

130. Forgive Each Other (Matthew 18:15-35)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we deserved punishment and death because of our sin. But You suffered instead of us. We thank You and praise You for Your gift. Please help us to live and show our thanks. Help us to forgive others the same as You forgive us. We pray in Your name. Amen.

Matthew 18:15-17. Jesus said, “If another Christian sins against you, go to him privately and correct him. If he listens (and repents), you have your Christian brother back. If he doesn’t listen to you, go to him again. Take two or three witnesses with you. Then the two or three witnesses can show what happened. If he refuses to listen to you and the witnesses, then tell the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, then act like he is an unbeliever or a tax-collector.”

- If someone sins against you, what should you do? Ignore it, gossip to other people about the sin, get angry, or what?
- If the person who sinned doesn’t repent, what are the next 2 steps to encourage them to repent?
- What is the goal for these directions Jesus gives? What does Jesus want to happen?

Matthew 18:18-20. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. If you don’t forgive a person on earth, in heaven their sins are not forgiven. If you forgive a person’s sins on earth, the person is also forgiven in heaven. Again, if two of you on earth agree about anything and ask God to do it, My Father in heaven will do it. If two or three people are meeting together in My name, I am there with them.”

- Jesus is explaining why the church can remove a person who won’t repent. What does Jesus say about forgiving or not forgiving sins? Whatever we do on earth, it happens in _____ the same.

- Does that mean we can tell God what to do? We can order God to forgive or not to forgive someone? What does this mean?
- Is this something we decide by ourselves, or with other people? Who are the “two or three” people? What does that mean?

Matthew 18:21-22. Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, if another Christian sins against me, how many times should I forgive him? Seven times?” Jesus said, “No, not seven times. Forgive him up to 77 times.”

- Suppose Peter forgives another Christian for the same sin 7 times. Peter thinks he is very kind to forgive 7 times. What does Jesus think? How many times should we forgive someone who continues sinning against us?

Matthew 18:23-27. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to finish accounts with his servants. The king’s men brought one servant who owed the king \$200,000,000. That servant had no way to pay the debt. The king ordered that the servant should get sold, his wife and children sold, everything he owned sold to pay the debt. The servant bowed down and begged, ‘Please be patient! I will pay everything!’ The king had mercy on him. The king forgave the debt and let the man go free.

- Now Jesus tells a story that shows we should forgive freely. The servant who owed the millions of dollars, is there any way he could pay that debt, even if his wife and children got sold? How is our sin to God like that debt?
- Did the king have the right to sell the servant and his family? What did the king do instead? What does God do for us and our sin against Him?

Matthew 18:28-30. “The man went and found another servant. That servant owed him \$200. The man grabbed the other servant and started to choke him. He said, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ The other servant knelt down and begged, ‘Please be patient! I will pay you back!’ But the man didn’t want to be patient. He had the servant arrested and put in prison until he paid the debt.”

- Is \$200 a small debt or a big debt? How much is a \$200 debt compared to \$200,000,000? Should the first servant be patient and give the second servant more time to pay the \$200, or maybe forgive the debt? Or was he right to get angry and throw the servant in prison?
- How does another person's sin against us compare with all our sins against God? Should we be patient and forgive those sins?

Matthew 18:31-34. "The other servants saw what happened. They were very upset. They went and told the king what happened. The king called the servant to come. The king said, 'You are a wicked servant! You begged me, and I forgave all your debt. I showed you much mercy! The same, you should show mercy to another servant.' The king was very angry. He ordered men to torture (punish) the servant until he paid his whole debt."

- Did the king think the servant should have forgiven the small debt? Why?
- Because the servant didn't learn to have mercy and forgive, what did the king do to that servant?
- That servant is now in prison getting punished. Can he ever pay his \$200,000,000 debt now?

Matthew 18:35. Jesus said, "If you don't forgive other Christians from your heart, My heavenly Father will do the same to you."

- If we don't forgive other Christians, what does Jesus say will happen to us?
- Then how can we learn to forgive other Christians? What will encourage us to freely forgive?