



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## MATTHEW 18:21-35

### LESSON: PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT—July 1, 2018

#### INTRODUCTION:

A parable is a story that Jesus would throw alongside the truth; an earthly story having a heavenly meaning.

#### Chapter 18:15-20

<sup>1</sup>What should we do when another Christian has sinned against us? Our Lord gave three guiding principles for every Christian to follow:

- I. Go to the person in private (18:15). Above all else, go to him with the idea of winning your brother, not winning an argument. When you do it in strict privacy it will make it easier for him to confess the sin.
- II. Ask for the help of others (18:16). Only after we have prayerfully followed step 1 should we go to step 2. If the sinning brother refuses to listen we may then share the facts as we see them with one or two dependable believers and ask them for their prayerful counsel. It is possible that we are wrong. If they feel the cause is right, then together we can go to the offender and try once again to win him.
- III. Ask the church for help (18:17-20) After you have followed steps one and two, and the sinning brother still fails to recognize his error, the situation should be brought before the entire Church. However we must keep in mind that our goal is not the winning of a case, but the winning of a brother. If this person still refuses to acknowledge his sin he is to be treated as an outsider, but not hated.

#### LESSON: I. FORGIVENESS REQUIRED MATTHEW 18:21-22

**18:21** Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?— We know we are to forgive, but Peter asks the Lord how many times shall he forgive his brother if his brother sin against him? And then adds 7 times? As if to say can we have a limit on the amount of time? - Because 7 times seemed generous to him because 7 meant completion.

**18:22** Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Jesus replies that that's not what I'm saying, but 70X7 which is 490 times to us. But **the point is:** Jesus was saying 70 X 7 X 70 X 7 and on and on through eternity because forgiveness is a matter of the heart, and not of the mind. The mind will keep a record of wrongs. A spirit of forgiveness does not measure and limit the number of times it will forgive. A spirit of forgiveness will tolerate being wronged and hurt time after time. Jesus was able to do it, and through Him we are required, if we are in Him. Things to think about as a servant:

1. Forgiveness is a thing of the spirit. All spiritual things such as love, mercy, grace, joy, or forgiveness cannot be measured or limited. They are by their very nature spiritual and not physical. Therefore they are without measure or limit.
2. Good human relationships are impossible without a forgiving spirit.
3. So, forgiveness is required because an unforgiving spirit shows that a person is basically ill-natured, self-centered, and spiritually immature!
4. Peace and health can be preserved only through a forgiving spirit.

#### II. FORGIVENESS RENDERED MATTHEW 18:23-27

**18:23** Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. Jesus gives a parable to illustrate how God's spirit of forgiveness is just like a King who takes account of His

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/steps-to-church-discipline/>  
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servants. The King wants to know how you handle forgiveness in His kingdom. God is the King, the Sovereign Father, to whom a debt is owed. And He will rule justly. The one who owes Him is the servant or the one who had access to the King's money. The King wants to bring His accounts up to date, which will cause us to evaluate our lives.

## **18:24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.**

So, one of His debtors was brought to Him. And this one owed 10,000 talents which was an insurmountable debt equivalent to millions of dollars. We learn that...

1. All must give an account.
2. We are all brought to the King by the Spirit, the Word, or some Christian witness.
3. We are all led to see our huge debt of sin and service that we owe God and can never repay.

The King began to reckon with him, meaning to take account; to settle accounts. He began to check the ledgers of His province (jurisdiction, His domain): receipts, expenditures, and capital improvements made. Some things that bring us to God, and cause us to evaluate and take account of our lives are: • trials, • trouble, • sickness, • disease, • a sermon or witness, • tragedy, • parents, • friends, • or special days or occasions (example the New Year).

**The point is:** God has given us life and made us overseers of that life. To sin is to mismanage that life, and cause loss, therefore, sin puts us in debt to God. The debt is infinite, beyond anything we can ever pay.

## **18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.**

The servant couldn't pay any of the debt back, so he was commanded to be sold, as well as his wife, along with his children, and all that he had, and the payment that was due would go to the King. Notice that a man's sins always affect both him and his family. It seemed that there was no getting out of this debt.

4. We are all bankrupt (unable to pay) before God.
  - a. Silver and gold—no amount of wealth can pay our debt.
  - b. Neither brother nor any other family member can pay our debt.
  - c. Good works can't pay our debt.
  - d. Making sacrifices and giving offerings can't pay our debt.
5. We face the justice of a just God.

## **18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.**

Instead, the servant cried out for mercy, falling to the ground, worshipping the King, saying that he would repay it all, but just have patience with him, and give him some more time to pay it all.

6. We cry for mercy.

## **18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.**

Our God is a compassionate God. After seeing and hearing the heart of the servant. His Lord was touched and felt sorry for him; took pity, and forgave and loosed him from his debt.

