

Being a kingdom person.

Matt.18:21-35

As we wait for Christ's return to establish his kingdom, we are to be kingdom people. I would borrow **Tony Evans' definition of a kingdom person**: *a person who is willing to adjust his decisions to God's decision, even if God's decision is not the one preferred*. As kingdom people, we are to operate on God's agenda and not ours. Last week we talked about kingdom people are known for their humility. Jesus calls his followers to display humility rather than pride in the way they serve one another. To be the greatest in the kingdom is the one who displays humility. **C.S Lewis Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but to think of yourself less.** (when you put other people ahead of you, you are not just thinking of yourself, but others.)

There is another element that must mark a kingdom person. We talk a lot about it in church, but I believe some of us quite don't understand the true meaning of it, or the importance of it. It is the element of forgiveness.

Jesus just got done teaching about forgiving your brother when he sins against you **Matt.18:15-19** Then later on Peter approached Jesus with this question. **(v.21-22) How many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?**

Jewish rabbis taught at this time that you shouldn't forgive a person more than three times. Peter's number exceeded the Jewish expectation for forgiveness. Peter doubled it plus one.

Up to seven times? Jesus said, *I tell you not seven times, but seventy seven times*. Jesus gave Peter a number to show him that **forgiveness has no limits**.

Then Jesus tells them a story to illustrate forgiveness and its implications.

(v.23) Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who holds his servants accountable.

This king is the judge

A servant owed him an outrageous amount and he could not pay. The king ordered that he and his family be sold until he could pay the amount he owed.

1 servant fell on his knees and begged for mercy. *Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything.*

The Master took pity on him and canceled the debt and let him go.

The first servant found a man who owed him 100 denarii, he grabbed him and began to choke him. Demanding that he pay what he owed

This servant also pleaded, *be patient with me and I will pay you back.*

The 1st servant refused. Instead he threw him in prison until he could pay the debt.

News of this reached the master (v.31) Other servants saw this and reported this to the King

The king called the servant again, time for accountability once again. (v.32-35)

The master called him wicked servant. His attitude was not of a kingdom person, but a secular's.

"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?"

The King said, I showed you grace, forgiving your huge amount, why didn't you do the same to your fellow man?

The king became angry with this servant and now, that servant who got grace and mercy. He now gets what he deserved in the first place. He got punished for his lack of forgiveness and grace. (v.34) He turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back what he owed.

(v.35) Here is the seriousness of forgiveness. **This is how your heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.**

A kingdom person is characterized by forgiveness. A kingdom person understands God's grace and forgives from the heart. When you refuse forgiveness, is because you still have not understood God's grace toward you. You are still acting as the wicked servant.

It angers God when his people who are to represent him display attitudes contrary to his character.

God said that if you don't forgive your brother from the heart, he won't forgive you either. (v.35)

Forgiveness affects your spiritual health, your very relationship with God is affected when you choose not to forgive.

Matthew 6:12 forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Matt.6:14-15 If you don't forgive, God will not forgive you.

Here in the context of prayer God is saying that your prayers won't be heard if you don't forgive your brother. **Mark 11:25**

Forgiveness and your relationship with God. *Forgiveness is connected to your worship and your prayers. God won't hear your prayers and accept your worship when you have an unforgiving heart.*

There may be many people whose prayers are not being answered just because they are refusing to forgive their brother or sister. God is dead serious about forgiveness among his people. When you refuse to forgive, don't bother worshiping God because you won't be able to connect with him as long you hold something against your brother. When we refuse to forgive is because we have not understood God's grace and mercy and how much he has forgiven us. Jesus said it plainly, forgiveness has not limit and if you don't forgive your brother from the heart, God won't forgive you either.

Going back to the definition of a kingdom person by Tony Evans. You are a kingdom person when you are willing to adjust your decisions to God's decisions, even if God's decision is not what you preferred. God's decision for his people is to forgive others. This may not be preferred or desired by you, but a kingdom person goes with God's decision. A kingdom person is known and marked by forgiveness.

