

The Greatest Gift

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[0:00] Matthew chapter 18. Again, I'm so thankful you all are here today. And I'm especially thankful that you've come with a purpose to reach heaven.

! That we can point back to our experiences we've had in these altars in the last two services. And point back to these times and say, God heard my prayer and he was there. Right there in Houston. Amen. So thankful for what God's been doing.

Matthew chapter 18 verse 21. A lengthy reading, but bear with me. Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me?

And I forgive him till seven times. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.

[1:13] Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.

But for as much as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold and his wife and his children and all that he had in payment to be made.

And the servant therefore fell down and worshiped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt.

But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence. And he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and beside him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt.

[2:27] And so that when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told unto their Lord all that was done. Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredest me.

Shouldest not thou also have compassion on my fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth and delivered him unto the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. And today I want to speak to you about the greatest gift, the greatest gift.

Pray with me. Lord Jesus, I thank you for showing up in this service. I feel your presence even now. And God, I pray, Lord, that you continue to be here with us as we discover your word, God, and how it would apply to our lives.

I pray, God, that your word has free course into every life and situation represented in this place today, God. I pray, Lord, that you give us the spiritual ears to hear and that your word would be received gladly, God.

[3:41] In Jesus' name I pray. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. You may be seated. God speaking to his people through the prophet Hosea said, in Hosea 4 and 6, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge because thou hast rejected knowledge.

I will also reject thee that thou shalt be no priest to me. Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Where there is rejection or a lack of knowledge of God and his laws and his principles and his ways, there is going to be an increase in sin and judgment.

We cannot reject the knowledge of God and his laws. We must face the facts of the word of God.

It will not do us any justice to take God's word casually. It will not profit us to take God's expectations that he has for us and the things of his kingdom casually and without concern.

[4:59] There are so many things in the word of God that we still need to discover and come into the knowledge of and accept and apply it to our lives.

There are so many principles and understandings of the way God operates and the way his kingdom operates that we need to come to an understanding of. Today, God wants us to understand the greatest gift that we have been given.

It is the will of God that we understand the value of what he did on the cross for us. He died for our sins, and that is the greatest gift from God that we could have.

The value of salvation is incalculable. You cannot put a price on it. It's priceless. There is nothing worth more for a human than the forgiveness of their sins.

But it is impossible for us to know the value of his sacrifice for our sins if we do not understand how desperately we need salvation. If you can't grasp the fact that you need salvation, you're never going to understand the value of what happened on the cross.

[6:11] Amen. Once you understand that I'm a ranked sinner and I need God and I need salvation, and you recognize that, then you realize that what happened on the cross was the greatest thing that could ever happen to any human that walks this planet.

Amen. It's the most valuable thing we could have is salvation through Jesus. Amen. Those that cannot value what God did on the cross appropriately will be destroyed because of their lack of knowledge, the Bible says.

Here is our problem in valuing what God did for us. See, we don't understand the seriousness of our sin conditions. We can't value the forgiveness that came with the cross appropriately because we don't comprehend how desperately we need forgiveness.

We tend to underestimate the cost of sin. We also tend to underestimate how sinful we are. And those two things combined lead us to not properly value the cross and the forgiveness provided by it.

Amen. What is it about the human condition? What is it about the conditions of us humans that leads us not to fully recognize or appreciate the absolute need for forgiveness from God for our sins?

[7:29] It is from Scripture that we find the answers. In Jeremiah chapter 17, verse 9, where the Lord says, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? See, our fleshly human heart deceives us and it hides the seriousness of sin from us, making us think we are righteous or that our sins are not so bad that we would require God's forgiveness.

Hebrews 3 and 13 says, But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

So our hearts are deceitful above all things and sin itself is deceitful. Sin deceives and it hardens the heart over time, blinding us to its own evil and the real need for forgiveness and cleansing from God.

1 John 1 and 8 says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Most people don't see their need for forgiveness because they deceive themselves into believing they have no sin and so they believe that they have no need for forgiveness.

[8:47] And it's self-deception. We having the fleshly fallen human heart, we are naturally deceived, we are hardened and we are blinded to sin's reality.

We are blinded to our desperate need for God's forgiveness that we can obtain through confession and repentance. But here it is in 1 John 1 and 9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Amen. Amen. I believe the word of God. I call out that portion of scripture over my life. Many times in this altar, I've led us many times in our opening prayers that if we would confess our sins and we would repent and say, God, I need you.

