

2nd Quarter 2021 Bible Study Outline



THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST - STUDY 11

The Unmerciful Servant - Matt.18:21-35

INTRODUCTION:

1. **"The Parables Of Jesus"** we have considered so far have centered around the kingdom of heaven itself...
 - a. How the "seed" of the kingdom would be received ("**The Sower**")
 - b. Its mixed character and future consummation ("**The Wheat & The Tares**", "**The Dragnet**")
 - c. Its growth and development ("**The Mustard Seed**", "**The Leaven**")
 - d. Its exceeding value ("**The Hidden Treasure**", "**The Pearl Of Great Price**")
2. The next parable we shall consider is one that describes "the character of the citizens" which are to make up the kingdom...
 - a. It is commonly called "**The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**"
 - b. It is recorded in **Matt.18:21-35**

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS MESSAGE:

A. The Occasion Which Led To Its Telling...

1. Peter's question about forgiving a brother - **Matt.18:21**
 - a. He probably thought he was being very gracious
 - b. For many Jewish rabbis taught that three (3) times was sufficient
2. Jesus' initial response - **Matt.18:22**
 - a. His answer is not to be taken literally
 - b. Rather, "**Jesus confronts Peter with the truth that the spirit of forgiveness really knows no boundaries.**" (Believers' Study Bible)
3. To reinforce His point, Jesus proceeds to tell the parable...

B. The Parable Itself...

1. A king shows mercy to his servant by canceling his huge debt - **Matt.18:23-27**
 - a. How large amount was 10,000 talents?
 - i) "**If the Attic talent is intended, about 6,000 denarii were involved in just one Attic talent.**" (BSB)

- ii) **"Remembering that a denarius was a day's normal wage, the poor fellow owed something like 60,000,000 denarii."** (BSB)
- iii) Using the rate of \$50 as one day's wage, the amount would be \$3,000,000,000 (3 billion dollars!)
- b. The mercy of the king goes beyond the actual request
 - i) The request was for patience to pay the debt
 - ii) Yet the king was willing to forgive the debt entirely!
- 2. That servant in turn then refuses to cancel a fellow servant's petty debt - **Matt.18:28-30**
 - a. How much was a hundred denarii?
 - i) Remember, a "denarii" was equivalent to a day's wage
 - ii) Using the same rate above (\$50/day), the amount would be \$5000
 - b. The unmerciful servant refuses to heed the same plea made earlier by himself
- 3. The final result: Upon this cruel servant the king imposes the former sentence, even adding to it! - **Matt.18:31-34**
 - a. Before, he, his family, and his possessions were only going to be sold
 - b. But now, he is to handed over to the "torturers"

C. The Lesson Of The Parable...

- 1. As stated by Jesus Himself - **Matt.18:35**
 - a. **"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."**
 - b. Failure to forgive a brother will bring severe punishment!
- 2. **"Prompted by gratitude the forgiven sinner must always yearn to forgive whoever has trespassed against him"** (unknown)
- 3. We can also draw several subsidiary lessons:
 - a. We are all God's debtors - **Matt.18:23; Rom.3:23**
 - b. None is able to pay what is owed - **Matt.18:25**
 - c. But by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid - **Matt.18:27; Matt.20:28**
 - d. Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven - **Matt.18:35; Matt.6:14-15**
 - e. It should be easy to forgive others, for what we owe God is infinitely more than what others owe us - **Matt.18:32,33**
 - f. The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment! - **Matt18:34,35; Rom1:31**

Perhaps the most important point we learn from this parable is that the kingdom of heaven is to consist of people who are both forgiven and forgiving, who have both received mercy and are merciful. - **Jam.2:13**

Understanding the importance of forgiving others, how can we develop a forgiving spirit?

II. DEVELOPING A FORGIVING SPIRIT:

A. Focus On God's Forgiveness Of You...

- 1. This is where the unmerciful servant went wrong

2. This is how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit - **Eph.4:32; Col.3:13**

B. Allow The Lord To Help Us To "Forgive And Forget" ...

1. Some may protest and say "It is impossible to forget!"
2. But let's first define "forget"
 - a. To be unable to remember (something)
 - b. To treat with thoughtless inattention; neglect: forget one's family
 - c. To leave behind unintentionally
 - d. To fail to mention- The American Heritage Dictionary
3. When we think of forgiving and forgetting, it is the last three definitions we should have in mind
 - a. Technically, we may be able to recall the offense to our minds
 - b. But for all practical purposes, we so disregard the offense that it is "out of mind"
4. Is this possible? By the grace of God, yes!
 - a. The example of Joseph - **Gen.41:51**
 - b. The attitude of Paul - **Phil.3:13**- Both these men had plenty of things done to them that could have made them resentful, but God helped them to "forget" those things
5. Can a person who says "I will forgive but not forget", truly have forgiven?
6. **"If I say, 'Yes, I forgive, but I cannot forget,' as though the God, who twice a day washes all the sands on all shores of all the world, could not wash such memories from my mind, then I know nothing of Calvary love."** (Amy Carmichael)

CONCLUSION:

1. When we truly contemplate the love, mercy & forgiveness God has shown us in Christ Jesus...
 - a. It is indeed possible to forgive and forget
 - b. At least in the sense of removing it from the attention of our minds
2. And from **"The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant" ...**
 - a. We should learn that it is essential that we do so
 - b. For the citizens of the kingdom of heaven are to be characterized by the attitudes of mercy and forgiveness towards others

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
(Matt.6:14-15)

Have we allowed the mercy of God to melt our hearts? Have we even accepted the mercy of God into our lives by obeying Jesus Christ? We should allow **"The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant"** to remind us that both are possible!