

Jesus' forgiveness is without limits. What about yours?

Jesus has forgiven all the sins you have ever committed. There is nothing that any fellow human can do to you that can come anywhere near the severity and debt which you owe to God and He has forgiven you, therefore you also should forgive and let it go.

Matthew 18:21-35 ²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' ²⁷ "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' ²⁹ "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' ³⁰ "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' ³⁴ "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵ "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

Condemnation

Whoever does not truly from his heart forgive his brother will not receive forgiveness from the Father.

This parable out to terrify us, because it ends on a really dark note. Other parables end this way, but because a man loved money more than the word of God, or didn't have the white robe on, etc. Here it is because he didn't forgive.

Whenever I give private communion I ask the person "is this your sincere confession that you heartily repent of your sins." Have you sincerely from your heart forgiven everyone around you. To forgive means to let it go completely. You are never going to bring up again, when your spouse annoys you. You are not going to go around telling everyone what a terrible thing so and so have done. You are not going to hold it against him/her until he/she makes up for it.

Have you sincerely from your heart let it go? Because if not you have no place in the kingdom of God.

Peter's Question

A little background, Peter isn't coming out of nowhere to ask this question.

The verses before this one show us a Savior who has prescribed a level of love and understanding for our brothers that is beyond anything the disciples have ever considered before.

Jesus shows us a God who is so eager and ready to forgive that not only does He announce forgiveness freely to all. But He in fact gives the keys to the entire church, so that every believer is able to go around throwing away this forgiveness to anyone who asks.

Imagine if a very rich man starts to give away his money to the poor. But not only gives away his money but gives away even ATM cards, saying if you need more go get, or if you know someone who needs more give them some as well.

The liberality of Jesus' forgiveness is so great it makes Peter stop to realize how petty he is being, and instead of confessing his pettiness instead he looks for vindication.

He looks for an excuse, ok, if my brother bumps into me by mistake I'll forgive him. But if he keeps doing it like seven times, surely, you can't mean I should forgive him. Sound familiar?

It's this desire for self justification that prompts Peter's question. What's the limit? Seven times?

Peter actually thinks that he is being generous here. The Rabbis said 3 or 4, Peter is doubling that.

But Jesus' answer is unequivocal, and squashes Peter's and our, self justification. 70 x 7, 490, without limit even as your Father has forgiven you without limit. There is nothing that any fellow human can do to you that can come anywhere near the severity and debt which you owe to God and He has forgiven you, therefore forgive and let it go.

Jesus tells a parable to explain

What is owed to the Debtor

It is important to note in the parable that the amount the second servant owes to the first is not insignificant. We are talking about 3 months wages. Today at minimum wage that would be about \$5,000. Imagine if someone owed you more than \$5,000, would you be likely to just let that go?

Equally than the sins against us which Jesus is talking about here are not small ones. He is not saying, "Hey your husband forgets your birthday you should forgive him." Rather he is saying, "Your husband cheats on you, you should forgive him." Someone murders your child, you should forgive him. Someone blows up the towers killing hundreds of people, we should forgive them.

This on the surface sounds ridiculous. We usually follow Peter's thinking; surely I cannot forgive this sin.

And yet Jesus reminds us that even such sins, even such great debt as this might be, which is not insignificant on its own, nevertheless is insignificant compared to the debt we owe him.

The debt of the second servant is around \$20 million. There might some who can imagine making that much money, but to a poor farmer in Jesus day, no way. This is an amount beyond anything we could ever even pay the interest on. And if God has freely forgiven such a massive amount to us, what can anyone do to us that would ever even begin to compare.

The Father's Forgiveness

The Father takes the first step, The Father forgives us first. "In this we know love, not that we first loved him but that He first loved us."

We began the service with the Father's forgiveness. Freely without hesitation and without making us "pay a little" first. We reminded of it in our text. And I tell you know again, as one who speaks in the name of Christ, "Your sins which are great, are forgiven." Go therefore and forgive the sins of others which are little.

It is this forgiveness that will allow you to live together as a family. It is this forgiveness that you will allow us to grow together as a church.

AMEN

THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.