

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant: The Spirit of Forgiveness

Mathew 18: 21-35

1. *The spirit and practice of forgiveness*

- a. Peter asked about forgiving a brother:
Is forgiveness to be limited?
- b. Jesus' answer:
Forgiveness is to be unlimited, times without number,
Mt. 5:7, 44, 48; Eph 4:31-32

2. *The spirit of God's forgiveness: Like a king who settles his accounts with his servants*

- a. All must give account
- b. One was brought to him
- c. The servant owed a huge debt (millions of rupees)
- d. The servant was bankrupt
 - 1) He and his family were to be sold as slaves
 - 2) He was to lose all
- e. The servant faced the king
- f. The servant cried for mercy
 - 1) Fell down before the king
 - 2) Made a commitment
- g. The servant experienced the compassion of a loving king:
Was freed and forgiven, 1 Jn 1:9

3. *The spirit of the servants unforgiveness*

- a. He faced a fellow servant who owed him;
In comparison, a very small sum
- b. He reacted severely
- c. He heard his servant's cry for mercy:
Rejected the cry
and refused to forgive

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked,
"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?
Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered "I tell you,
not seven times,
but seventy seven times."

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 talents
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 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,
cancelled 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 denarii.
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 you back.'

d. He acted materialistically and selfishly - according to law and justice e. He grieved the other servants: They carried the matter to their Lord 4. The great day of accounting a. The basis of judgment 1) God's forgiveness: Is offered in Christ, Jn 3:16; Eph 1:7; 1 Jn 2:1-2 2) The servant's wickedness: He lacked compassion and mercy b. The judgment 1) The Lord's anger 2) The Lord's justice: The man was condemned and punished 5. The point: <i>An unforgiving person will be condemned, Mt. 6:12, 14, 15</i>	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 greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled 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 turned 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 from your heart."
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