

The parable of the Unforgiving Servant

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[0 : 0 0] The reading is taken from Matthew 18, verses 21 to 35. The parable of the unmerciful servant.

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who has sinned against me? Up to seven times?

Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

As he began the settlement, a man who owed him 10,000 bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that his wife, his children, and all that he had had be sold to repay the debt.

At this, the servant fell on his knees before him. Be patient with me, he begged, and I will pay back everything. The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt, and let him go.

[1 : 1 7] But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him.

Pay back what you owe me, he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, Be patient with me, and I will pay it back. But he refused.

Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

Then the master called the servant in. You wicked servant, he said. I cancelled that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?

In anger, his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

[2 : 2 9] This is the word of God. This is how my father will treat each of you. I'm not drunk. Since I have labyrinthitis about 28 years ago, my balance has always been in question.

So that's why I staggered. It's a privilege to be here this morning to share the word of God to you and with you. And my prayer is that the words of my mouth and the meditation of your hearts will be acceptable to the Lord.

It's a privilege to be here, to be invited. I've never known this place. I've never heard of this church. But since God has brought us from the north of London down to the south, then he opened doors that I'm able to relate to my brother and my sister in Christ.

My name is Adi Dayo-Ige. I ministered at Aringay United Church Baptist on Green Lanes, North 8, for 19 years before I stepped aside.

I'm married with three grown-up children and a granddaughter. And I'm from Nigeria. I trained at Spurgeon College.

- [3 : 56] And I know Ann Kemp very well. That was the PA to our principal, Niger Wright, who is my dear good friend, who is always telling me, I'm older than you.
- Hallelujah. Hallelujah. It's another privilege to start this new series with you, the parables. And when Ann invited me, first for the harvest Thanksgiving, but unfortunately she was the fourth church that invited me, so I had to turn it down.
- So, now, today we are starting this new series. Am I on with the lapel? Oh, this one. Thank you. I'm not a still preacher.
- I move around. So, you have to excuse me for that. Today we are starting this new series about the parables.
- But before the parables, can you please display the PowerPoint? Okay. Thank you. Let me see if it's going to work.
- [5 : 19] And if it doesn't work, I will note you. Okay. Okay. Now, just to know what a parable is.
- According to Nelson's illustrated Bible Dictionary, it says, Parable is a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lessons.
- Or, simply, it's a figure of speech in which truth is illustrated by a comparison or example drawn from everyday life.
- When you look at the portion that Michelle has read for us, thank you for the reading, you will see that that particular passage is in a series of the teachings of Christ.
- And out of the book, like Peter, always quick in speaking, ask the master, Jesus, how many times should my brother or my sister offend me and keep on forgiving?
- [6 : 35] Seven times? Seven times? And Jesus answered him, no, I didn't tell you seven times. And actually, the version that was read for us, I think they got it a bit wrong, is 70 times seven in Hebrew.
- 70 times seven, which is 490 times. And if we keep on forgiving our brother and our sister 490 times, I think we must be in the habit of forgiving.
- Now, the opening says, why are you always speaking to people in parables? Because there was nothing Jesus would teach that will always be parable.
- And then, the answer to that question is found in Matthew chapter 13, from verse 10 to 17, because it was clearly explained there.
- You have been permitted, this is Jesus' answer to them. You have been permitted to understand the secret of the kingdom of heaven, but others have not.
- [7 : 57] For those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given. And they will have an abundance of knowledge.
- But to those who are not listening, even what they have will be taken away from them. That is why I tell these stories, or these parables, because people see what I do, but they don't really see.
- They hear what I say, but they don't really hear. And they don't understand. This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, you will hear my words, but you will not understand.
- You will see what I do, but you will not perceive its meaning. For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear.
- And they have closed their eyes, so their eyes cannot see. And their ears cannot hear. And their hearts cannot understand.
- [9 : 18] And they cannot turn to me and let me hear them. And all my life, it has become to me that people hear only what they want to hear.

I'm the only one speaking now. After the service today, if there's a question of what I said, I guarantee you, as many of us here, we have different interpretation and understanding of it.

And it's only one person that is speaking. We hear only what we want to hear. But Jesus makes it explicit. If we yearn for his word, if we obey his word, if we are keen to hear him, we will have more understanding.

My prayer this morning is that all of us, we will develop the listening ears to be able to comprehend what Christ is teaching us. And he said this to you this morning.

Blessed are you, are your eyes. Because they see. Yes, you didn't see Jesus physically. You didn't see all his miracles. But you are able to see it reading in the scripture.

[10 : 41] And even he said to Thomas, after he said, if I didn't see the marks of the nails in his hands and legs, I won't believe that is reason.