I failed you again. If we can recognize that we failed, amen, and that we need God to forgive our sins, that's confession. It's recognizing that we need it.

Amen. But too many people go day in, day out, not even thinking about how they live and how it's opposed to the word of God and it displeases God. Amen.

[9:58] And so they're deceived. Amen. By their fleshly hearts and by sin itself, they're deceived. Amen. But we've got to be able to recognize that we need God. Amen. That we need, that we're sinners.

Amen. There's nobody without sin and we need to confess that and if we do, the Bible says he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and I hold God accountable to that word.

Amen. It's in God's word. Amen. God can't be a liar. And so I pray that every day. Amen. We need to pray for our own selves every day and say, God, your word says, if I will confess my sins to you, amen, that you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Amen. We have to be able to get through the deception of the human heart and confess that we are sinners. We, you know, we were talking the other day about these things right here.

These little tissue boxes and how these are the same ones that we've had all year and we haven't had this. This is one expenditure we haven't had. There's not enough crying that goes on in this altar like there has been in the last two weeks.

[11:08] I'm so thankful to God. Amen. It's almost since those words, came out of our mouths almost and it wasn't a ridicule. It was just, we noticed that we haven't had a place to replacement order on tissues and that's not right for an apostolic church.

Amen. We need to recognize that we need God. You know, you can go to, from apostolic church to apostolic church nowadays and you won't find altars like this and I was intentional about making sure that we had an altar in our altar area.

Amen. There's not, you can stand here and raise your hands to God and pray and I know on the day of Pentecost it was where they were sitting when the Holy Ghost was poured out. I understand all that. You can be sitting in your car.

You can be sitting at home. I understand all that but there's something about coming to an altar and getting down on your knees and putting your face in the altar and say, God, I need your forgiveness today. God, I'm not going to leave this altar until you do something in my life.

Amen. Without understanding our real need for forgiveness, we cannot appropriately value forgiveness. And when we remain in a lost state, when we do that, God's greatest gift to us is forgiveness and we have to understand the value of that gift and appreciate it.

[12:23] See, there is real confusion on our part about the value of forgiveness. Matthew 18, 21 is the beginning where we picked up in our scriptures and Peter came.

Then came Peter unto him and said, Lord, how oft shall I forgive shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times and so here's Peter thinks he is very forgiving, you know, and because when he asked the Lord Jesus how many times he should forgive someone that has done something wrong to him, probably thinking he was very forgiving, he would be approved by Jesus. He quickly answered his own question with a suggestion of seven times. Amen. And what did Jesus say? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until 70 times seven.

Amen. 490 times. See how much of a double standard we can sometimes have when it comes to the valuation of forgiveness.

Amen. We have a double standard sometimes when we value forgiveness. We think that we don't need forgiveness or that when we do need it that people should easily just give it to us.

[13:37] But then when someone does something to us, all of a sudden forgiveness is a lot harder to come by. Peter thought there was no way he would need to forgive someone more than seven times before it would be okay not to forgive.

And if we're honest with ourselves, we would agree that forgiveness is probably one of the things that we are most often stingy with. Forgiveness, when it is coming from us, all of a sudden is worth more than gold and it has a hard time leaving our hands.

Amen. It's hard to give away sometimes. And so we are exposed for our double standards today. It is hard for someone to get complete forgiveness from us.

But we expect forgiveness to come easily for us. Amen. And that's the human nature that we're talking about. And it's not right. And when you have that attitude and you're not valuing the forgiveness you need, but you are making the forgiveness you have towards another very expensive, that's exactly what the servant of the Lord did in the parable that Jesus was teaching. Jesus is trying to teach us the value of what he has done for us. How massive was the 10,000 talent debt?

[14:55] In that day and age, a talent was a large amount of money. It was a large weight of silver or gold. One talent was equal to 6,000 denarii.

I'm sure you're probably wondering what even a denarii is. So let me tell you. A denarii was a standard day's wage for a laborer. So we go to work every day and you take the average what people make and it's what you can make in a day.

That's a denarii. Okay? It was a standard day's wage. So one talent, like I said, was equal to 6,000 denarii.

6,000 days of labor. So then one talent would be about 15 to 20 years of wages. So then 10,000 talents would be about 60 million denarii, which was over 150,000 years of labor for an average worker.

