



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: Forgive

Date: February 25, 2024

Scripture Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Notes:

Forgiveness is a hallmark characteristic of the Christian. Since we rely on being forgiven through the redemptive work of Christ, we in turn are to forgive others ([Eph. 4:32](#)). But it's not always easy (if ever). We may struggle with taking a stand on a principle of fairness or what seems right. But in the end, forgiveness is not a conditional expectation, but is to be practiced regardless of the situation. Archibald Hart said, "forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you for hurting me." In today's Bible text we see Jesus' teachings on forgiveness, how often and under what conditions. We should judge how we forgive by the measure that we've been forgiven.

I. How Many Times Do I Forgive ([Matt. 18:21-22](#))

Peter asked Jesus how often should he have to forgive a brother who sins against him, seven times? This was more than double the three times required by the rabbis. Peter probably figured he was being generous with his offer of seven. But Jesus' point in His reply was that there is no limit when it comes to forgiving a brother, just as there is no limit in God's forgiveness of us through Christ.

- What do you think Peter's motive for asking Jesus this question?
 - What do you suppose Peter was thinking when he heard Jesus' response?
- Why is it so hard to forgive at times?
- How would you define "forgiveness"?

II. Why Should I Forgive ([Matt. 18:23-35](#))

"In Jewish parables, a king symbolizes God and to settle accounts symbolizes divine judgment. The ten thousand talents were equivalent to a billion days' worth of peasant wages. This was more money than was circulating in all of Palestine. The talent was the largest unit of currency (equivalent to approximately six thousand days' worth of wages), and ten thousand is the highest single number that can be expressed in Greek. Thus, we see that in this parable the sum represents the sinner's hopeless debt to God. Selling the debtor, his family, and possessions would hardly begin to recoup this debt. Forgiving such a loan is an astounding act of grace. A hundred denarii (about a hundred day's wages) were negligible compared to the first servant's debt to the king. The contrast shows that the sins



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of others against us are trivial in comparison to the enormity of our own sins against God. The fellow servant begged the servant to be patient just as the servant had begged before the king, but the fellow servant was more honest in his pleas and promises since his debt was actually manageable.” (Blum)

- Based on this parable, one reason we are to forgive is because we’ve been forgiven much. What can someone do to us that can compare to what we’ve needed forgiving for from God ([vss. 23-27](#))?
 - Describe what it means to you to receive God’s forgiveness.
 - What did Christ do so you could be forgiven?
 - What could you have done to receive forgiveness apart from Christ?
 - What is the relationship between forgiveness and *humility*?

- The servant whose gigantic debt was forgiven by the King refused to forgive a fellow servant his debt, which was minuscule in comparison. Instead, he treated him harshly and threw him in prison until he could repay ([vss. 28-30](#)).
 - Describe a practical situation that you might see today that would parallel the actions described in [vss. 28-30](#).
 - What would motivate someone to treat another this way?
 - How might we forget the forgiveness we’ve experienced through Christ?
 - What is the relationship between forgiveness and *compassion*?

- Forgiveness is needed to maintain unity in the body of Christ. Others see when we don’t forgive a brother or sister and are affected by it ([vs. 31](#)).
 - How can not forgiving one another affect unity in the church?
 - Why is it important to maintain unity within the church?
 - What is the relationship between forgiveness and *love*?

- Unforgiveness affects our relationship with God. Not forgiving others is a sin, and sin impedes our relationship with our Heavenly Father ([vss. 32-35](#))
 - Look up [James 2:13](#). What does it say will happen to those who show no mercy?
 - What is the relationship between forgiveness and *mercy*?

III. How Can I Forgive?

We cannot forgive as God’s wants us to on our own. “And looking at them Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” [Matt. 19:26](#)