



All Citizens Christian Church Calgary

Bible Study: Thursday December 5th, 2013. **THE PARABLES OF JESUS Part VI.** The Unforgiving Servant

TEXT: Matthew 18: 21-35

INTRODUCTION: Today's parable has to do with forgiveness. I have found this topic to be highly discussed by many Christians but hardly practiced. It has broken churches, homes businesses etc. Jesus takes the issue of forgiveness very seriously. It is as serious as the issue of life and death. Unforgiveness could stand between our making it to heaven. Unforgiveness is a major point of contention in many relationships. This also troubled the leader of the apostles and hence he asked Jesus that very famous question which pioneers today's Bible Study. How often shall me brother sin against me and I forgive him? Jesus went further to illustrate how serious heaven is about forgiveness. May God help us today as we study this all-important topic of forgiveness? God will not only help us to understand it He will also help us to be the doers of the word.

DISCUSSION:

- Peter's question prompted Jesus to give this parable. Do you think peter would have been surprised at Jesus' answer?
- Is Jesus' answer possible? **Gen 33: 4, 45: 15, Acts 7: 60.**
- What did the answer of Jesus mean? Jesus' answer is not to be taken literally. He confronts Peter with the truth that the spirit of forgiveness really knows no bounds.

Lessons from the story.

God forgave us our sins so we should forgive all others who sins against us.

If we refuse to forgive whoever sins against us will God forgive us?

The servants both begged for their sins. That brings us to the problem of repentance.

Should I forgive someone even when the person does not repent? **Isa 55:7, Matt 18:15-17, Luke 17: 3. James 5: 20, Matt 5: 23.**

Forgiveness is a sign of gratitude. **Matt 18: 32.**

We can also draw several subsidiary lessons:

- We are all God's debtors - **Matt 18:23; cf. Rom 3:23**
- None are able to pay what he or she owes - **Matt 18:25**
- But by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid - **Matt 18:27; Matt 20:28**
- Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven - **Matt 18:35; Matt 6:14-15**
- It should be easy to forgive others, for what we owed God is infinitely more than what others owe us - **Matt 18:32,33**
- The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment! - **Matt 18:34, 35; Rom 1:31**

HOW TO DEVELOP A FORGIVING SPIRIT

A. FOCUS ON GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR YOU...

- This is where the unmerciful servant went wrong
- This is how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit - **Eph 4:32; Col 3:13**

B. WE SHOULD ALLOW THE LORD TO HELP US TO "FORGIVE"

- It is difficult to forget when someone hurts you unless the Holy Spirit helps you!"

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word 'forget' as

- To be unable to remember something
- To treat with thoughtless inattention; neglect: forget one's family
- To leave behind unintentionally
- To fail to mention

The last three definitions should help us to define forgiveness

- 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"
- a. The example of Joseph - **Gen 41:51**
- b. The attitude of Paul - **Phil 3:13**

LET THE SPIRIT OF TRUE LOVE RULE YOUR HEART.

With true love it is easier to overlook what others have done to you. **I Cor 13: 7, Isaiah 49: 15**

Consider Jesus on the cross, Stephen when he was being stoned, Joseph when he received his brothers.

CONCLUSION: When we see the reason why God expects us to forgive, we will not find it hard to forgive others. Since the Bible abounds with people who were able to forgive people in spite of the wrong done to them by these people, we too should be able to forgive. Unforgiveness gives room to bitterness which is the root of a lot of sicknesses.