And so that's what I mean when we don't have knowledge or understanding about what the details of the word. Sometimes it doesn't hit right. But when you break it down and you do a little study and you figure out what Jesus was teaching, that hits a little different.

[16:10] When you're talking about 150,000 years of the worth of labor for an average worker and that is what this guy owed the king. But this parable Jesus is teaching and Jesus was making a point that we need to understand.

And so he was intentionally over the top, hyperbolic, to make his point. 10,000 was the largest Greek numeral in common use at that time. And a talent was the biggest currency unit used at that time.

So it represented the largest conceivable debt possible. It was far beyond what any individual or even a whole country of people could owe or repay.

There are historical records that you can go and look at during the times that the Romans controlled Israel and Jerusalem. And you can see they kept records and from regions like Judea to Rome for a whole year was only around 600 talents.

So you're talking about the taxing that Rome would do to the whole country in one year is only 600 talents and Jesus is using, saying that this is 10,000 talents this guy owed.

[17:23] So in this parable this man's debt was unrepayable in his lifetime. It was impossible that he would ever pay that debt.

He could never repay the king. And for the king to just forgive the debt out of his compassion was monumental. It was a miracle. Jesus is trying to make it a very important point here.

He is teaching us the value of what He has done for us by paying our sin debt something that we could never ever pay ourselves by being crucified on the cross for our forgiveness of our debt to God.

And I thank God for that today. I hope you understood what I said. He's trying to teach us that the debt that we owed it was there's no way it could never be paid by us or anybody else.

Only Jesus only God robed in flesh could take care of that debt. He did it and that's a miracle in my life that I have salvation. And I thank God for salvation.

[18:35] Let's not be like the man in the parable who received the miracle of forgiveness that saved his whole family. Remember they weren't going to just take him they were going to take his wife and his children too.

Saved his whole family and quickly forgot and didn't appreciate what was done for him. Let's not be like that. Because by the end of the parable someone that owed that forgiven man far less but then he didn't forgive them and bound him and dealt hard with him.

And when the Lord found out about it he wasn't happy he was wroth the Bible says and the Lord reassigned all of that debt that he had forgiven he reassigned it back to that man and he was delivered to the tormentors until he would repay which could never be repaid.

I hope you understand the point of the parable Jesus was teaching. No gift of God is fulfilled in us unless it flows through us. 1 Corinthians 12 and 7 says but the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit with all.

Every gift that we get is not just to profit us but it's to profit with all. Gifts like prophecy and healing and teaching and mercy and different services aren't given to us just for personal edification.

[20:05] They're tools God's gift us for building up the body of Christ. Amen. And if they stay bottled up they don't accomplish what God meant for their intended fulfillment by him through us.

Matthew 10 and 8 says heal the sick cleanse the lepers raise the dead cast out devils all great giftings and he went on he said freely you have received freely give we have received the greatest gift more greater than being able to cast out devils greater than being able to heal the sick physically or cleanse lepers and do all these miracle things raise the dead even greater than those

things is the fact that we can have forgiveness of our sins and have salvation and have eternal life greater than the greatest gift and if freely it was given so freely it should be given it was given to us freely and it should be given freely we have received the greatest gift the most valuable gift the gift of forgiveness and we have received it freely and so we should give it freely Romans 5 and 5 and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us see God supplies love and forgiveness and other gifts in abundance so we can be generous on every occasion possible God's power God's presence God's anointing flows in to refresh us but it must flow through us to avoid becoming stagnant think about how fresh a mountain river stream water could be versus a lake or a pond in the valley where there's no outlet and there's no flowing of water blocking the flow through selfishness or fear or neglect hinders the gifts full realization in our lives in the parable the king representing God forgives an impossibly massive debt of 10,000 talents but the servant's refusal to let that mercy flow through him to forgive a tiny debt leads to the gift being revoked and taken back to forgiveness like other gifts is fulfilled in us only when it passes on to another we're not the owners of the gifts of God but we are to be the channels in which the gift flows amen it doesn't matter what gift we're talking about today we're talking about the greatest gift the gift of forgiveness and today

