

FORGIVENESS

jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org

November 21, 2021

Matthew 18:21-34

1. Here Jesus was dealing with issues related to how the church, particularly the local family of God, is to function.
2. Having become a child of God through repentance and faith we should identify with a local church where we can be nurtured and involved in the nurture of others.
3. As members of God's family we are to:
 - a. Manifest humility.
 - b. Remember that Jesus personally identifies with every child of God and cares about how they are treated.
 - c. Be careful not to cause others to stumble.
 - d. See to it that we do not despise or devalue even one of our brothers or sisters in Christ.
 - e. Actively seek to restore those who go astray.
 - f. Hold accountable those who continue in sin.
4. The last issue Jesus dealt with was forgiveness.
5. Like Jesus (Luke 23:34) and Stephen (Acts 7:60) we are to forgive and pray for all who sin against us, but in this passage Jesus dealt with forgiveness within the family of God.
6. John MacArthur wrote, "Nothing so much demonstrates God's love as His forgiveness. A person who does not forgive is therefore a person lacking in godly character and without Christlike love, no matter how orthodox his theology or how outwardly impeccable his morals appear to be."
7. An unforgiving Christian is a living contradiction because we are constantly in need of God's patience and forgiveness.
 - a. Since you became a Christian how many times have you needed to ask God for forgiveness?
 - b. How many times has He extended forgiveness to you?
 - c. In your lifetime how many times will He need to forgive you?
 - d. I am glad that God has not set some number of sins beyond which we could no longer expect to be forgiven.
8. So let's look at this passage under three headings.

I. Peter's question.

- A. In response to Jesus' teaching on the issue of church discipline and our need to forgive those who repent and turn from their sin Peter asked a reasonable question.
- B. The question was, how many times are we required to forgive a brother (or sister) in Christ who sins against us or the church in some way?
- C. The popular rabbinical teaching of the day was three times, but no more.
- D. Peter was being generous when he suggested seven times.

II. Jesus' response.

- A. In using the phrase, "seventy times seven," Jesus was saying that forgiveness is to be extended as often as it is called for.
- B. Think about how functional families function.
 1. When it comes to raising children how many times is forgiveness called for?

2. On what basis is forgiveness extended?
- C. Here the standard is not some arbitrary human standard, rather it is divine in its design.

1. Hebrews 10:11-17

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD**, 13 waiting from that time onward **UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET**. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 16 **"THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,"** He then says, 17 **"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."**

2. Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

3. Colossians 3:12-13

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

4. 1 Corinthians 13:5

Love...does not take into account a wrong suffered (does not keep a record of wrongs).

III. The reasoning.

A. To illustrate His point Jesus told a parable about a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

B. One of his slaves, probably of high rank and responsibility, was found to owe his master a debt that was beyond his ability to ever repay.

1. Perhaps he was charged with gathering taxes and had completely mismanaged his responsibility for a long time.

2. Ancient records show that the total taxes collected in the Roman provinces of Idumea, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee for one year totaled about 900 talents.

3. This man owed a debt that was about eleven times that amount.

4. Suppose you owed someone an amount equal to the total, yearly taxes collected in Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, and Spartanburg counties over the past eleven years, and he demanded immediate payment?

C. The slave, about to be sold along with his family, begged for both patience and time.

NOTE: It was a debt he could never pay, just like no human being could ever hope to atone for the sin-debt they owe God.

D. The king, motivated by compassion, released the man and forgave the totality of his debt.

E. The slave then went out and found a lesser official that owed him a relatively small amount of money and physically abused the man and demanded full payment.

F. When payment could not be made he ignored the man's plea for patience and had him thrown into prison.

G. Other slaves, who were probably aware of the king's actions, were deeply grieved by the behavior of the man who had been forgiven so much, but refused to extend forgiveness to a fellow slave.

H. When they told the king what happened he summoned the man he had forgiven and called him a wicked slave.

I. The king declared, "Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way I had mercy on you?"

J. The king then delivered the unforgiving slave to the torturers, not executioners, until he repaid what he owed. (What he owed was not the original debt, that had been forgiven, what he owed was a debt to forgive just as he had been forgiven.) Matthew 6:14-15

"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

NOTE: The king was disciplining his slave for his refusal to forgive, and God will discipline (sometimes severely) His children who do not extend forgiveness to others.

K. The point Jesus was trying to make to His disciples was that God has freely and completely forgiven us a sin debt that could never be repaid, and having been the recipients of God's mercy and grace we are to freely and completely forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ.

L. Additionally we are relate to all men based on the mercy and grace God has extended to us. Titus 3:1-8

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

APPLICATION

1. Jesus' teaching on forgiveness needs to be embraced and obeyed related to the church and the world.

2. We need to understand that a refusal to embrace and obey the teaching of the Lord related to forgiveness:

- a. Grieves the Holy Spirit.
- b. Breaks our fellowship with God.
- c. Makes unity impossible.
- d. Sets a bad example before the world.

3. We are not responsible for how others respond, but we are to keep in mind the words of Paul in Romans 12:18 which read, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

4. Our ability to forgive does not come from the flesh, rather it is a manifestation of God's love being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

5. God's love and grace can be manifested only in the hearts and lives of those who have experienced God's forgiveness in response to repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.