And when he showed up, then Thomas said, oh, my Lord and my God. Oh, because you see me. That's why you believe. But blessed are those who didn't see me and yet believe.

We didn't see him and we believe. So we are more blessed. You are more blessed. Let somebody say amen. Purposes of parables.

Oh, sorry. Let me, the first, there's something in the first slide that I needed to say.

Okay, thank you. Now, when they ask him the question, why are you always speaking in parables? He said to them, from what I've just read to you, he has, secret of God has been hidden from creation to those who don't believe.

[11 : 47] So that means God had a secret. And that secret is about the salvation plan he has from creation. From since the time Adam and Eve, they rebelled against him.

That is the time he has made a plan. But it's only to those eyes are open, to those whose hearts are open to his teaching that we understand that.

Thank you. Oh, sorry. I put it back again. Purposes of parables.

According to Dr. R.T. Kendall, I don't know that you know him at all, is the former minister of Westminster Chapel. He's a good theologian and a good teacher. He said, first is to sow a spiritual seed.

When you sow a seed and it falls into a good ground, it will eat fruits and more fruits, though it will take time. And efforts to tend, to make sure there are no weeds contending with the fruit, and there's adequate watering to eat, and wait for some time.

[13 : 05] Corn, especially, put it in the ground today, good ground, watered, with good sunshine, in 60 days. Just one grain of a corn will eat not less than about, say, 400, depending on how big the curb is.

The same thing can be applied to our spiritual life. When we open our, when we allow the word of God to come into our heart, it's a seed.

And when we nurture it, giving it in a good ground, that's another parable that Jesus was talking about, the sower, which is not today's topic.

It will eat fruit. It will germinate. It will bear fruit, that even much fruit as well. The second thing he said about the purpose of a parable is that it's to highlight the sovereignty of God.

A theological term which refers to the unlimited power of God who has sovereign control over the affairs of nature and history and to do whatever he places.

[14 : 20] And nobody can question him. For example, he told Abraham, I will bless those that I will bless.

And nobody dare question him. And when you look at the scripture, you will realize that the sovereignty of God is superb. It's an unquestionable God.

Whatever he does, he does. anyway, there's no cut to challenge his decision anyway. Because with him, he makes the decision and the decision is final.

the third thing about the purpose of the parables is to survey the teachings of salvation.

and that's one of the great secrets that God has hidden from the world from the beginning.

[15 : 22] So, the fourth one is to reveal the Holy Spirit. The work is of the Holy Spirit. Jesus revealed the work of the Holy Spirit in all kinds of manner, kinds of ways, some more obvious than the others.

The entire sermon on the mount. is about the Holy Spirit. And you may say, oh, pastor, there's no mention of the Holy Spirit there.

Yes, there may not be. There's a precedence to that. The whole book of Ruth in the Old Testament is about the sovereignty of God, the power of God, and the providence of God for his people.

But not even once God was mentioned in the book of Esther. whenever the kingdom of God or heaven is mentioned in the scripture, generally, it is referring to the realm of the spirit of God.

God is spirit according to John 4. and those that worship him must worship him in truth and spirit.

[16 : 37] And the fifth purpose of God is to fulfill the scripture, the prophecy, as made by Isaiah in chapter 6, verse 9, and Psalm 78, verse 2, which he said, I will speak to them in parables.

There are some principles that we need to bear in mind when we are considering reading and understanding the parables.

The first principle, please change this slide for me. This is not working. not all parables point to the same truth. Some speak about the Holy Spirit, some about eschatology, which is the end times, and yet others teach about our spiritual growth.

The second principle we must understand while reading and trying to understand parables is often parables will have one basic truth.

in it. Hence, we must not try to read more into a parable than we ought to. The third one, more important, we must never try to make a parable stand on all four legs.

[18 : 15] That is, don't make a theology out of a parable. parable. And the last one is that when we are interpreting parables, we must be careful to keep the essential truth in mind.

Are you with me this morning? Let somebody say, yes? Aha! I want to engage you. Yes.

Now to go to today's parable, the parable of unforgiving servants or ungrateful servants.

Depending on where you are coming from, some theologies, they say it's parable of unforgiving servants. Another says it's ungrateful servants. I say both of them because it combines the two together.

when we start living in an atmosphere of humility and honesty for which Christ has called us, we must take some risk of uncharted territory, of unpredictable of how our relationship will go.

[19 : 33] And we should expect some hurts as well, the dangers of being hurt in our relationships. many of us who are married, we know that all along we keep on hurting one another, offending one another, and if we don't cultivate the habit of forgiving, that is why many marriages fail today.

