

**THEME: THE PARABLES OF JESUS**

**TOPIC: THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT**

**TEXT: MATTHEW 18:21-35**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In our study the other day we considered "**The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**" which describes "the character of the citizens" which are to make up the kingdom.

**The occasion which led to the telling of this parable**

- Peter's question about forgiving a brother – **Matthew 18:21**
- "Jesus confronts Peter with the truth that the spirit of forgiveness really knows no boundaries. **Matthew 18:22**

### **THE LESSON OF THE PARABLE**

1. As stated by Jesus Himself – **Matthew 18:35**
  - a. "**So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.**"
  - b. Failure to forgive a brother will bring severe punishment!
2. "**Prompted by gratitude the forgiven sinner must always yearn to forgive whoever has trespassed against him**" (unknown)
3. We can also draw several subsidiary lessons:
  - a. We are all God's debtors – **Matthew 18:23; Romans 3:23**
  - b. None are able to pay what is owed – **Matthew 18:25**
  - c. But by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid – **Matthew 18:27; Matthew 20:28**
  - d. Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven – **Matthew 18:35; Matthew 6:14-15**
  - e. It should be easy to forgive others, for what we owe God is infinitely more than what others owe us – **Matthew 18:32, 33**
  - f. The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment! – **Matthew 18:34-35; Romans 1:31**

Understanding the importance of forgiving others, how can we develop a forgiving spirit?]

### **DEVELOPING A FORGIVING SPIRIT**

#### **A. FOCUS ON GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF YOU...**

1. This is where the unmerciful servant went wrong
2. This is how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit – **Ephesians 4:32; Col 3:13**

#### **B. ALLOW THE LORD TO HELP US TO "FORGIVE AND FORGET"**

1. Some may protest and say "It is impossible to forget!"
2. But let's first define "forget" (The American Heritage Dictionary)
  - a. To be unable to remember (something)
  - b. To treat with thoughtless inattention; neglect: forget one's family
  - c. To leave behind unintentionally
  - d. To fail to mention
3. When I think of forgiving and forgetting, it is the last three definitions I have in mind
  - a. Technically, we may be able to recall the offense to our minds
  - b. But for all practical purposes, we so disregard the offense that it is "out of mind"
4. Is this possible? By the grace of God, yes it is!
  - The example of Joseph – **Genesis 41:51**

- The attitude of Paul – **Philippians 3:13**

Both these men had plenty of things done to them that could have made them resentful, but God helped them to "forget" those things.

5. Can a person who says "I will forgive but not forget", truly have forgiven?

6. **"If I say, 'Yes, I forgive, but I cannot forget,' as though the God, who twice a day washes all the sands on all the shores of all the world, could not wash such memories from my mind, then I know nothing of Calvary love."** (Amy Carmichael).

## **CONCLUSION**

Perhaps the most important point we learn from this parable is that the kingdom of heaven is to consist of people who are both **forgiven and forgiving**, who have both received mercy and are merciful – **James 2:13**

I believe that when we truly contemplate the love, mercy, and forgiveness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

- It is indeed possible to forgive and forget.
- At least in the sense of removing it from the attention of our minds.
- We should learn that it is essential that we do so
- The citizens of the kingdom of heaven are to be characterized by the attitudes of mercy and forgiveness towards others

**"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** – **Jesus in Matthew 6:14-15.**

Have we allowed the mercy of God to melt our hearts? Have we even accepted the mercy of God into our lives by obeying Jesus Christ? Allow **"The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant"** to remind us that both are possible!