



Topic: Forgiveness. Category: Kingdom> Bible Scriptures: Matthew 18:21-35 and Ephesians 4:31-32.

Forgiveness

Let me ask you a question. If someone causes offence to me, how many times do I forgive that person?

This is the same question Peter asked of Jesus. To answer Peter's question of how many times he should forgive someone who causes an offence to him, Jesus tells a story of what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Let us read the entire story so we can receive the full picture and then we will journey through one verse at a time.

Matthew 18:21-35

Let us look at the verses.

Verse 23

The kingdom of heaven is like the king. The king who is compassionate, hates injustice, hates offences, wants to settle accounts, wipe off debts and restore a relationship of no offence or obligation. The king who wants raise his servants up to be like him and to be in equal relationship with him.

Verses 24-25

The king is someone of honour. He not only desires to settle accounts to open the way for an equal relationship based on free choice, but he also actions that desire. Using his power to set people free.

The servant caused great offence to the king, owing to the king more than he could ever earn or pay back. The cost of such offence is that he and his family will be sold.

The servant becomes a slave to his debt, a slave to the offences he has caused and as a result so does his family. The rest of the servant's life and that of his family are now obligated to pay for the offence he has caused, for the debt, for all the wrongs he has done.

That is the way of the world, not the kingdom of heaven which Jesus is about to reveal. Slavery and being in debt to a person from the tribe of Jewish bloodline at the time of Peter's question was great shame. Yet the selfishness of humanity demands the debt must be paid.

Verses 26-27

Yet the king who is rich in mercy and compassion, forgives the servant and releases the servant from all debt and offences done against him.

God Himself has throughout the history of humanity continually been offended against by the rebellion of evil and humanity, especially the offences that humanity has done to each other.



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Jesus reveals that God Himself and His kingdom is like the king in this story, rich in mercy and full of compassion. God has forgiven all of humanity for all the offences and evils done against Him and against each other.

God Himself paid the debt. He became the flesh and blood sacrifice and took upon Himself all the offences, all the evil of humanity that has been done to God and to each other. God paid the cost for us not only to release us from the slavery of these offences, but to totally defeat their destructive forces for all eternity.

God Himself was the one who was offended, yet He was the one who initiated forgiveness and became the sacrifice and paid the cost. In Jesus' sacrifice, it cost God everything of Himself.

Let us read on.

Verse 28

Forgiveness was given to the servant, yet the servant was not changed by the experience. Why?

The servant had forgotten that he himself had greatly offended, owed a great debt — an even greater debt than that which was owed to him — and that he had been forgiven. The servant held onto all the offences done unto him. As a consequence the servant was not changed by his experience of being forgiven and having his debt cancelled. Not only did the servant hold onto to all the offences done to him, but he also sought out the offender in anger, violently demanding justice.

The justice of the flesh or selfish desires of humanity demands that someone has got to pay!

Like the servant, we could never pay back the debt of all the offences we have ever said thought or done. When we forget we have been forgiven of all offences, we tend to hang onto the offence done to us and start to identify ourselves with that offence. We become trapped in that offence, in captivity or a slave to the offence. A slave to unforgiveness.

It is important to remember that we have been forgiven and in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the debt is paid in full. Jesus has paid the cost of all offences in time past, offences in time present and offences in time future.

Not only has Jesus paid the cost of all my offences done to others but all the cost of any offences done to me. How we release others from offences done against us is a direct reflection of the revelation that we have been forgiven, and that Jesus has paid the cost.



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To be fully healed from the hurt, pain, the rejection, the inequality, the abuse, whatever offence that has been done, the person who has been offended against must initiate forgiveness. That is surrender the hurts and the pain to God.

Any form of abuse or offences done against one another are not of the Kingdom of God. Abuse is wrong and God takes abusive behaviour very seriously.

His kingdom is a kingdom of equality and respect, love, forgiveness and healing.

In surrendering the hurt and the pain of it all to God, the one who has been offended effectively releases those who have done the offence from the obligation to pay. Jesus became the sacrifice to pay the cost, which is more than enough payment.

In the place of the offender having to pay, we can receive God's payment on behalf of self who wants justice. This is the enormity and value of God's own sacrifice and payment of all the offences of humanity, in time past, time present and time future.

Verse 32

If we remember we are forgiven, we then can in His forgiveness in us, surrender the hurt and pain and forgive others.

Verse 33-34

The torturers here in this verse means to be pressed for the truth. God is not condemning anyone who is holding onto unforgiveness. What Jesus is saying is because I love you, I have paid the cost for this. Give any unforgiveness to me before it destroys you.

Unforgiveness becomes a destructive force within the one who has been offended against. When we live with unforgiveness, we actually identify ourself with that offence and that abusive situation becomes a stronghold. It has destructive power that can get into our thoughts, heart and every aspect of our lives.

But praise God we can remember Jesus has paid the cost and in the revelation of being forgiven, we can give the hurt and pain to Jesus.

To forgive is to break relationship with that moment of pain.

Then that moment of pain is no longer a stronghold and we can be truly free.

Verse 35

God loves us so much, He will do anything to bring us into receiving His forgiveness and being transformed by that reality. Who Jesus sets free is free indeed.



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Therefore God in His great love presses us with the truth, so we can be truly free. The truth is, we are forgiven. Forgiveness is a free gift from God. For Jesus has paid the cost of all offences on the cross.

It is a daily journey to live in the reality of letting go of all offences ever said thought or done. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are forgiven and as a result we can surrender to God everything that holds in bondage.

Ephesians 4:31-32

The Kingdom of Heaven on earth is founded on forgiveness and rooted in love. Jesus reveals that God Himself and His kingdom is like the king in this story, rich in mercy, full of compassion, and has forgiven all of humanity for all the offences said, thought or done against each other and as a result against God.

God Himself was the one who was offended, yet He was the one who initiated forgiveness and became the sacrifice and paid the cost. All so that we could believe we are forgiven and receive the forgiveness that is eternally there for us.

I would like to share with you a poem of what forgiveness means to me.

It is titled 'To Be Forgiven'.

To be forgiven... is like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. To be forgiven... is a way to make things right. To be forgiven... is the key to healing. To be forgiven... is to be able to forgive myself. To be forgiven... is the ultimate act of love. To be forgiven... is to be a child of God. To be forgiven... is the freedom to embrace. To be forgiven... is to receive, God's free gift, of grace!

If you are holding onto any offences caused against you or to others, now is the time of letting go. Now is your time of healing and release. To live in the reality of Jesus' victory.

Surrender all the unforgiveness to Jesus. He has paid the cost and brings healing in His truth, love and power. No longer are we identified as a victim, a slave, or a debtor.

Having received Jesus' sacrifice and cost He has paid we are identified with Jesus, a victor, a king, forgiven and a forgiver. Hallelujah!