



# **The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**

Matthew 18:23-35

# Parable Reminders

- A Parable is ***not*** a straightforward description of an event, just as it occurred or will occur.
- A Parable is a ***casting or placing side by side*** to a real event or ***to compare likeness or similitude*** to reveal the true meaning by interpretation .

## **Application: Parables Are Keys to the Kingdom of God**

- The keys to *open* understanding are contained in Christ. He gives those keys to whom He will.**
- The parables of Jesus are keys to the Kingdom of God, that unlock the knowledge to Life, if we will heed the revealed understanding and warnings of the parables.**

# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Luke 17:1-5

- **Stumbling Block – Temptations to Sin**
- **Millstone – A heavy stone for grinding grain**
- **“Increase our faith!” – They felt incapable of measuring up to the standard set forth by Jesus Christ**



# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Matthew 18:15-20

- If you brother / sister sins against you...
- Go in private and tell them the grievance.
- If they listen you have won them.
- If they do not listen, take 2 or 3 (Deuteronomy 19:15) witnesses.
- If they do not listen, go to the church.



# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Colossians 3:13

- “bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

## ■ Forgiveness is a matter of justice, mercy and conduct. It is a Christian's duty to forgive others.

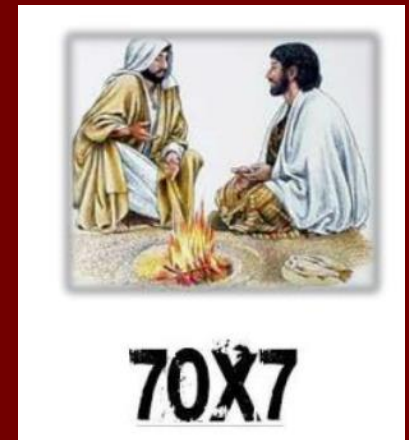
## ■ II Corinthians 2:5-11

- “...but one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven...so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”

# Peter's Question

## ■ Matthew 18:21-22

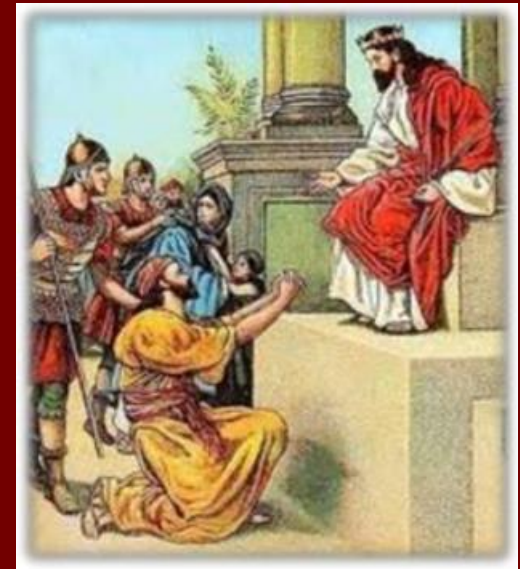
- Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.
- Jesus sheds light on the principle of a person forgiving another by illustrating God's example of forgiveness toward His human creation.
- The Jews taught that a man was to forgive another three times but not four. Peter more than doubles this, asking if forgiveness should be extended so far. Jesus' answer tells us we should not limit our forgiveness to any fixed number.



# Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Matthew 18:23-27

- "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt."





# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Luke 11:4

- “And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.”

## ■ Sin in the Bible is spoken of as a debt, as something that we owe to God.

## ■ Matthew 6:9-13

- “...And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors....”

## ■ Every time we sin, there goes to our spiritual account a debit which creates a debt. And our debt becomes bigger and bigger all the time. It becomes such that it is utterly out of control. That is the meaning of the 10,000-talent debt (1 talent = 15 years of wages; 10,000 talents = 150,000 years of wages) in the parable. Every human being is in such debt before God and there is no one who has the means to pay it.

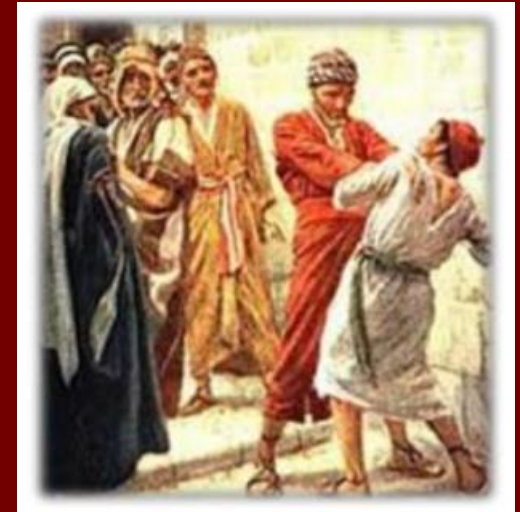
# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

