

Forgiveness Matters

Matt.18:21-35

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Followers of Jesus are to imitate his teachings; there are many people who called themselves Christians, but their lives, behavior don't reflect Jesus. I think people should stop calling themselves Christian if they are not going to love others the way Jesus asked us to love them. Another area in which many Christians misrepresent Jesus in our world, is when it comes to forgiveness. There are followers of Jesus who have a really difficult time forgiving a brother or sister. If you are one of those who really struggle forgiving their brother or sister, I hope you are ready to journey through God's word so we can see why forgiveness really matters.

Jesus just got done teaching about forgiving your brother when he sins against you **Matt.18:15-19** Then 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? Peter was seeking a limit; how often or how many times would be enough?**

Jewish rabbis taught 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.* (70 x7 =490) Jesus' answer to Peter shows 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 forgiven servant refused to forgive. He 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 didn't reflect God's. He failed to show compassion to his fellow man. *"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 punished him for not being merciful. He now gets what he deserved in the first place. He got punished for his unwillingness to forgive. (v.34) *He turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back what he owed.*

(v.35) **Forgiving others matters to God and it should matter to you. This is how your heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.**

Unforgiveness angers God and makes you a recipient of his anger rather than his blessing.

There are people who forfeit God's blessings all because they are not willing to forgive.

God's people are to be known for forgiveness, they should be identified by forgiveness. 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.

Kings David understood God's love and grace. Listen to his words in Psalm 103:8-13

God does not treat us as our sins deserve; he is compassionate and a forgiving God, but when his people refuse to act as he expects, he would act as a Just judge and give you what you deserve. **Jesus makes this point clear when he said, *this is how God will treat each of you when you refuse to forgive your brother from the heart.*** (v.35)

Forgiveness affects your relationship with God. If you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. Jesus taught this in the Sermon on the mountain. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. (forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us).* **Matthew 6:12**

In the model prayer, we are asking God to treat us the same way we treat others. Forgive us as we forgive. This is very serious matter. Forgive our debts, the same way we forgive our debtors.

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

Unforgiveness affects your prayers to God. Here in the context of prayer Jesus said that your prayers won't be heard if you don't forgive your brother.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." ESV

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. Forgiving others really matters to God and it should matter to us as well.

God's people are instructed in Scripture to forgive as God has forgiven us.

Col.3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Eph. 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you

Forgiveness matters. It has no limits because God doesn't have a limit for us. It matters because to refuse to forgive others is to ask God to treat you the same way you are treating others.

It matters because if I refuse to forgive others, God won't forgive me; he won't hear my prayers or accept my worship. All those things become lip service, empty when I harbor unforgiveness in my heart.

Forgiveness matters because when you refuse forgiveness, it shows your lack of knowledge and understanding of God's grace. When we refuse to extend grace, mercy or compassion to others is because we have not yet understood what God's grace is all about.

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 will for his people is to forgive others. As followers of Jesus, why would you block the channel between you and God by refusing to forgive others? Open the channel that forgiveness provides.

