me! Please, I beg you. I'll repay you everything. Just be patient!" Notice what happened in verse 27. It says the master was moved with compassion for him, and he forgave him his debt.

We had a debt we could not pay. The Bible says that the wages of sin was death (Rom. 6:23)—separation from God for eternity—all the silver and gold in the world couldn't redeem us. Then God in His compassion and in His grace sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth to pay the debt we couldn't pay. God looked upon us in His compassion and mercy and said, "I forgive you that debt."

This man who had just been forgiven ten million dollars was owed something like twenty dollars by a fellow servant. He found him and said, "I've just been forgiven ten

million dollars, and what is twenty dollars to me? I want you to be as free as I am! Just let it go. It's okay, for I've been forgiven ten million dollars!" That is what should have happened, but it didn't. Let's read what really happened in verses 28-31. *"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done."* He threw that man into prison for twenty dollars after he'd just been forgiven ten million dollars! Can you imagine that?

Verses 32-34 say, *"Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."* This man was then thrown into prison because of the way he treated his fellow servant, and thus forfeited his original forgiveness. Jesus said in verse 35, *"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."* Isn't it foolish, having been forgiven all our sin—the wages of which are death and separation from God for eternity—to refuse to forgive? We beseech God, saying "Forgive me and have mercy on me through Jesus Christ," receive forgiveness, and then turn and refuse to forgive someone else for a little thing we think is so big—after having received forgiveness for all the things we've done. God's says that's wickedness.

I pastored a church awhile back, and there was a young woman in the congregation who was able to see things in the future. She came to me one day and said, "Is it the Holy Spirit telling me things to come and showing me things in the future? I know when people are going to die and when someone is going to have a car wreck, and things like that." I said, "You won't like my answer, but I don't believe that's the Holy Spirit. I think it's a spirit of divination, the same spirit that followed the Apostle Paul around in Acts 16. He finally rebuked it and commanded it to come out of that girl and she lost her ability to tell fortunes." I went on to tell her that I wasn't God, and said, "I want you to go to Jesus and ask Him, 'Lord, what is telling me things and giving me information, even before I was saved? Is it your Holy Spirit, or is it something else?'" She came back to me one day and said, "I talked to the Lord about it, and I think it's all right." I said, "Whatever the Lord says is all right—I'm not the Great Shepherd."

This was in early 1986, and do you know what happened in 1986? We had a space shuttle called the Challenger, and eight people went up in it. One of them was a woman schoolteacher. As this young lady was watching television, she saw the woman saying, "Tomorrow I'm going up in the Challenger," and talking about it. A spirit spoke to her and said, "She's going to die, she's going to die." The next day when the Challenger was launched, it blew up as the whole world watched, and all of the crew perished. The young lady came back to me and said, "Brother Don, I think what's talking

to me and giving me information may not be the Holy Spirit. Would you pray for me?" Following the service that night, after everyone left, I took her by the hand and said, "You unclean spirit of divination, come out of her!" Nothing happened. Jesus' disciples tried to cast an unclean spirit out of a young man once and couldn't do it. Jesus said, "Bring the young man to me." So I said, "Lord, I thought I knew what was going on here, but I bring this lady to you. Show us what's going on." My wife was praying with us and God gave her a word of knowledge. She said, "It has something to do with her mother." I said to the woman, "Will you forgive your mother?" The moment I said that, a voice screamed out of her, "NO! She gave me away!" Then I said "I bind you, you unclean spirit" and asked the woman again if she would forgive her mother. She then forgave and released her mother and let her go by the grace and help of God. She was able to let go by making the decision to forgive, and then she received her deliverance and freedom.

Just like Jesus said in the parable in Matthew 18, I'm saying that if we do not forgive from our hearts after we've been forgiven such a great debt by our heavenly Father, we will be delivered into the hands of the tormenters. What are the tormenters? They can be all kinds of things—demonic strongholds, oppression, sickness, depression, disease, and many other things. The root is unforgiveness. Not forgiving after we have been forgiven allows Satan a foothold in our lives. The Bible says we have to make the decision to forgive. In the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:9-11), Jesus said to forgive as we've been forgiven.

