

True Forgiveness

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[0:00] This morning we will be reading verses 21 through 35. Matthew chapter 18 verses 21 through 35.

And this morning's sermon is the second in a four-part sermon series on the Christian life. Matthew 18.

Beginning in verse 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? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times.

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents.

[1:11] 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 be made.

So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, have patience with me and I will pay you everything. And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 denarii. And seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, pay what you owe.

So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, have patience with me and I will pay you. He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

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.

[2:26] And the master summoned him and said to him, you wicked servant. I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?

And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt. And that's what he said. So also, my heavenly father will do to every one of you.

If you do not forgive your brother. From your heart. That's right. Father, we look to you in this moment as we.

Prepare to sit under the preaching of your word. Thank you for your word this morning. And Lord, we thank you for your care for us. That you have given us all that we need for life and for godliness. We thank you, Lord, for this section of your word that we have come to this morning. Believing that we will always need it in our lives. And trusting you that providentially you're using it to speak to us as a congregation and as individuals this morning.

[3:51] But give us ears to hear. Would you grant us the grace to heed your word this morning?

Father, we pray in particular for those of us for whom obedience will be difficult. Lord, assure us even now of grace to obey.

So we pray that you would watch over our hearts and the preaching of your word in these moments. In Jesus' name. Amen. One of the realities of living in a fallen world is sin.

And it will remain a reality until the day that Jesus returns. We will deal with sin. We sin against others.

And others sin against us. And scripture places a duty on both parties to go and to seek reconciliation.

[5:03] When you read scripture, you will find that the witness of scripture is that there's a duty on both parties to seek forgiveness.

Forgiveness. In this passage that we have come to this morning that we just read, it deals with when others sin against us. And really it deals with the hardest part of forgiveness.

It's easy to receive forgiveness. When we sin against others, it's easy for us to receive those words from them when they say, I forgive you. When others sin against us.

It is far more difficult. Not just to form the words, but to truly extend forgiveness to that other person. In a sincere and in a genuine way. And so in this passage that we have come to this morning, Jesus addresses the hardest part of forgiveness.

[6:08] When others sin against us, and we need to forgive them. And I believe that every single person, as I look around the room this morning, has experienced this.

You have had others to sin against you. And perhaps some of us are facing it this morning. Perhaps some of us have had others to sin against us this week or recently.

And we're wrestling with this whole issue of forgiveness. Maybe it's repeated. Maybe it's not the first time that this has happened.

It has been an ongoing situation. But wherever we are this morning, wherever we find ourselves, whether the issue of forgiveness is not on your radar this morning or it is on your radar, I believe that God has something to say to us, all of us, about forgiveness.

And I titled the message, True Forgiveness, because I think we also know that sometimes we can extend false forgiveness. Sometimes we can extend forgiveness right from here.

[7:21] And no further. And so this morning, what I believe the Lord wants to address us concerning from this passage is true forgiveness.

Two simple points this morning. First, true forgiveness extended. And second, true forgiveness withheld.

Let's consider the first one, true forgiveness extended. The background to this passage is a teaching that Jesus had just done in verses 15 through 20, where he talks about how we are to deal with when somebody sins against us.

And not just someone, actually. When a brother sins against you. And I think it's important to establish this right at the outset, that what Jesus is addressing is sins against one another in the household of faith.

Now, we can certainly extend this broadly. But what he's addressing is sins against us between fellow believers.

[8:28] And it's very clear when you look at this earlier teaching that he does, which I didn't read, but I'll refer to. In verses 15 through 20, when he says, if your brother sins against you, you are to go to your brother alone, not including other people, not telling other people, and explain to your brother his sin.

And if he hears you, then you've won your brother. And then he says, if your brother doesn't hear you, go and get two or three others and try to get him to hear you. If he doesn't, then you are to go to the church.

Now, clearly, you can't do that with some unbeliever because the church has no jurisdiction over that unbeliever. And so the context is, how do we handle situations of sin in the community of faith? And this helps us to see something else. It helps us to see that even in the community of faith, we sin against one another. It helps us to see that the same experiences that have happened to us in the world, they also can happen to us in the church.