I'm reaching for us today amen about this about forgiveness when forgiveness flows through us it becomes a multiplied blessing and prevents spiritual stagnation and aligns with the kingdom of God it pleases God that we would forgive it's in the Lord's prayer it's all over scripture that we're good we will be forgiven as we forgive that's right God's greatest gift to us is forgiveness so the greatest gift we can give to others and ourselves is forgiveness forgiveness is a gift others have forgiven you right now you need to forgive them or forgive sometimes we need to forgive ourselves sometimes we need to forgive so we cannot harbor forgiveness towards others or ourselves sometimes we have to forgive God too we may have gone through some things in our lives and we don't understand why and we might blame it on God why didn't

God fully protect me from that why didn't God take care of that you start questioning God and we get a little bitter towards God about some things that's happened in our lives and we don't understand and so we harbor unforgiveness towards God but in Acts 24:16 Paul said in hearing do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men Paul said I have to make sure I'm not offended by God or other people and how do we make sure we don't get offended we forgive they may trespass against us they may offend us but we have to be quick to forgive offenses are going to come but we cannot keep from forgiving God's forgiveness of our unpayable sin debt is such a profound miracle and blessing that we have to extend similar mercies to others refusing to do so shows ingratitude and invites judgment upon us

[24:51] I don't want I don't want my sins that have already been forgiven me to be reassigned to me all the things that I've done the mistakes that I've made that I've gone to God and asked for forgiveness and receive forgiveness I don't want those things to come back on my record because I'm not willing to forgive someone else another thing we need to understand is all of those were the servants of God in that parable everybody was a servant to the king it was all the servants and here you got one servant getting not having forgiveness over another one of God's servants and his fellow servant fell down at his feet and beside him saying have patience with me and I will pay thee all as a fellow servant and he would not but went and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt so when his fellow servants saw what was done they were very sorry and came and told unto their lord all that was done and then his lord after that he had called him said unto him oh thou wicked servant

I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me shouldn't thou have also had compassion on thy fellow servant even as I had pity on thee and his lord was wroth and delivered in the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him and Jesus said so likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother his trespasses unforgiveness is the most damaging of all sins because it removes the effects of the blood of Jesus Christ off of our previously forgiven sins opening the door for us to struggle with all our old habits and all of our old desires and to ultimately lose out on our salvation amen the effect of the blood the effect the blood has on us when we get baptized in Jesus name we come up out of that water amen the blood covering that we have that washed our sins away our sins are in remission amen of things that we have to fight and

I know stories that are represented in this place where people were addicted to things that they don't have to be addicted they had broken the bonds of those things amen with that blood of Jesus Christ that covered their life amen what a tragedy would it be that we would not forgive a fellow servant that's really what we're all fellow servants to God amen that we wouldn't forgive someone and all those things that would come back to us what a tragedy that would be let's all stand on the flip side let's say we do recognize the value of the greatest gift God has given us forgiveness and we realize that a blessing what a blessing it is to be forgiven of our sins and trespasses against God and we let that blessing and gift flow through us to those that offend us and have done wrong to us I brought this up on our Thursday night

Bible study but Deanna sister Eccles and I have been married 25 years and from what I understand in this world that we live in that's a pretty good accomplishment how do you stay married for 25 years yeah of course commitment but it's forgiveness forgiveness forgiveness if we're going to stay married if we're going to continue to stay married yeah more commitment but it's going to be a lot more forgiveness too she has to forgive me and every once in a while I have to forgive her how much forgiveness as much as it takes as much as it takes when you sin against God and you repent he is faithful and just to forgive you so don't harbor unforgiveness towards others if someone has offended you and they've repented to God of it don't you think God has forgiven them so why don't we forgive them too right now right where we are

I want us to check our hearts and make sure we don't have any unforgiveness harbored inside of us let's not leave here today until we check ourselves and let's show God our appreciation for the forgiveness of our sins and let the gift of forgiveness flow through us amen let's do that right now let's check in with God right now Jesus I pray over everyone that's here today God God I pray Lord that we're not harboring unforgiveness if we are God I pray Lord that you begin to work on us God let that perfect great gift flow through us don't let it become stopped inside of us Lord we need your forgiveness I don't want my sins God I don't want the things that I've conquered through your blood and through your power and through your anointing God to come back to me Lord and to my life [30:12] God I thank you for all the forgiveness that you've given me all the debt God that you've paid for me God help me now Lord Jesus help me God to be easy to forgive!

Lord help it flow through Lord Jesus I pray over everyone that's here today