That is why many friendships they have been done away with. because we lack that grace of forgiveness. But in all this, whether with friends, with spouse, in the family, what we Christians, that is why we are different from the world.

In the world, the principle of the world is teeth for touch. God is not to God, but as Christians, followers of Christ, the culture must be different.

And that is why Jesus' answer to Peter was so relevant. Peter was thinking that he is showing grace, is showing maturity, and is displaying love by asking seven times.

He was asking for a measurement. But there are two mistakes that Peter made in that question. He knew definitely that his brother or his sister will offend him.

[21 : 20] but little did he know or accept or imply that he too might be an offender. That's the first mistake he made.

The second mistake he made, yes, maybe the rabbi has taught them that if your friend or your sister or anybody offends you, three times is sufficient to forgive.

Otherwise, then you just do away with that person. He was looking for measurement. But Christ answered to him, he said, no, don't look for measurement.

Just keep on forgiving. Keep on forgiving. Keep on forgiving. So the principle I want us to use as Christians is found in Romans 8, verse 18 to 19.

If it's possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written, it is mine to avenge.

[22 : 38] I will repay, says the Lord. We must let go. If we don't let go, let me tell you the physiology of forgiveness or of anger, the moment we see the person that offends us, adrenaline starts flowing in our blood system.

The heart begins to beat faster and pound. We blushed, we trembling, and the person that offends us did not even know.

And when that is happening in our body, check your pulse at that time. Instead of maybe 70, 72, it's racing at 100. Check your blood vessels at that time.

Instead of it to be as big as this, it is narrow like this. So you are giving the heart more job to do to pump blood into the system.

Tell me who is hurting who, me or you, that has offended me. I'm hurting myself. So, in other words, I am killing myself by installment, by fretting for nothing.

[24 : 06] What is it that cannot be forgiven? me? I know infidelity is one of the greatest and the pinnacle of sins, of all offense.

Even that, Jesus said, no sin except the sin blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

That's the only sin that cannot be forgiven. I'm not saying, I'm not encouraging infidelity, no, that's not what I'm saying. But that is what probably I will detest, you will detest, but even that, with grace, it can be forgiven.

when we look at this passage, there was this servant.

He owed the king 10,000 talents. A talent is 60,000 denarii.

[25 : 24] So, in other words, this man owed his master. Let me see now, I think about 160 million denarii he owed the master.

The whole Palestinian income at that time is about 800 talents. And he owed the king 10,000 talents.

Only God knows how many years he has been defrauding the treasury. Only God knows that. And when the king decided to audit the account, what happened is sins were uncovered.

he since found him out that day. And when you look at his approach, he started very well.

He kneeled down. Master, please give me some more time. I will repay every penny. Looking at that, when the whole budget, or the whole income of the nation is only 800 talents, and you owe 10,000 talents, how can you pay it?

[26 : 54] That's the first arrogance he has, thinking. He thought it's big enough to pay the debt, but really, no. But because he begged the king, he begged the master, the master had compassion.

tell your neighbor, have compassion. Please speak loud. Tell your neighbor, have compassion. I want it to sink.

The king has compassion for him. He said, okay, okay, I know you've done this, but you are forgiven. Go, and go free.

In those days, when you are in debt like that, the debtor, his wife, and his children, they will be put in debtor's prison until they pay it back.

I can relate to that, because when I was growing up, there are some wealthy to do in our community when they loan people money. What they would do is to bring their son, to the person that, to their creditor.

[28 : 13] He will continue to work with him until the father is able to pay the debt. And if it's only a girl they have, he will come and work with the missus of the creditor until the father is able to pay the debt.

debt. So, hallelujah, the man was happy. He was going out of the palace or out of the king's presence.

And not soon as he got out of the king's presence, he saw a fellow servant who owed him only a hundred denarii. denarii.

This man owed the treasury or the king sixty million denarii. But that man owed only a hundred denarii.

denarii. if I want to put it in fraction, it's so infinitesimal. And when he saw the debtor now, he held him by the neck.

[29 : 30] And the Bible says, and he began to choke him. He's just been forgiven not quite a long time now. And when he got out, he's forgotten the mercy the compassion, the grace that has been given to him.

He couldn't replicate that to his fellow servant. When other servants saw, he made sure that that man was put to prison there.

When the other servants saw it, they went and put to the king. And of course, if you are the king, if I'm the king, oh, I would do the same.

Oh, you have been forgiven so much, you cannot have forgiven this little. He booked himself back into where he originally belonged, the prison.

Where we were not told whether his wife and children were put into the prison, but he booked himself back into prison. Let's look at what has happened to this guy.

[30 : 48] What's wrong with him, really? What's wrong with him? He was a debtor, he was forgiven.