So Jesus told this parable, he said, this is the way you're supposed to deal with the brother who sins against you. And clearly, Peter was listening to him. And Peter pondered, and maybe a situation came to his mind that was recurring.

[9:51] And in verse 21, sorry, in verse 22, Peter asks a question. I'm sorry, I'm getting lost.

In verse 21, Peter asks the question. Peter says, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times.

Now, in Peter's mind, Peter was being generous when he said as many as seven times because typical rabbinical teaching of that day was that you did not have to forgive in perpetuity.

You didn't have to forgive forever and ever. You had a limited amount of time to forgive. And one popular view was that you forgave three times. The fourth time, you were not obligated to forgive.

So Peter was being generous when he said, shall I forgive him seven times? He was doubling plus one what the typical view was in his day. And Jesus says to Peter, Jesus answers him and Jesus

says, I do not say to you seven times.

[11:04] But I say to you 77 times. Some translations may have 70 times seven times. Now, clearly, Jesus is not telling Peter, Peter, I want you to keep track of the number of times everyone sins against you.

And make sure that it doesn't go to the 78th time. And at the 78th time, you can withhold forgiveness from them. Jesus is not saying that at all. Jesus is using Peter's own words to teach Peter a lesson that he is to be forgiving in an ongoing way.

He is to be forgiving. Perpetually. He's saying to Peter, Peter, if that happens, it's not just seven times that you count it, but you just forgive. In an ongoing way.

And so Jesus then does what he typically does to reinforce something that he wants to teach.

He tells a parable. And a parable is a simple story to illustrate a spiritual lesson. So he tells this parable about two debtors.

[12:16] He tells this parable about two men who owed debts. It's quite interesting that Jesus does not tell a parable on forgiveness itself, in terms of the details of the parable.

He tells a parable about debts. And the first man owed the king a huge sum of money. And you can tell by the amount of money that this servant owed the king.

The king had to be a wealthy man to allow this one person to owe him this large amount. Of money. And in the parable, Jesus says it was 10,000 talents.

And a talent was a measurement of money. If you have a ESV Bible, it would show you right at the bottom that a talent was a measurement of money.

This man owed 10,000 talents. And we're also told in that footnote in the ESV Bible that one talent was the equivalent of 20 years wages. One talent, 20 years wages.

[13:20] So this man owed 10,000 talents. So the equivalent of 200,000 years of earnings for a laborer.

He owed this king a huge amount of money. So clearly, for this king to have one person owed him that amount, and from what we could see, he has other people he is settling debts with, this was a very wealthy king.

Well, naturally, this servant can't pay. And so the king did what was normal in that day. The king said, okay, you're going to be sold.

You, your wife, your children, and all that you have. And clearly, it was not that what this man had and the value of himself and his wife and children would pay the debt.

He wouldn't pay the debt. It was just the way it was to be dealt with. But the servant pleads.

[14:24] No doubt seeing the reality that his wife and children are going to be sold into slavery. Probably could have taken it if he was going to be sold. But his wife and his children as well. He falls to his knees and he just makes a desperate promise.

He says, listen, if you give me time, if you be patient with me, I will pay it back. I'll pay you everything. Now, clearly, he couldn't pay it.

He couldn't live long enough. If he lived a thousand years and worked every single day, he could not pay it off because he owed 200,000 years worth of debt.

And so this was a stalling tactic. This was nothing more than desperation. Oh, please give me time and I will pay you back. But that was really not the case in terms of a real possibility.

And so we see in verse 27 that this king does an amazing thing. The king does an amazing thing. The king did more than this man asked.

[15:34] The man only asked for time. What the king did is the king said, you know what? It's forgiven. Paid in full. It's an amazing thing for this king to do when you think of this amount of money.

Now, let me ask you this. You don't need to put your hand up. But I can almost guarantee that in this room, many present have people who owe them. Now, don't laugh or smile because you'll give yourself away.

How many of you thought about just saying, don't worry about it? This is not an easy thing to do just to say, hey, don't worry about it because probably we lent those funds and can certainly use those funds.

But this king forgives it all. He didn't tell the man, well, here's what the king could have done. He could have said, okay, I'm going to give you a break.

But I'm going to sell your property. It won't put you and your wife and your children into slavery. But I want at least something for the debt.

