

# LUKE 17:1-10

## LESSON: FORGIVENESS, FAITH, AND SERVICE — February 23, 2020

### INTRODUCTION

**16:24-31** The rich man cried for Father Abraham to have mercy on him, begging for Lazarus to come touch his tongue with water with the tip of his finger just to cool the tormenting flames that he's in. But Abraham brings up his past—remembers his former life? He received everything good while Lazarus received evil, but now the tables have turned and Lazarus is comforted, and the rich man is tormented. And another thing there is a gulf that separates the two of them; neither can get to the other; neither can cross over. The rich man is fixed in hell; Lazarus is fixed in Paradise. The rich man wants Lazarus to go to his family's house for he has five brothers that needs to be warned about the place of torment he is in. Well, if that didn't work, send someone from the dead to them. Abraham tells him that they have Moses and the prophets to tell them. He's still pleading that by sending someone from the dead to them, they would repent. The idea is to hear the living, because if they didn't receive the message from Moses and the prophets they will neither hear the dead speak to them.

### LESSON: I. REQUIREMENTS OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS LUKE 17:1-5

**17:1** Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! The word "*offend*" means to be a stumbling block; to bait, lure, and trip someone.

- A "*stumbling block*" is anyone who seduces others to sin.
- A "*stumbling block*" is anyone who makes a false profession, anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ, but who is not.
- A "*stumbling block*" is anyone who discourages a person from following and serving Christ.

Jesus is saying there will always be temptations to sin. It's impossible, but offenses; stumbling blocks will come, but it will be terrible for anyone who causes them to happen. We will be reminded of Judas Iscariot being the one the offence will come through. So, this is really a warning that offense will come. And the disciples had to guard themselves against this grave sin.

**17:2** It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. There are five laws in this passage.

1. The "*first law*" is a severe warning: leading another person into sin brings heavy judgment. The word "*millstone*" is the word for a donkey. The word "*mulos*" is the word for the millstone that the donkey pulled around and around to grind the grain. Thus, the millstone Jesus spoke of is the huge millstone, not the small hand millstone used by the women to grind a little grain at a time. The very fact that Jesus chose the huge millstone shows how great this sin is. The person would be held to the bottom of the sea by the most awful and terrible weight. The sin of leading others astray is where Jesus stresses that its condemnation will be awful and terrible; the most awful sin that can be committed.

"*Little ones*" mentioned here have nothing to do with children, but rather believers who are young in the faith, immature, and vulnerable; and easily led astray; new believers that needed protecting.

**17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.**

2. The "*second law*" is that forgiving others is essential.

If a person sins against us, we are to rebuke (reprove) him privately; but if he repents, we are to forgive (pardon) him. The point is strong. The Believer is to confront the person who offends and puts a stumbling block in his way; not point out or bring to their attention every sin, but the attention is to restore him or her to God and our fellowman. We are to do what we can to correct an offending brother, but the correction is to be done in love and compassion, not in a censoring and judgmental spirit. When a believer corrects those who sin against them; doing them wrong, you are not allowing the sin to continue or for them to indulge in it; or give them a license to sin. No matter how big a stumbling block is put in our path, the whole theme of this instruction is forgiveness, which means that a spirit of love and compassion exists. The critical importance is that we are to "*take heed to ourselves; check our attitudes*" before opening *our* mouths—Do you love the person? And are you willing to forgive?

**17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.** The scenario is pointing out: <sup>1</sup>"*Suppose he sins against you 7 times in a day. If he repents each of those 7 times, you must forgive him.*" The number 7 here does not mean only 7 times. It means 'however many times he sins'.

**17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.** Upon hearing that, the apostles desired Jesus to increase their faith. Faith does not stand alone, Jesus is right there.

3. The "*third law*" is that faith is essential; faith is a powerful force.

The apostles realized something: their faith was weak—too weak to ever live like Jesus was talking about. Jesus had told them to forgive them that trespassed against them even if it's 7 times a day. They wanted the faith necessary to do what Jesus had been telling them to do. They desperately needed greater faith in the power and love of Christ because they could not do it alone.

