

LESSON 22

PAY IT FORWARD

Hear & Obey | [Matthew 18:21-35](#)

OPENING QUESTIONS: OUR TEXT IN CONTEXT

1. What was the situation in the life of Jesus and his disciples when he spoke this parable? How does the parable address that situation?
2. Matthew 18 is the only chapter in all four Gospels that mentions the Church. Browse through the chapter and summarize Jesus' teaching on the Church there.
3. What is the basic story line of the parable? What are your first impressions as you read it? Anything odd, surprising, shocking, contrary to normal expectations? And what do you make of these?

THINKING QUESTIONS: INTERPRETING THE TEXT

1. Parables compare. This one compares a king to _____. And the *fellow servants* of the king to _____. Fill in the blanks and draw your conclusions.
2. Parables contrast. What is being contrasted in our parable? The contrast between the size of the two debts is obvious. But there are two other contrasts in the story:

Between _____ (:27) and _____ in (:28).

Between _____ (:27) and _____ in (:34).

What do all three sets of contrasts tell us about God and his kingdom?
3. The cancelled debt (10,000 talents) and the release from prison are surprising. They go far beyond the slave's request for time to pay. No king acts like that. But God does! What conclusions do you draw from this about the character of God and the cost of forgiveness.
4. Summarise the essential meaning of the parable.

MATTHEW: THE DISCIPLEMAKER MANUAL

Sermon Series
Bible Study

PASSAGE FOCUS

Matthew 18 is 'Lesson 4' in Jesus' curriculum of discipleship: "The Community of the Kingdom." The parable before us is about doing life together as a community of forgiven sinners who forgive each other as God has forgiven us.

STUDY GUIDE

LISTEN

Listen to this passage's sermon before you begin the study. If you missed it, you can watch the recording on the CPC Website or Youtube Channel.

REFLECT

Take some time to read through the passage and reflect on the questions.

SHARE

Answer the questions and share with your Life Group.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS: OBEYING THE WORD

1. The unforgiving servant was not *unable* to forgive, but *unwilling* to forgive. He simply did not want to. What then would you say to someone who says, "I cannot forgive."?
Hint: Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:13.

2. Like the sinful woman at Jesus' feet (Luke 7:47), God's extravagant forgiveness of us should move our hearts to *pay it forward*, to forgive and love others. But what if it doesn't? What can we do about it?

3. A spiritual exercise to be done in a group or in solitude:
 - a) Meditate on this: "To forgive is to set the prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you" (Lewis B. Smedes).

 - b) Call to mind any person or persons you have not fully and freely forgiven for whatever hurt they have inflicted on you.

 - c) Reflect on the extravagant forgiveness you have received. The heinous death of Jesus on the Cross is an indication of the cost of our forgiveness. It's free but it's not cheap.

 - d) In light of the above, wait on the Lord to soften your heart. Then articulate a prayer of forgiveness for each person who has wronged you. Will to forgive. Mean it from your heart, whether you feel it or not.

 - e) Think about this: "You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well" (Lewis B. Smedes).

Wait on God for his power to put this into practice. Then pray a prayer of blessing for each person who has offended you.

 - f) Now confess your own sins to God and receive his full forgiveness and freedom. Determine in your heart to stay free by practicing free-flowing forgiveness toward everyone for the rest of your life. We are set free to forgive.