



# **MATTHEW**

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

## **The King's Forgiveness!**

**Matthew 18:21-35**

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Sunday Morning Service

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# **The King's Forgiveness!**

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## **Opening Comments**

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 18**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

## **Teaching**

- **The King's Forgiveness!**
- Last time we looked at the role we, as believers, play in maintaining unity in the church.
- It involves doing the hard work of reconciliation.
- It is as we walk in unity in the faith of Christ Jesus that the power of the Holy Spirit flows through the church into the world around us.
- This is also true for our marriages, families, and communities.
- Unity is the goal and today we will look at the primary tool we use to reach that goal.
- We open with a question from Peter.
- **Matthew 18:21**
- Peter asks a logical question, 'Is there a limit to how often we should work for reconciliation?'
- 'my brother' = My fellow believer in Christ.
- Once someone is saved, they don't stop being a sinner.
- They are a sinner saved by grace, but they still sin.
- Becoming a Christian doesn't make us sinless, but we should sin less than we used to.
- And because we are all sinners, we may sin against each other.
- This text will help us to know what to do so that we can be reconciled back to that other believer.
- And by the end of this message you will see that this is not optional.
- Some of the rabbis taught that you only had to forgive someone three times.

- This is based on some verses in Amos that showed God would not forgive the wicked nations because they had sinned four times.
- It is not a very convincing argument.
- Peter goes further than the rabbis - As usual, Peter, though well-intentioned, misses the mark.

- **Matthew 18:22**

- Not seven times – 490 times
- Jesus is using hyperbole to make a point.

**Hyperbole: exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.**

- The previous section dealt with unrepentant sinners.
- This one deals with believers who have sinned against another believer and repents (**Luke 17:3-4**).

**Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him.**

- When dealing with believers, God's goal is always reconciliation.
- Disunity in the body of Christ is sin, whether it be in a marriage, family, or church.
- God doesn't count or keep track of our sin that we have repented for – they were taken by Christ on the cross. Neither should we.
- Forgiveness is an expression of love. If we truly love, we will forgive and keep on forgiving (**Romans 13:8**).

**Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.**

- Jesus carries the thought of unlimited forgiveness into a parable.

- **Matthew 18:23**

- This is a parable. We are not to take it too literally.
- Every important detail is exaggerated. The king is God the Father.
- 'settle accounts' – All sin incurs a debt, first and primarily with God, but also with whoever that sin is against.
- The parable continues.

- **Matthew 18:24**

- Jesus uses an amount that is beyond their understanding.
- A talent was about equal to 6,000 days wages.
- 10,000 talents today might be worth 10 billion dollars or more.
- The king is a picture of God. This servant is each one of us.

- The debt we owed God because of our sin is greater than anything we could ever hope to pay in thousands of lifetimes.
  - The debt the servant owed was humanly impossible to pay.
  - **Matthew 18:25-27**
  - This is a radical expression of God's amazing grace.
  - If someone is a believer in Christ, there was a moment when we realized that we owed a debt to God for our sin that we could never repay.
  - When we humble ourselves before Him and ask for His mercy, God expresses His amazing grace and forgives us completely.
  - We go from owing more than we ever could repay to owing nothing.
  - We go from being in bondage to our sins to being free (**John 8:36**).
- Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**
- Even though the king is innocent in this matter, he takes the loss.
  - The innocent paying the debt of the guilty.
  - This is a picture of Christ on the cross.
  - He was the innocent One who paid our debt of guilt.
  - It is hard to imagine what that servant felt upon experiencing such amazing grace.
  - We are that forgiven servant.
  - How should we act toward God's other servants?
  - As people who have experienced God's mercy, how much mercy should we give to others?
  - The parable continues and we see how he responds to the king's grace.
  - **Matthew 18:28-30**
  - Remember, this is hyperbole – an exaggeration of the details for the purpose of illustrating a point.
  - 'one hundred denarii' = \$22k. This is not an insignificant amount of money, but compared to what he was forgiven, it is a tiny amount.
  - Fellow servant did exactly what he had done with the master and begged for mercy.
  - This is an immensely wicked act, especially after the grace he has received. This is the opposite of how we should act (**Luke 6:36**).
- Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.**

- We should be as merciful to others as God has been merciful to us.
- This wicked act did not over well with the other servants.
- **Matthew 28:31-33**

• As forgiven people we should be quick to forgive and in the same manner that God forgave us (**Ephesians 4:32**).

**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

- The wicked unforgiving servant experiences the consequences.

- **Matthew 18:34-35**

- Someone who understands God's gracious forgiveness and refuses to forgive others is worse than an unbeliever.

- It also calls into question whether they are saved at all.

- Forgiven people forgive. To not do so, will incur God's anger.

- 'delivered him to the torturers' – doesn't sound pleasant.

- 'should pay all that was due to him' – What was 'due to him'?

- Show compassion and forgive.

- Listen, brothers and sister, this is important.

- We all need to hear this. Jesus is talking to believers.

- What I am about to say may be hard to hear but we all need to hear it.

**The secret to a miserable and tortured life is unforgiveness.**

- If you want your life to be miserable and tortured don't forgive people when they sin against you.

- Unforgiveness is a prison we build for ourselves.

- We are the only miserable tortured prisoner.

- The prison guard is our rebellion against God by refusing to forgive.

- If we refuse to forgive, we are choosing to be tortured in that self-made prison for the rest of our lives.

- 'from his heart' – This is a heart issue.

- If we are unwilling to forgive it is because there is something wrong in our heart.

- The only way to be free is to forgive that person who sinned against you.

- Let me give you an illustration of what forgiveness looks like.

- Kelly and I have been married for over forty years.

- Needless to say, she has gotten lots of practice in the area of forgiveness. We both have.
- Recently, I said something I shouldn't have. Something insensitive.
- It didn't take me long to realize I had offended her.
- We talked about it, and I apologized/repented and then I did something very important – I asked her to forgive me.
- Why did I do that? It wasn't for me. I wanted her to be free.
- When I repented, I was cleansed and freed.
- By forgiving me, she prevented the prison of unforgiveness from torturing her and making her life miserable.
- Listen, my friends, there are too many Christians living in self-made prisons of unforgiveness. Many even some here this morning.
- Too many believers who are miserable and tortured by the sins others have committed against them.
- I know that the things others have done to you that have you locked up were much worse than my insensitive comment to Kelly.
- It doesn't matter what it was – God's grace is bigger.
- No matter how bad it was, Christ's sacrifice can wash it away and set you free.
- Unforgiveness is sin you commit against your own soul! And it is not a small sin.
- If you are a believer, God forgave your sins.
- He forgave your billions of dollars of debt.
- He expects you to forgive others their infinitely smaller debt.
- And if you do – if you forgive it, whatever it might be, big or small, you are the one who is set free.
- It is your choice, live in a self-made prison of tortured misery, or as a forgiven child of God forgive others and be free.
- Invite worship team to come up.
- Take a few moments and ask God if there are any prisons of unforgiveness in your heart. Ask Him to help you forgive.
- Do that quietly and then I will pray.
- **Pray!**
- Worship Team plays the last song!