## II. REQUIREMENTS OF GENUINE FAITH LUKE 17:6-10

**17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.** What is this "*grain of a mustard seed faith?*" The "*mustard seed*" was known for its small size, yet it grew to be one of the largest tree- plants. Picture a mustard seed lying in one's hand. It is real and very small, yet imagine the potential for growth and use. So, when we look at faith as a grain of mustard seed. Faith is real and small, yet it has enormous power for growth and ministry." *This sycamine tree*" is a black mulberry tree which grows to a height of twenty feet. <sup>2</sup>The roots of that tree are varied in size and spread so far and wide, and deep, that even today with our modern machinery it would be impossible to pull out a sycamine tree without leaving some of the roots behind. But Jesus said that if you have faith, believing faith, the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to say with boldness without flinching to the sycamine tree, be plucked out by the roots. The smallest amount of believing can remove this bitter fruit tree with all of its extensive root system, and not only remove it, but replant it in the sea; replanted under the water far from you. Praise God!

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



- **Genuine faith is certainly needed, not great faith. When you have genuine faith, faith automatically increases. The very smallest amount of genuine faith can do the impossible because it's always increasing when hearing God's Word! Then you will be able to easily repent and forgive. The very smallest amount of genuine faith, as small as a mustard seed, can do the impossible because that mustard seed grows; increases.**
- **Boldness is also needed. It takes boldness to walk up to a tree and tell it to be removed. We either believe it or not. Be bold and genuine in your faith.**

**The point is: faith comes from God and its total dependence is upon God.**

**17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?— This speaks of servanthood.**

4. The "*fourth law*" concerns obedience: to obey God is a duty not a service you receive tips. This short parable of service reflects upon what our attitude should be when we have done all that God has commanded. So in this verse, suppose you had a servant plowing or feeding cattle, and says unto him, when he comes from the field, Go and sit down to meat? This would show that the servant doesn't tend to the master's needs at all because he goes to sit down to eat after being in the field all day. But, <sup>3</sup>Jesus is explaining here that the servant usually serves his lord first, even if he has been in the field working all day. The servant is not greater than his master. The servant waits until his master's family is finished and then he eats. He generally has his own quarters and eats at his own table.

**17:8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?—**

5. The "*fifth law*" concerns humility; having an humble quality to serve by simply doing your duty. The point Jesus is expressing is that the believer is to be humble in his service to the Lord, just as this servant in the above verse is to be at the beck and call of his lord, for the master would be expecting to be fed first and the servant would have to gird himself to serve him. And the servant wouldn't eat or drink after coming from the field until the master has eaten or drank. Self would be last. Jesus is preparing His apostles to increase their faith to do any job. "*Stay ready for duty!*" The more you serve, forgiveness is demanded! The more you serve, the more faith is demanded!

**17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. And the servant wouldn't even get any thanks because he did the things that were commanded him. "*I trow not*" is like saying I think not? There is no room for pride or arrogance or boasting. God accepts humility. How many rise up before others, spend time alone with the Lord studying, prays for others and other things the Lord had guided them to do, and then spend the last minutes of the day with the Lord after others have retired and do they get thanked? I don't think so?**

**17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Jesus is making a point by saying <sup>4</sup>we don't need applause for every little job we do. Our reward will come when our Lord says, *"Well done thy good and faithful servant."* We do not need or deserve the praise of the world for doing**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/42.html>

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# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE



our job. Do you sometimes feel you deserve extra credit for serving God? Obedience is our duty, not just an act of charity. The more you serve, the more your faith is increased!

## SUMMARY:

Jesus tells His disciples that there will always be temptations to sin. It's impossible, but offences; stumbling blocks will come, but it will be terrible for anyone who causes them to happen. So, Jesus says it's better for a millstone to be hung about that person's neck, and he be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of those little ones. If a person sins against us, we are to rebuke (reprove) him privately; but if he repents, we are to forgive (pardon) him. And if he trespass against a person seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to him, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. The apostles desired Jesus to increase their faith. The point is: faith comes from God and its total dependence is upon God (17:1-5).

If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you can speak to the sycamine tree to be plucked up by the root and be planted in the sea, and it should obey at your word. Then Jesus asked His disciples "*when a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, 'Come in and eat with me'? Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'?*" And the servant is not even thanked because he did the things that he was supposed to do. "*So, likewise in the same with us; when we have done all we have been told to do, say, 'we are ordinary servants; we have only done our duty.'*" (17:6-10).

