

What are the types of situations or events that make it most difficult for you to forgive someone?

What types of rationalizations can we use to justify our own lack of forgiveness?

Read Mt 6:14-15

This is a difficult passage to embrace. How might an unbiblical understanding of v.14 lead to thinking that there is something we can “do” to earn our salvation.

Why is v.15 so abrasive to us?

To fully understand Jesus’ teaching on this subject, it is helpful to understand a biblical perspective on the level of forgiveness we, as sinners, have received from the Father. Jesus uses a parable in Mt 18:21-35 to help His disciples further understand forgiveness in response to Peter’s question “How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?”

Read Mt 18:21-35

v.21 What unbiblical motivation might have been at the heart of Peter’s question with respect to forgiveness?

What motivations might be driving us when we find ourselves questioning Jesus’ expectation for us to forgive others?

v.23 What might Jesus be wanting His listeners to understand by opening this parable with “a certain king wished to settle accounts with his slaves”?

v.24 If a talent is approximately 75 lbs, 10,000 talents would equate to over 15 Billion Dollars by today’s gold standards. It would be impossible for any slave to have amassed this kind of debt. That being said, why might Jesus have used hyperbole (exaggeration) to communicate the level of debt this slave owed?

v.25 literally says “not having, of himself, to repay”. Would there have been any possibility for the slave to actually repay this debt, had he actually accrued it?

v.26 What was it that the slave requested of the king?

v.27 What was it that the king granted?

Why is that difference significant?

v.27 What prompted the king to take this action?

Read Ex 34:6-7a

6) "Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7) who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished..."

What similarities to the king who forgave the debt, do we see in our Father (King of Glory)?

v.28 When this slave went out and found a fellow slave that owed him 100 denarii, how was his efforts to "settle accounts" different than the king's?

What is the significance of the fellow servant using essentially the same phrase that the original slave used with the king when asking for mercy? (see v. 26 & 29)

Why is it important to note that the debt owed to the slave (likely over \$18,000 in today's economy) is not inconsequential?

Why is it equally important to recognize the immense difference in the debts that were owed?

v.30 How did the slave respond to the fellow slave's request for mercy?

What does this indicate about the character and mindset of this slave?

v.32 How does the king label the slave that would not forgive the debt of his fellow slave?

v.34 What is the result of the king's decision for the wicked slave?

For how long is this decision to be carried out? (what does that really mean given the slave's ability to repay this debt?)

v. 35 What is significant about the final words of this passage with respect to forgiveness "from your heart".

Application

At what level is Jesus' forgiveness to us? (partial; mostly; incremental; or COMPLETE)

In what ways do we sometimes mete out partial forgiveness?

Discuss the following statement: "A persistent unwillingness to forgive demonstrates disbelief in the essential truths of the gospel."

Reflection

As we have studied this passage, who has the Lord brought to mind that you have not fully forgiven?

How does their wrong/debt to you compare to your wrong/debt to Jesus who gave his life to redeem you while you were still his enemy?

Will you commit to praying about this and asking the Lord to give you the strength and opportunity to make this right?