[16:38] I'm going to sell your property. And you can go free. Or he could have said, well, look, I'll negotiate it down. I'll settle it down to an amount that you could pay.

I want you to pay something. I'm going to let you go. He doesn't do any of that. This gracious king forgives the entire debt.

And brothers and sisters, that is a picture of true forgiveness extended. That's the first part of the parable.

The second part of the parable deals with a second servant. And he owed money. And it starts in verse 28.

And this second servant, though, had the experience where his forgiveness of debt, which he needed, was withheld. And this brings me to the second and final point that I have this morning.

[17:39] True forgiveness withheld. Look at what it says in verse 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. Now, from the text itself, it doesn't seem like he happened to run into this guy.

You know, I just got forgiven 10,000 talents, and I just was going about my business, and I ran into this guy who owed me. It doesn't seem to be the case. It says he found him.

It says he found him. When that same servant ran out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.

And if you notice how this servant who had just been forgiven this huge amount of debt does, this particular servant owed him a hundred denarii.

[18:46] And again, a footnote that we have tells us that one denarius was equivalent to a day's work.

That was the wage you got for one day's work. So this man owed the one who had just been forgiven, he owed him a hundred denarii, a hundred days' work, a little over three months' worth of work.

And what we see is that this servant who had just been forgiven the debt, he doesn't even extend the kindness that his master extended to him.

The master called him in, called him to give an account, and really dealt with him in a very courteous manner. But he goes to this guy, and he grabs him by the neck and begins to choke him. He says, I want you to pay what you owe me. And when you consider the comparison between the two amounts, I mean, this guy owed him change.

[19:49] This guy owed him the kind of money that we would go in the store and we'd purchase something, and with the change we'd throw it in a cup. That's the kind of money that really was owed. But he starts to choke this guy, and he demands payment.

I notice that this servant does the same thing he did. He falls to his knees and he begins to plead. He says, hey, give me time.

Be patient with me. If you'd be patient with me, I'll pay you the whole thing. But he would have none of it. He took this fellow servant of his, put him in prison, and says, when you pay it, you can come out.

Now, in his mind, he probably thought he was being merciful to this guy compared to what was going to happen to him. He probably thought, well, you know, at least I'm not selling you into slavery. I'm putting you in prison.

And I'm not selling your wife and your children into slavery. And I'm giving you a break. So he could have been deceiving himself that he was being merciful to this guy in some way.

[20:54] But what he did was not merciful. It was merciless. We're told in this parable that Jesus tells us that his fellow servants, they observed it.

They knew what he had been forgiven. They observed him dealing with his fellow servant in this merciless way. And they go and they tell the king. And the king is furious. And rightly so, the king is furious. And look how Jesus concludes the parable, starting in verse 32. Then his master summoned him and said to him, And you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you? And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt.

And Jesus concludes with these words. So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

[22:08] This merciless servant was called a wicked servant. And the reason the king called him a wicked servant is that his heart was unchanged.

His heart was unaffected by this massive debt that he had been released from. The prospect of him, his wife, and his children being sold into slavery and that he would lose every single thing that he had, all of that happened to this man.

His heart was unchanged. His heart was ruthlessly unchanged that he would go and he would choke a fellow servant for change and throw him in prison when he was not able to pay it.

Well, if we miss the point of the parable, Jesus ensures in verse 35 that we don't miss it.

And he helps us to see that he is answering that question that Peter put to him earlier when he says in verse 35, So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

[23:31] Now Jesus helps us. Although Jesus himself does not explain this parable, Jesus helps us to be able to put this parable together and to draw the lesson that he is actually teaching from it.

Notice what he said earlier in verse 23. He says, Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like. So Jesus is teaching us something about what the kingdom of heaven is like.

And when we understand that, we're able to say that God the father is like this wealthy king.

God the father is like this wealthy king. And every one of us owes him a great debt because of our many sins. Every single one of us owes him a debt that we could never repay.

Our sin debt is like that 10,000 talents. It's like 200,000 years worth of work. That we could never live long enough to earn.

[24:40] That we could never. It is an impossibility. Every single one of us owes that kind of debt. Each one of us who has come to Christ, that's what we've been forgiven.