- **We all have sinned. We owe to God more than could be paid. We are about to be cast off. If there is anything left of us, it is to come before God with a contrite heart and say to Him, 'Lord, I am a sinner. I realize that there is no way I can pay off my debt. I beg of you to have mercy upon me. Forgive me.'** God will listen. And He is very ready, out of pure compassion, to forgive the sins of those who humble themselves before Him.
- **The first scene thus illustrates the boundless grace of God in forgiving sins, as the king forgave his servant.**
- **We sometimes think that when the first act is over, when we have been pardoned, the whole drama is over. But this is not so. That is not salvation in its fullness. The forgiveness of sins, to be sure, is a major part of Jesus' message. But this forgiveness is only the beginning of the Christian life. The parable then moves to another scene which teaches the responsibility of the forgiven.**

# Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Matthew 18:28-31

- "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened."



# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

- Justice and mercy are two biblical concepts that cannot be treated separately. They are interrelated, as we can see from our parable. Jesus tells us that mercy does not eliminate justice, nor does justice nullify mercy. He teaches the application of both mercy and justice.
- The shocking aspect of the unforgiving servant's behavior is his failure to exercise toward his fellow servant even a little of the generosity with which he himself had been treated.
- For some reason, he just did not get it. After being forgiven **10,000 talents**, he threw into prison someone who owed him a debt that was **600,000 times smaller (1 denarii = 1 days wages; 100 denarii = 100 days wages)**.
- **150,000 years of wages compared to 100 days of wages.**

# Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

## ■ Matthew 18:32-35

- "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.' Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."



# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

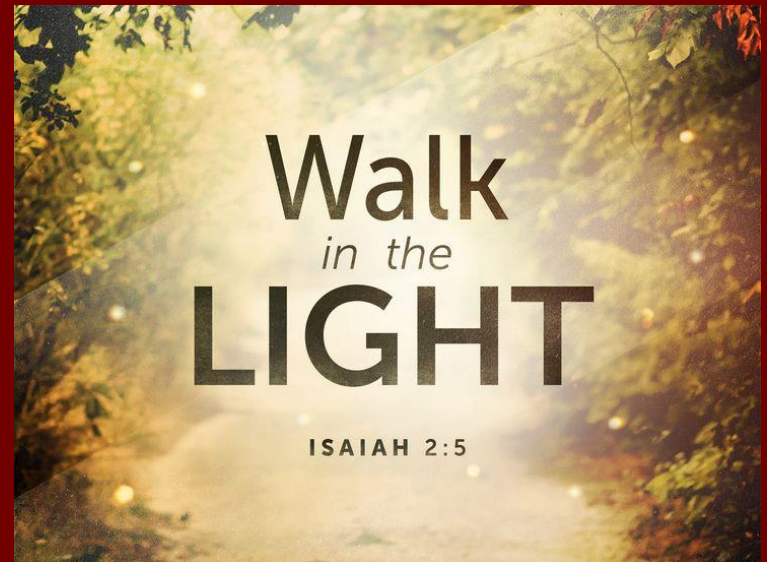
- **What this means for us as Christians?**
- **God's forgiveness of us must find an appropriate response in our life, in our relationships with other people. The privilege of being forgiven brings with it a serious responsibility. What responsibility? The responsibility that we, having been forgiven, will treat others in the same way.**
- **In the world, people's behavior is very often tit for tat. You are nasty to me; I am going to be nasty to you. You offended me; I will offend you. It is not so in the Christian life.**
- **Actions have consequences. Even with mercy there is an element of consequences with forgiveness, as determined by the actions / sin / stumbling block.**

# Context: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

- **This parable demonstrates the principle that as one treats others, so also one will be treated.**
- **What the servant had done to his debtor, the king now does to him: justice is administered without mercy.**
- **If the debt represents our sins, if the king is a symbol of God, the Father, and if the servants symbolize the disciples, could this parable demonstrate that, as the king revoked the earlier cancellation of his servant's debt, so too God could revoke His forgiveness of a disciple's sins, if that disciple, like the first servant in the parable, refuses to forgive the sins of another disciple?**

# Context: Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

- **Can We Be Forgiven, If We Do Not Forgive The Offenses of Others?**
  - **Matthew 6:14-15**
- **Ultimately, receiving God, the Father and Jesus Christ's mercy and compassion is contingent upon our forgiving treatment of others.**





# Life Application: **Parables of Unforgiving Servant**

- **Failure to forgive a brother / sister could bring severe punishment**
  - **We need to ask Jesus Christ to increase our faith, to forgive as He forgives**
- **We are indebted to God the Father and Jesus Christ and we are not able to pay it off**
  - **Our sins are great; God abundantly forgives**
- **Only those who are willing to forgive others can be sure that they will be forgiven.**
  - **Often, offenses committed against us are comparatively small**
- **The unforgiving person is destined to judgment from an angry God the Father and Jesus Christ**
  - **Actions have consequences**

# GROUP DISCUSSION