The picture illustrates God's total forgiveness when dealing with our sins at the point of salvation. The debt has been paid by Christ and we are set free from it forever!

7. We hear the love and forgiveness of a loving God.

## III. FORGIVENESS RECALLED MATTHEW 18:28-35

## **18:28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.**

Now, this is the same servant

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that was forgiven and loosed from his debt by the King. He goes out and finds one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence (?). However he does not have the same forgiving spirit as the King did.

- He faced a person who owed him, or who offended him in some way.
- He reacted severely. He attacked the debtor; had his hand at his throat attempting to squeeze the payment out of him. He got so angry that he showed malice. Remember the King had mercy toward him, but this servant had a spirit of unforgiveness.

**18:29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.** This servant did the same as he himself had done before the King.

**18:30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.** The servant had every right to demand and force payment. And we see that this servant had no patience with this debtor.

- He rejected the cry for mercy and refused to forgive.
- He acted selfishly and worldly according to law and justice.

The story is merely hypothetical, for no one who was forgiven a debt of millions would behave this way; therefore, the intention of the parable is to challenge the genuineness of the disciples' conversion.

**18:31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.** Fellow servants saw what had taken place and were greatly distressed and went and reported it to their Lord, the King.

- He grieved others. This means that others were very sorry for his cruel actions. God's true servants are always grieved to see people mistreated, abused, and trampled upon.

**18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:—** The King summoned the servant, calling him a "*wicked servant*" because he had not been transformed by kindness and/or forgiveness. The King had spoken and demonstrated kindness and forgiveness toward him because he literally fell to the ground and worshipped Him (the King), asking for patience and proclaiming that he would pay it all, which is what the fellow servant who owed a lesser debt also did before him (the servant)!

**18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?—** So, the King asks him shouldn't he have had the same compassion for his fellow servant?

**18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.** It seems that this servant undid all the good the King had allotted unto him. The king was angry (wroth), so there was nothing else for the King to do, but to deliver him into the hands of the tormentors; jailers, till he could repay all that was due to the King. Note two critical things about the justice executed.

1. The unmerciful servant received perfect justice. He received exactly what was due him. He had to pay; he was punished only for what he owed—no more.
2. The King, God was perfectly just. He merely executed perfect justice. He executed what the servant himself had chosen; due payment for due debt.

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A truly saved man would never behave like the man in this story. A truly saved man would have compassion and forgiveness.

**18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.** *"Likewise"*, means similarly, equally, also shall our Heavenly Father also do; that is, deal with us, if each of us does not forgive our brother from our hearts. **The point is:** an unforgiving person shall be judged! This determines our eternal destiny! We must not only forgive, but we must live a life of forgiveness and mercy. If we do not forgive from our hearts, neither will God forgive us! As I said earlier, this is not a head or physical thing, but it's of the spirit embedded from our DNA in Christ!

## SUMMARY:

Peter asks the Lord how many times shall he forgive his brother if his brother sins against him. And then adds 7 times? Jesus replies that that's not what He's saying, but 70X7 which means on and on through eternity because forgiveness is a matter of the heart, and not of the mind. Forgiveness is required for every believer (18:21-22).

Jesus gives an illustration of a parable of how God's spirit of forgiveness is just like a King who takes account of His servants. God is the King, to whom a debt is owed. So, one of His debtors was brought to Him who owed an enormous debt. The servant couldn't pay any of the debt back to Him, so he was commanded to be sold, as well as his wife, children, and all that he had, and the payment that was due would go to the King. Instead, the servant cried out for mercy falling to the ground worshipping the King, saying that he would repay it all, but just have patience with him, and give him some more time to pay it all. The King had compassion after seeing and hearing the heart of the servant, and He forgave and loosed him from his debt (18:23-27).

Now, this is the same servant that was forgiven and loosed from his debt by the King. He goes out and finds one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence. He reacted severely by attacking the debtor by the throat, attempting to squeeze the payment out of him, saying pay me what you owe! This servant did the same as he himself had done before the King. However, he rejects this servant's cry for mercy and refuses to forgive. Fellow servants saw what had taken place, and were greatly grieved, and went and reported it to their Lord, the King. The King then summons the servant he had forgiven, but now He's calling him a *"wicked servant."* The Lord had demonstrated kindness and forgiveness toward him when he owed a higher debt. The Lord says you should have had the same compassion for your fellow servant? The king was angry, so there was nothing else for the King to do, but to deliver him into the hands of the tormentors; jailers, till he could repay all that was due to the King. And this is how our Heavenly Father will deal with us, if each of us does not forgive our brother from our hearts (18:28-35).