

FORGIVENESS PARABLE OF THE UNJUST SERVANT

July 7th 2007 Matthew 18:21-35

Have you ever thought about how many decisions we make on a daily basis?

Think about it.

What time to get up,

Do we take a take a bath or shower (or do neither),

What will you eat for breakfast,

What will you wear.

I just got home from a family reunion with our whole family over the 4th of July

My brothers and sister and their children had not been together for 20 years.

I volunteered to provide the food for the first night.

I said I'll grill.

Great.

Then I went to pick up the meat.

Do you know how many different kind of brats and wieners there are.

Smoked brats or un-smoked,

Brats with skin and skinless.

There are brats with sourer kraut, with jalapeños,

Brats with green onions and peppers.

Brats with cheeses,

Brats with Sour cream and onion

The grocer said there are brats with Spaghetti look like little white worms.

He said they seem to sell.

I said no thanks.

So 10 different packages of brats latter.

A blend and a mix.

I got it done

Decision over.

I was at the check out and he asked me?

Or will that be Paper or Plastic?

You cringe "Oh man".

That question is not as simple as it seems.

It's not just paper or plastic.

Its about Guilt.

Its about my values and priorities

Paper or Plastic?

Do I want to destroy trees or use oil?

Paper or Plastic?

Support the middle east oil company,

Or support the loggers.

Paper or plastic?

Fill the landfill with non-biodegradable bags.

Cut down the trees so we can't breath.

Green or grease

By this time the groceries are pilling up and

Other holiday shopper were giving me the look.
 So I said: Paper---With Handles.
 I Grilled those brats on a fire circle.
 And I burned the paper bag.

Most decision we make speed up our lives.
 Some decision don't just slow us down.
 They stop us completely,
 From growing and learning,
 From moving forward.

That was the kind of decision Peter needed to make.
 How many times have you been hurt, wounded, offended,
 Misused or abused. And you need to make a decision about forgiveness..

**"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?
 Up to seven times?" Matthew 18:21**

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.
 And He doesn't deal with just the quantity of forgiveness, the how many times,
 But the quality of forgiveness
 And he leads us to this three act in the Parable of the unjust Servant
 act one - the Servant with the enormous debt.

I. THE ENORMOUS DEBT.

**²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts
 with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand
 talents was brought to him. Matthew 18:23-24**

Every debt begins with someone owing and another being owed.
 The Loaner is a Rich king with unlimited resources,
 He is calling in a loan on a poor man to "settle account"
 That has an ominous sound —
 Its like being investigated by the IRS.
 This man didn't just get a letter,
 he has been arrested
 Actually dragged in against his will

We have all had debts at some time.
 We have all struggled with paying them.

When I was 10
 Uncle Landi's store in Olivet was such a temptation for me.
 Oh the candy and licorices, pop and sunflower seeds.
 All for a penny and a nickel.
 And for some reason one week,
 I began to just charge a penny here, a nickel here.
 And at the end of the week the bill was over 25 cents.

Oh that debt shackled me.
 Rode me like bad tick.
 I couldn't tell the folks.
 That would be trouble.
 Debt can be ominous.
 On Saturday night I was so glad to get my 25 Cents allowance.
 Dad said remember 5cents for church
 That left only 20cents for the debt.
 With the promise of next week paying off the rest.
 Oh what a blessed relief it was when that debt was canceled.
 Maybe that is still one of the reason I don't like debt today.
 I have lost some lost sleep over this debt for our new building

Before we get too sympathetic over the man who was dragged into the Kings presence.
 What kind of man gets into this kind of extreme debt?
 Was he a scam artist, a gambler, unwise investor,
 a spender who owed ten thousand talents?

The debt is staggering.
 The annual income of Herod the Great was only 900 talents —
 Galilee's total taxes gathered for a year was only 200 talents,
 10,000 talents? Who could pay this amount?
 Nobody.
 Jewish law says the debtor could be thrown into jail.
 But only the debtor.
 But this king says:

²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. Matthew 18:25

Jesus was trying to say that the debt of sin is so great
 Against God that we can't in any way make the payment
 We will forever be cast into the prison bars of hell with no chance.
 This is an eternal debt.

But let us listen to the servant.

In v. 26 the servant makes a heartfelt plea:

²⁶"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'

Now don't get sentimental over this servant.
 At how magnanimous, how high-minded he was.

He doesn't' ask for forgiveness but time to pay it back.

The man, his wife, his kids, the courts, the king, the city knows
 He can't pay it back if he worked a 1000 years.
 Because he has no intention of paying the debt.
 This man is not seeking forgiveness
 He's seeking time.