At the same time, he was a debtor, he was a creditor too, because he loaned somebody a hundred denarii. The money that he did not own anyway because he looted it from the treasury, it wasn't his money, and then he became a prisoner.

So we can bring it back home now. I'm a debtor because I'm a sinner.

You are a debtor. because you are a sinner. And God in his even mercy, his grace that is unlimited, his compassion that is so big, he decides to forgive me and to forgive you.

And when we look at it, we are creditors too because somebody has offended me.

[32 : 18] You are creditors too because somebody has offended you. Then if Christ has forgiven us so much, so much that he gave us life instead of death, he took us from darkness into his marvelous light, and we, who were nothing before, alienated, will become part of his kingdom.

God, why not forgive those who have offended us? And if we don't, I've explained it earlier on that we book ourselves back into prison.

We may not be in a physical prison like that man was, but we will be in the prison of our conscience, and that is the greatest prison to be in prison of our conscience.

Because whenever you see that person, you know you have not forgiven. And you know what? Christ is not asking for wishy-washy kind of forgiveness.

He's not looking for that. He's looking for real forgiveness. And what I believe true forgiveness is is when you see the offender or you remember what they have done and you are not hurt anymore.

[33 : 50] That is when you are truly forgiven. But if you still feel a little bit on the edge, please walk on it. Walk at it.

Try to forgive. In fact, you know, when people come and say they are sorry, we always love that. we could say, oh, then I will forgive.

No, I want us to go to the second level. The second level is they offended us. Some of them we know, some of them we not even know that they have offended us.

But if we choose to forgive in our hearts, from our hearts, and do not feel hurt when we see them or when we remember what they have done, then we have to forgive them.

In fact, you will not even tell anybody. It could be a testimony later on, but you will not say, oh, don't you see what Richard has done for me, to me? See how, and you know what, we worry, we take offense from nothing.

[34 : 59] Oh, didn't you see how he looked at me, or did you hear the language you use? Which language? Really, what was wrong with him is what is wrong with me and wrong with you.

I think I want to pause here. I want you to check yourself. I want you to reflect. Do you need help about this issue of forgiveness?

Do you need help? The gentleman I've just quoted his book. Dr.

Artic and wrote a book. he called it total forgiveness. I don't know how many people have heard about that book. Total forgiveness. We had the book, my wife and I.

We read and read and read and it became tattered because of the hurt we had undergone. and that book.

[36 : 29] God used it to liberate us to total forgiveness. And from there I got it that my own understanding and what we have tried to do is to not let what they have done or them to hurt us anymore.

when we remember it became a testimony for us. If you find it hard or difficult to let go I want us to stand up please.

Let the church stand up. Yes, Christ has forgiven us.

He's forgiving you. He's forgiving me. Have you really forgiven yourself? And that's the question. Because when we can't forgive ourselves, when we don't experience the true forgiveness that God has given to us, we cannot give it back to others.

You must be set free in your spirit that truly I'm forgiving and experience the forgiveness. And if you want to experience that this morning, Christ is here by his spirit.

[37 : 56] He's here by his spirit. I just want you to bow down. Ask God. Yes, Lord, and be honest with him.

We are not Catholic, we are not church of England that do confession, no. But you can confess to God this morning that, Lord, I struggle with this.

And I want to help. And I guarantee you, Psalm 46, 1 is there, the very present help in time of trouble.

Ask God, please help me to be able to forgive this person. Ask him. Ask him. Ask him. Ask him.

Ask the Holy Spirit. Help me to let go.

[38 : 57] I don't want to hurt myself anymore. I don't want to raise my blood pressure unnecessarily. Help me.

I want to experience forgiveness you have given to me. I want to be free. I don't want to put myself in the prison of my conscience, the prison of ingratitude, the prison of ungratefulness.

God will him. If you remember, those that have hurt you, that you find difficult, mention their name in your prayers now.

God is here to help you. Thank God for answer prayers because He said if we ask anything in this name He will do it.

Father we want to thank you for your word that is double edged one to the hearers and one to the speaker we all need help regarding forgiveness.

[40 : 31] Those people we have found difficult to forgive or to let go we release them today. We are not wishing them to be punished anymore.

We are not wishing that we want to take a revenge we let them go scot-free because you have forgiven us our own sin too.

Thank you. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. As I, please sit down. As I close I want to tell you from Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another forgiving each other just as Christ just as in Christ God forgave you.

And in Colossians 3 13 bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. forgive as the Lord forgave you and the last one Matthew 7 verse 12 So in everything do to others what you will have them do to you for this serves up the law and the prophets and I plead with you today choose forgiveness God bless you.

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