Mark 11:25-26 says that when we pray, if we have anything against anyone, we're to forgive. What does that mean? Unforgiveness should stay in our hearts how long? Only as long as it takes us to go to the Lord and pray. And if we have the slightest bit of unforgiveness against anyone, we should release them and say, "God, I'm letting them go today. I'm forgiving them. I'm making a choice because You forgave me such a great debt."

Lord, I pray for anyone reading this lesson that has unforgiveness in their life, that they make a decision right this moment to let that person go, to forgive them whether they are living or dead. I pray they will let it go and let that hurt be healed by your power and your grace today, Lord. I thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Matthew 18:21. How many times did Peter offer to forgive?

_____

2. Read Matthew 18:22. How many times did Jesus say we were to forgive?

_____

3. Read Matthew 18:23-24. How much money did this servant owe his master?

_____

4. Read Matthew 18:25. Since this servant could not file for bankruptcy, what was going to happen? _____

5. Read Matthew 18:26. What was the servant's request? _____ _____ Could he have repaid his debt? _____

6. Read Matthew 18:27. What attitude did the master show toward his servant? _____What attitude did God show toward us and our debt (sin)? _____

7. Read Matthew 18:28. The servant that had been forgiven had a fellow servant who owed him how much? _____

8. Read Matthew 18:28. What was this servant's attitude toward his fellow servant? _____

9. Read Matthew 18:29-30. What did this servant do to his fellow servant? _____

10. Read Matthew 18:31-33. What did the master call the unforgiving servant? _____

11. Read Matthew 18:33. What did the master tell his servant he should have done? _____

12. Read Matthew 18:34. When the master found out what had happened, how did it affect his emotions? _____

13. Read Matthew 18:34. Did this unforgiving servant by his actions (or decision) forfeit the forgiveness that had been offered to him originally? _____

14. Read Matthew 18:35. What is the point of this parable? _____

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Matthew 18:21 – *"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"*

Matthew 18:22 – *"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."*

Matthew 18:23-24 – "[23] *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.* [24] *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents."*

Matthew 18:25 – *"But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."*

Matthew 18:26 – *"The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."*

Matthew 18:27 – *"Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."*

Matthew 18:28 – *"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest."*

Matthew 18:29-30 – "[29] *And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* [30] *And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt."*

Matthew 18:31-33 – "[31] *So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.* [32] *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:* [33] *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"*

Matthew 18:33 – *"Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"*

Matthew 18:34 – *"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."*

Matthew 18:35 (The Message Bible) – *"And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."*

Answer Key

1. Read Matthew 18:21. How many times did Peter offer to forgive? **Seven times.**

2. Read Matthew 18:22. How many times did Jesus say we were to forgive? **Four hundred and ninety (or endlessly, continually).**

3. Read Matthew 18:23-24. How much money did this servant owe his master? **Ten thousand talents, or ten million dollars (an amount that probably never could be repaid).**

4. Read Matthew 18:25. Since this servant could not file for bankruptcy, what was going to happen? **He, his wife, his children, and all he owned was to be auctioned off at a slave market to pay his debt.**

5. Read Matthew 18:26. What was the servant's request? **For the master to have patience with him and he would repay him everything.** Could he have repaid his debt? **Probably not.**

6. Read Matthew 18:27. What attitude did the master show toward his servant? **One of compassion and forgiveness.** What attitude did God show toward us and our debt (sin)? **One of compassion and forgiveness.**

7. Read Matthew 18:28. The servant that had been forgiven had a fellow servant who owed him how much? **A hundred pence (a day's wage).**

8. Read Matthew 18:28. What was this servant's attitude toward his fellow servant? **One of impatience, violence, and unforgiveness.**

9. Read Matthew 18:29-30. What did this servant do to his fellow servant? **Cast him into prison till he could pay his small debt.**

10. Read Matthew 18:31-33. What did the master call the unforgiving servant? "**O thou wicked servant."**

11. Read Matthew 18:33. What did the master tell his servant he should have done? **He should have had compassion on his fellow servant as the master had pity on him. He should have released him and forgiven him.**

12. Read Matthew 18:34. When the master found out what had happened, how did it affect his emotions? **He became angry.**

13. Read Matthew 18:34. Did this unforgiving servant by his actions (or decision) forfeit the forgiveness that had been offered to him originally? **Yes.**

14. Read Matthew 18:35. What is the point of this parable? **"And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy" (Matt. 18:35,** *The Message***).**

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