He is saying like the million of people who think they can save themselves from the Debt of sin. Just give me some time.

When Peter says—"should I forgive 7 times?"
 But Peter was missing the whole point.
 Because 7X 70 can't pay the immensity of grace that is needed to forgive
 This debt of sin.
 Jesus moves us to ACT TWO

II. THE GENEROUS KING

The king, who was portrayed as heartless and cruel,
 forgives the debt.

The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. Matthew 18:27

This is an amazing turn of events —
 The king doesn't just buy him some time.
 He doesn't just cut him some slack.
 He totally forgives the debt.
 He cancels it in its entirety.
 Can you imagine the joy of his wife, and children- no prison.
 The loan is paid off. They are completely free.

Jesus is revealing THE CHARACTER OF Gods compassion and mercy
 The parable could have ended at this point
 and been a good illustration of Mt. 7:7:

"Ask, and it will be given to you"

or an example of praying for forgiveness
 even when burdened with the debt of sin.

Here is the second act of the parable.
 The debtor is a free man.
 His wife and kids are free?
 When somebody lets you in traffic,
 aren't you more likely then to let another person in?
 If someone buys your lunch, don't you want to buy another's?
 If God has forgiven you,
 Should we not want to forgive others as God has forgiven us?
 Apostle Paul said to the Colossians

Colossians 3:13 ¹³**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

The servant accepted it, but he missed it.
 THE ENORMOUS DEBT
 THE GENEROUS KING
 THIRD ACT:

III. THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

This man had just gotten the best news of his life. Forgiveness.
 Does it make him a better man? The test is immediate.

And he went out, ran into another servant who owes him one hundred denarii's. "He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" Matthew 18:28b

One denarius's is about a day's wage,
So 100 denarii's would have been about 4-5 months wages.
This is a payable debt.

This second servant is a mirror image of the first.
He falls on his knees and repeats the words,

"Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Matthew 18:29

again the parable could end here
with the first servant forgiving the debt
or even granting the request for time to pay it back.

**Wouldn't the church be a wonderful place if all Christians
Could live like this.**

Oh what a glorious story this would be.

The exact opposite occurs.

This forgiven servant grabs the guy by the throat,
throttles him, he chokes him, and throws him into prison.

"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. Matthew 18:30

The community is shocked at this injustice —
so are we - what is going on?
Christ has set us free from the laws of sin and death?
Shut of door of hell against us.
Erased our crimes

The mistake the servant made was to think
That nothing had changed in his life.
He could continue to live as ruthless as he had in his debt.

But the *WORLD WAS WATCHING* him

And the world is watching us.

³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened

This man is no friend of the people.
The king was probably not the only person
he ripped off in this community.

In the movie the Music man,
The man who sold the whole town a dream.
That he would lead the band
If they would buy the instruments.
They bought the instrument and he fled the town with their money.

Employee shoplifting is off the charts.
 People who promise to be loyal to the company turn around and rip it off.
 We all know the scams
 Money in Africa needs a bank account to get money out.
 Billions lost in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
 Scams in floods and disasters even in the Dakotas.
 Of people who claim to clean,
 And clean their claimants.

God's justice will remain.
 Sin's consequences will be paid.
 The king summoned the first servant,
'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' Matthew 18:32-33

But the opportunity is missed.
 How could he have missed it so badly,
 A debt so great
 A forgiveness so gracious?
 Then we ask
 If he could miss it, could I do exactly the same thing?

Am I guilty of a debt forgiven which cost God his son,
 And yet now I am unwilling to forgive those who have offended me?
 The answer is, of course.
 Here is the danger.
 The amount of the forgiveness doesn't erase the debt.
 Because when the servant went back before the king.
 The whole debt was still in place,
 The consequence of that debt now fell on him alone.
 Look at the verse 34

³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

This time there is no mention of his wife or his children.
 This man is to be tortured alone until he should pay back all he owed.
 That would take an eternity.

When you reject the forgiveness of Christ.
 And are unwilling to forgive others.
 The whole consequence of the sin of the world become ours alone.
 Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "Without forgiveness, there is no future."

As we come to communion today
 Let us remember this warning that Jesus give as he ends this parable.
³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew warns us that we are alive by the forgiveness of God
And unless we live by this forgiveness,
God will require from us the debt of the cross.

The invitation is open today at Gods table.
Jesus has died for you.
Paid for your sin at the cross.
So come for forgiveness.
Receive the body and blood of Christ.
And leave the table to live a life of forgiveness.