

Jesus Demonstrated Abundant Grace

February 10, 2019

THE
DISCIPLE
MAKER

Open: What's a story or example of forgiveness that you've been inspired by?

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

Discuss:

1. Peter's question in verse 21 follows Jesus' teaching about how to be reconciled to a person who has offended you (see verse 15). Reflecting on your own experience, why do you think this might have caused Peter to ask about the extent of our obligation to forgive? What seems to be at the center of our tendency to resist forgiving others?
2. Jesus' answer to Peter's question is a parable. What similarities and differences do you see between the two debt holders and the two debtors in this passage?
3. Parables have one main point. How would you state the main point of this parable in your own words? Where do you see it most clearly expressed in the passage?
4. According to this story, what is to be our motive for forgiving others? How has this principle helped you in exercising forgiveness toward those who have offended you?
5. It's been said that grace is getting what you *don't* deserve while mercy is not getting what you *do* deserve. Verse 33 twice uses the word mercy. How do you think forgiveness is an expression of mercy? How might it also be an expression of grace? In what way do these two words help you in your effort to be a forgiving person?
6. In addition to the teaching of this passage, what other ways did Jesus teach his followers to value other people that might also help us when we need to practice forgiveness?
7. What do you think it means to forgive someone "from your heart" (v. 35)? How do you recognize when your forgiveness has or has not been from the heart? What's our responsibility when we recognize that we haven't forgiven someone appropriately?

Apply: Thinking forward, how can you prepare your heart to be ready to forgive? Thinking backward, is there anyone you've withheld forgiveness from that you need to go back and forgive? Thinking in the present, is there anyone that you need to seek forgiveness from?

Pray: Pray that we would be people who are quick to show others the forgiveness, grace and mercy we've been shown by Christ.

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ "But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

³² "Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (ESV)