

God's Golden Rule

"We are to treat others the way God treats us."

Outline Notes

Matthew 18:21-35 (niv)

This Parable of Jesus is commonly called "*The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.*"

... Introduction

- 1. Peter's raises a question of Jesus about forgiving a brother.**
(see 18:21)

Peter probably thought he was being very gracious as many Jewish rabbis taught that forgiving someone three (3) times was sufficient.

- 2. Note Jesus' initial response to Peter's question.**
(see 18:22)

Jesus' answer is not to be taken literally. Rather, Jesus confronts Peter with the truth that the spirit of forgiveness really knows no boundaries. We are to live in a permanent attitude of forgiveness.

To reinforce His point, Jesus proceeds to tell the parable...

... Understanding the Parable

- 3. A king shows mercy to his servant by cancelling his huge debt.**
(see 18:23-27)

How much was 10,000 talents? If the Attic talent is intended, about 6,000 denarii was approximately the value of just one Attic talent. And one (1) denarius was a day's normal wage - the poor fellow owed something like 60 million denarii.

Actually, one Attic talent is equivalent to approximately \$500 Aud.
The total amount would be around \$5,000,000 Aud (5 million dollars).

The request of the servant was for the king to be patient with him to repay the debt. Yet the king was willing to forgive the debt entirely! Amazingly!

4. The servant in turn then refuses to cancel a fellow servant's petty debt.

(see **18:28-30**)

How much was a hundred (100) denarii? One (1) denarii is equivalent to -5 cents. We're talking about roughly \$5. The unmerciful servant refuses to remember the same plea made earlier by himself

5. The king imposes that the huge debt owing now be repaid in full.

(see **18:31-34**)

Originally, the servant was to be sold along with his family, and his possessions. But now he is to handed over to the "torturers." It all went pear shape!

... Lessons from the Parable.

- We are all God's debtors.

Matthew 18:23; Romans 3:23

- None of us are able to pay what is owed.

Matthew 18:25

- But by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid.

Matthew 18:27; 20:28

- Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven.

Matthew 18:35; 6:14-15

- It should be easier to forgive others, in view of what we owe God is infinitely more than what others owe us.

Matthew 18:32-33

- The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment!

Matthew 18:34-35; Romans 1:31

Perhaps the most important point we learn from this parable is that the kingdom of heaven is to consist of people who are both forgiven and forgiving, who have both received mercy and are merciful. See **James 2:13**

... Developing a Forgiving Attitude

1. Focus on God's Forgiveness of us.

This is where the unmerciful servant went wrong.

Note how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit.

Ephesians 4:32

Colossians 3:13

2. Allow the Lord to help us to Forgive and Forget.

Some protest and say *"It is impossible to forget!"* But let's first define *"forget."*

Definitions of "Forget"

- a. To be unable to remember something.
- b. To treat with thoughtless inattention.
- c. To leave behind unintentionally.
- d. To fail to mention.

When thinking of forgiving and forgetting, it is the last three definitions that best help in forgetting. Technically, we will be able to recall the offense to our minds. For practical purposes, we *"so"* disregard the offense that it is *"out of mind."*

Is this possible forget the offence committed against us? By the grace of God, yes!

- a. The example of Joseph - **Genesis 41:51**
- b. The attitude of Paul - **Philippians 3:13**

Both these men had plenty of things done to them that could have made them resentful, but God helped them to *"forget"* those things. By remembering the offense but preventing it from being constantly in our mind tearing us up.

True forgiveness it when we forgive and the sting of pain the offence caused is not felt when we reflect on it. When this happens we are able to forget the offense by removing it from constantly tormenting us in our mind.

... Conclusion

When we truly contemplate the love, mercy, and forgiveness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus ... It is indeed then possible for us to forgive.

From *“The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant”* we learn that it is essential that we forgive others. True authentic Christ followers are to be characterized by the attitudes of mercy and forgiveness they show towards others.

Matthew 6:14-15

Have we allowed the mercy of God to melt our hearts in forgiving others?
Have we accepted the mercy of God into our lives by obeying Jesus Christ?

As we allow *“The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant”* to remind us that both are possible!