



PROVERBS 17:9

PART 4

True Forgiveness

READ MATTHEW 18:21-35

INTRODUCTION

In this parable that Jesus teaches, we see a servant that is forgiven a great debt by his master and immediately, he turns and throws a fellow servant into prison over a small debt owed. There is a tendency to view others' transgressions against us in a very negative way when Jesus sees all that we have done and forgives us of every sin. It is common to ask God to forgive our sin and yet, not be willing to forgive others because they hurt us personally. This tends to turn into a situation where we see the speck in our brother's eye and cannot see the log in our own. (Matthew 7:5) We are called to help the brother remove the speck but first we are to remove the log in our own eye.

When we look at the forgiveness of Christ, it is refreshing to know that He forgives us for any transgression. We must show the same kind of forgiveness to others. How we forgive others is a big indicator of our spiritual maturity. When we see others as fellow sinners in need of a Savior, we are able to more easily forgive them of the hurt that they caused us. This brings up a key point of forgiveness: we must understand appropriately WHO the person has sinned against. David said that he sinned against God alone. (Psalm 51:4) The importance of this cannot be misunderstood. We sin against God and no one else. There are outward consequences to our sin and those affect others around us and we end up damaging our relationships through our sin but we sin against God and God alone.

We see in the parable that Jesus teaches a servant who decides to not forgive and yet, he is willing to accept the forgiveness offered to him. There are times that we can have the same temptation. Christ has forgiven us of our transgressions and we accept that gladly. We live in that forgiveness because it is what makes us happy and comfortable. Then, someone hurts us or breaks trust and we do not offer forgiveness to them because our personal feelings have been affected. This is not forgiving as Christ forgives. It is selfish and prideful and we must repent and change our heart towards our brothers and sisters, as well as our enemies. We do not get to accept God's forgiveness and not offer it to others. (Ephesians 4:32)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to forgive someone for something big? Was that easy for you? Why or why not?
2. How does the parable in Matthew 18 show us how God forgives? How does that help us when we are supposed to love others as Christ loves us?
3. In forgiveness, why is it important to remove the log from your eye before pointing out the speck in your brother's? What is the best way to forgive someone, even when they do not think they have done anything wrong?
4. Why does David say that he only sinned against God? What was the complete context of that interaction? How do you think it relates to how we forgive today?
5. Read Ephesians 4:32. What is the consequence of not forgiving others? Why is forgiveness so important to our walk with Christ? Is there someone that you need to forgive? What is holding you back from doing it?

WRAP UP

Forgiveness can be difficult. It is an emotional activity that requires humility and maturity to perform. The only way that we can truly forgive others for their wrongdoings is by understanding who we are in light of who God is. When we understand that better, it becomes easier to see past the sin and see the sinner who needs love from Christ and from us.