

REVIEW: THE STORYTELLER SERMON SERIES, CHRISTIAN LIVING PARABLES

- Two Weeks Ago: We are called to be Salt and Light. We live right, and it produces persecution, but we don't change who we are, and we don't hide.
- Last Week: The Good Samaritan. We meet needs, even for those we don't know or like or who don't like us.
- This Week: Christian living leads to relationship amongst believers.
- This leads to the obvious question, "What do I do with people who are not easy to love?"

Matthew 22:37-40 ³⁷Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

THE PARABLE

Matthew 18:21-35 ²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

³⁰"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

³⁴In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

1. HOW MANY TIMES DO I NEED TO FORGIVE?

- Disappointment comes from unmet expectations. What are your expectations?
 - A sinful nature, a broken filter, a spiritual enemy...
- If we are going to have relationships between broken people, then forgiveness is essential.

EVERYBODY'S QUESTION: HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO FORGIVE?

- Peter is being gracious (so he thinks).
- Jesus says, "Times without number!"

JESUS IS LAYING OUT A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LIVING WITH THE STRUGGLE OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS.

- We forgive when we don't think it is possible.
- We had a debt that could not be paid back.
- Because our debt was paid, we now can forgive the debt of others.

2. WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

- Beyond the fact that no relationship is possible without it...
- Because God forgave us. It's amazing that God forgives us that way, and the devil constantly tries to tell us we have sinned too many times, and that we can't go back to God.
- Personal importance: God is asking us to do for others what He does for us.
- He expects us to do what He has done for us—there is an accountability.
- Warnings: a lack of forgiveness causes a bitter root that poisons us and those around us.
- An ongoing lack of forgiveness causes a new chain of events that furthers my pain and the pain of those we love.

Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

3. WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE?

- It's a decision, not a feeling.
- It's a decision that we have to make many times depending on how deep the wound.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

- Denial
- Forgetting
- Allowing hurt to continue
- Letting go of consequences

HOW TO FORGIVE:

- Realize the power of the cross. (See 1 Peter 3:18)
- Recall the pain and the people who hurt you. (See Ephesians 5:8)
- Resolve to forgive. (See Colossians 3:12-14)

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL STEPS?

1. Follow the teaching of God's word.
 2. Meet with trusted friend and possibly a counselor.
 3. Ask God to help you.
 4. Take captive your thoughts. (See 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
-
-
-

4. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED PEOPLE AND ARE HAUNTED BY THEIR PAST...

- Claim the truth that if you have confessed your sin to God, you are forgiven. (See 1 John 1:9)
- Go and make it right as far as it depends on you. Make it easier for others to forgive you.
- Don't do those you have hurt another wrong by the way you ask for forgiveness.
- Let them forgive you on their time.

Matthew 5:23-24 ²³Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Remember that your past sin is used by the enemy in the life of those you love, so say you're sorry as often as needed.

Next Week: New Sermon Series: One