

# The Storyteller

Part 10 - The Unforgiving Servant  
Sermon Worksheet



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# THE PARABLE

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**Matthew 18:21-35 21** "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

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. At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.

He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

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## Things to think about

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- **How many times do I need to forgive?**

- Jesus says it should be an unlimited number.
  - Disappointment comes from unmet expectations. A sinful nature, a broken filter, a spiritual enemy. If we are going to have relationships between broken people - forgiveness is essential.

- **Jesus is laying out a whole new way of living:**

- We forgive when we don't think it is possible.
- We ourselves have a debt that could not be paid back.
- Because our debt was paid by Christ, we now can forgive the debt of others towards us.

# More things to think about..

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- **Why should I forgive?**

- We forgive because God forgave us.
- God is asking us to do for others what he does for us - there is an accountability to that.
- A lack of forgiveness can cause a root of bitterness to grow in us.
- An ongoing lack of forgiveness can further our own pain and the pain of those we love.

Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many"

- **What does forgiveness look like?**

- Forgiveness is a decision, it is not a feeling.
- Forgiveness is not always a one time thing - it may be a decision we have to make over and over depending on how deep the wound is.

- **What forgiveness is NOT:**

- It is not denial
- It is not forgetting
  - You can remember without letting it define you - it doesn't mean you haven't forgiven.
- It is not allowing hurts to continue
  - Abuse, addiction, and other harmful behavior are not to be accepted or allowed to continue.
- It is not letting go of consequences
  - When we choose to forgive someone, we both will still need to live with the consequences of the act.

- **How do I forgive?**

- Realize the power of the cross. (See 1 Peter 3:18)
  - Forgiveness cost Jesus his life.
- Recall the pain and the people who hurt you.
  - (See Ephesians 5:8) This sounds counterintuitive, but until we face the pain we have a hard time getting free of it. We are called to walk in the light, and the more we try to hide or avoid the memories the less we are able to deal with them.
- Resolve to forgive
  - Forgiveness is a choice - and it is a tough choice. It is an intentional act in which you let the person off the hook and free yourself from the past.

- **Practical steps to forgiveness**

- Follow the teaching of God's word.
- Talk about it with a trusted friend or counselor
- Ask God to help you
- Respect the other person
  - When old feelings begin to resurface remind yourself that it has been done away with.
- Take your thoughts captive
  - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- Release the other person through prayer
  - An example prayer is on the following page -

- **Prayer of forgiveness:**

- At this point we rely on God as never before. We turn to our Heavenly Father with new dependence and deeper intimacy. The prayer of our hearts needs to be something along these lines:

*Lord, I lean on you for the grace and strength to love \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(At this point make a list of what they did. This will probably bring out some emotion.*

*Continue your resolve to forgive, remembering the power of the cross.)*

*God show me the depth of your grace toward ME so that I can forgive in the same measure that I have been forgiven. Lord I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for the things that I just listed. I release the feelings of bitterness and anger. I renounce my desire to retaliate and seek any revenge. I ask that you would replace the painful feeling with love from your heart God.*

This is not a magic prayer. As we release the person and grant them forgiveness we need to continually rely on God for the strength and capacity to be loving towards them. Then watch as God continues to do a work in us.

## **What if I'm the one who needs to be forgiven?**

- If you have wronged someone in your past:
  - Claim the truth that if you have confessed your sin to God, you are forgiven. 1 John 1:9
  - Go and make it right as far as it depends on you - make it easier for others to forgive you.
  - Don't do another wrong to those you have hurt by the way you ask them for forgiveness.
- Let them forgive you in their own time.

*Matthew 5:23-14 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."*

*Romans 12:18 "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

Remember that your past sin is used by the enemy in the life of those you love, so say you are sorry as often as needed.

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