

par • a • ble(s)

an earthly story

with a spiritual truth



PARABLES – THE STORIES JESUS TOLD

Jesus sometimes taught in parables because these vivid stories engage us in thought, emotion, and sensation. They impact us. They force us to go away and ponder, struggling with the meaning perhaps, feeling struck by the truthful and accurate perspective on life they offer. A parable compares something familiar to something unfamiliar. It helps us understand spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships. Parables compel us to discover truth, while at the same time concealing the truth from those too lazy or too stubborn to see it. To those who are honestly searching, the truth becomes clear. This series invites transformation as you discover fresh truth about Jesus, yourself, and others.

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant Forgiveness – The Only Way to Live

Matthew 18:23-35

Jesus Told Stories

1. **Tell Stories** > Jesus had an active imagination. His stories were not designed to give answers, as much as to ask questions. It takes a lot of skill—and a lot of courage – to raise questions – especially the kind that poke holes in religious paradigms.
2. **Summary** > Jesus makes the point directly and with the negative example of a parable that the exercise of forgiveness in the disciple community is to be extravagant and without limits.
3. **Analysis** > The point about the exercise of forgiving in the disciple community is underscored by Peter's question and Jesus' parable about the unforgiving servant. When Peter's "as many as seven times" would seek to apply limits to forgiveness, Jesus' "seventy-seven times" implies that there is no limit to the community's exercise of forgiveness on behalf of rescuing or preserving its erring members. The members of this community are not to be calculators, but ones open to the power available to faithful disciples. The point is sealed by the negative example of Matthew's unique parable of the unforgiving servant. A servant whose master forgives his enormous debt refuses to forgive the comparatively paltry debt of his fellow servant, thus failing to imitate the generous "mercy" of the master. The parable concludes with a warning regarding the reciprocal exercise of forgiveness that intentionally recalls the language of the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (6:12).

Forgiveness: The Only Way to Live!

– Matthew 18:23-35.

1. **Forgiveness** > It is a way of life! It is NOT something you do! It is something you are. If you live a life a forgiving life, you never ask about the limits—for it is as limitless as life itself.
2. **Humility & Gratefulness** > Forgiveness is intended to bear fruit. Sadly, I have known people who were forgiven great sins but were never broken in the forgiveness. They remained proud, haughty, self-righteous, arrogant. God continually warns us against such a spirit. When a man is genuinely forgiven, and receives that forgiveness, the spirit of self-righteousness always dies. The problem lies in the fact many are genuinely forgiven, but never receive their forgiveness.
3. **Arrogance & Self-righteousness** > Forgiveness is a serious matter. If you are not sensitive to what God has done for you and what you are expected to do for anyone who has sinned against you, you cannot be used by God in His kingdom.

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4. **“I have been wronged!”** > What do you do with people who have wronged you? What do you do with people who have killed our loved ones? What do you do with a father who deserted you? What do you do with an uncle or mother who sexually abused you when you were young? What do you do with someone who has stolen your money?
5. **Law of Retaliation** > The basis of the Jewish law was “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” The world’s system says, “Go after him! Get your hands around his neck and choke it out of him.”
6. **Understand the Debt** > Only as we understand the debt that has been paid for us can we grasp how we must treat others who owe us for less than we owe God. Romans 6:23 – “We owed a debt we could not pay, Jesus paid a debt He did not owe.” The kingdom of God is wrapped up in one sentence from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:12).

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7. **NOT Worth It!** > You cannot afford to wander through this world hating anybody, harboring bitterness, resentment or Unforgiveness. To do so would be to open yourself to disease and death. Will Rogers: “I never met a man I didn’t like.”
8. **You Get What your Give** > If you give forgiveness, you get forgiveness. If you give judgment, you get it back.
9. **Self-worth** > Much of your ability to forgive depends on what you view about your self (Colossians 1:21-22, 2:10).
10. **Pray** > “Father, so fill me with Your Spirit that I may forgive as Jesus forgave, love as Jesus loved, live as Jesus lived. Amen.”

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Who has modeled forgiveness for you?
2. Who do you need to forgive?



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A Man knows that a life-style of forgiveness is a must for the journey

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - Forgiveness – The Only Way to Live Matthew 18:23-35

September 21, 2017
Highland Colony Men's Roundtable
www.MensTable.com

Bible Verses: Matthew 18:23-35; Romans 6:23; Matthew 7:12; Colossians 1:21-22; 2:10

Resources: *Parables—The Mysteries of God's Kingdom Revealed Through the Stories Jesus Told* - John MacArthur
10 Parables of Jesus: Poking Holes in Religious Balloons - Jamie Buckingham

Music: Amazing Grace My Chains Are Gone

Videos: A Thousand Words – Nursing Home Scene

Jesus Told Stories

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Bible Verses – New Living Translation

Matthew 18:23-35 – 23 “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. **24** In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. **25** He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

Romans 6:23 – 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 7:12 – 12 “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

Colossians 1:21-22; 2:10 – 21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.

22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Colossians 2:10 – 10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

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