

July 6th & 7th, 2024

Resolving Conflict in a Fallen World ***Greatness Through Forgiveness***

Matthew 18:21-35

Our responsibility to resolve conflict in a fallen world requires that we overcome pride, treat others with love, and seek restoration. Even when we exercise greatness through humility, love, and restoration, hurting people continue offending and hurting, and we rationalize the difficulty of forgiving those who offend us. It is vital to maintain a lifestyle of forgiveness in which we exercise the mercy and grace that God has given every follower of Jesus.

Matthew 18:21 “Then Peter came up and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’”

When do I stop forgiving?

❖ Peter, aware of the seriousness of offense and assuming his own goodness, asks Jesus when the responsibility to forgive is complete. Jesus responds by teaching the disciples the final step of resolving conflict: forgiveness.

➤ Forgiveness is unnatural for man.

Exodus 34:6-7 “The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.’”

Proverbs 17:15 “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.”

➤ God’s kingdom is upside down.

Mark 10:43-45 “But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

➤ God’s teaching on forgiveness is contrary to our ideas.

Matthew 5:38-39 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Matthew 5:43-45 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

↳ Peter was looking to defend his rights and end the responsibility of forgiveness.

Unforgiveness is not an option!

Matthew 18:22 "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times'"

❖ The refusal to forgive others ends the process of reconciliation.

➤ In the kingdom of heaven, unforgiveness is not an option.

Matthew 6:12 "and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

➤ Unforgiveness is a sin.

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Mark 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Matthew 5:23-24 "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Forgiveness Granted

Matthew 18:23-27 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt."

❖ God is just and will judge everyone, but in His compassion, He is moved to have mercy on us.

➤ Our debt to God is insurmountable.

Isaiah 64:6 "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

➤ Our God is the champion of Compassion!

Romans 5:8 "but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

➤ Our sin and the goodness of God should lead us to a humble understanding of forgiveness.

Psalms 130:3-4 "If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared."

↳ In God's love, mercy is extended, forgiveness is granted, and grace is given!

Forgiveness Expected

Matthew 18:28-31 "But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place."

❖ The true source of forgiveness from us to others is the experience of God's forgiveness toward us.

Colossians 3:12-13 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

1 John 4:8 “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;”

➤ Forgiveness is rooted in our experience of love, and true love grants forgiveness to others.

❖ “Forgiveness is required of a believer because forgiveness is the most Godlike act a Christian can do....No act is more divine than forgiveness. Never are we more like God than when we forgive.” – John MacArthur ⁱ

Forgiveness Required

Matthew 18:31-35 “When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

❖ Jesus’ teaching not only addresses the requirement for reconciliation and forgiveness for greatness in the kingdom of heaven, but He states that His Father will withhold forgiveness toward those who are unforgiving toward others.

Matthew 6:14-15 “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

➤ If forgiveness from God is not based on works but freely a gift from God, why would God withhold forgiveness from us if we are unforgiving toward others?

Ephesians 2:8-10 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

➤ Our love and forgiveness toward others demonstrate to what extent we have experienced God’s grace.

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

➤ The result of His grace in us will lead us to unconditional love.

📖 Luke 7:36-48

Romans 12:17-21, “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ ²⁰To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Endnotes:

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ⁱ “Reasons to Forgive, Part 1.” Grace to You, 18 Aug. 2016, www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-393/reasons-to-forgive-part-1.