We've been forgiven this massive amount of debt. And it is the realization of the magnitude of our sins before God that helps us to appreciate the forgiveness that we've received.

But see, what we do is we have a tendency to minimize our own sin and maximize another person's sin. So we're just like the man in the parable who would receive this huge forgiveness of debt.

He minimizes it. It doesn't affect his heart. It doesn't make him grateful. But he goes to his fellow servant who owes him change and he makes a big deal out of it. Such a big deal.

I need to choke you. You need to pay me what you owe right now. But it is the realization of what God has forgiven us that causes us to appreciate his forgiveness and causes us to posture our own hearts to extend forgiveness.

[26:00] And one of the reasons we don't have an appreciation for the magnitude of our sins is we don't have an appreciation for the one against whom we truly sin.

So when we sin a lot of times, when we sin against another person, we tend to think and have that person more in view than we have God in view.

And the witness of Scripture is, is that all sin is against God. He is the one we ultimately sin against. And David saw this in Psalm 51, when not minimizing his sin against Uriah and against Bathsheba, he said, against you only have I sinned.

Because he recognized that ultimately his sin was against a holy and a righteous God. But when all we see is a fellow sinner who we have sinned against, when we see our sins only as demerits, which God, we see forgiveness as you tear them up and say, don't worry about it.

We don't appreciate the forgiveness of sins, the magnitude of it, excuse me, that God has given to us. Here's how John Stott explains it.

[27:16] He writes, in his book, *The Cross of Christ*, every sin is a breach of what Jesus called the first and great commandment.

Every sin. Every sin is a breach of what Jesus called the first and great commandment. Not just by failing to love God with all our being, but by actively refusing to acknowledge and obey him as our creator and Lord, we have rejected the position of dependence, which our createdness inevitably involves, and made a bid for independence, our autonomy, which is to claim the position occupied by God alone.

Sin is not a regrettable lapse from conventional standards. Its essence is hostility to God, issuing an active rebellion against him.

That's the nature of sin that God forgives. It is against him personally, and more than that, it is active rebellion against him. He is our creator and has done nothing but good for us.

We rebel against him. Every single sin is personally against him. But he doesn't say, don't worry about it.

[28:52] He doesn't say, hey, I'll let you slide. He doesn't do that. As a matter of fact, he cannot do that because he is too holy to overlook our sin and say, don't worry about it.

He is too holy to overlook our sin and cheer it up as a demerit slip. And at the same time, he's just too loving to leave us in the condition of that servant on his knees with 200,000 years worth of debt that he could never repay.

No chance of repaying. He's too loving to leave us in that condition, but he's too righteous to say, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it.

And in a sense, God has this dilemma that he has to overcome, this dilemma of his holiness that will not allow him to overlook sin and his love, the desire to rescue us from sin.

And here's how John Stott, again, who I appeal to, how he explains what God did, how he was able to extend mercy to undeserving sinners like us, hopeless sinners like us.

[30:06] He writes, how then could God express his holy love? His love in forgiving sinners without compromising his holiness and his holiness in judging sinners without frustrating his love?

On the cross, divine mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled. God's holy love was satisfied.

You see, it is in the cross that Jesus, through the sacrifice of his own son, punished sin. And it's in the cross, through Jesus Christ, that God extends mercy to sinners.

that when we compare the forgiveness that we have received from this holy, righteous God against whom we have sinned to the sin debt that others have for us, those who have sinned against us, it's like this massive amount, 200,000 years worth of wages compared to change, a little more than three months worth of wages.

And see, when we, any person who remains unaware of the magnitude of the sins that he has been forgiven of will not extend forgiveness to those who sin against him.

[31:49] But when we are aware, when we are mindful of what God has forgiven us, then we extend mercy, we extend forgiveness to those who sin against us.

Learning how to forgive others is based on learning how much God has forgiven us. And when we struggle with unforgiveness, what we are giving evidence to is we have forgotten the magnitude of sin that God has forgiven us of.

We have forgotten what it is to be under the weight of sin and condemnation. We have forgotten. And we need to remember again.

When we don't forgive, God does not take it lightly. When we forgive, God does not gloss it over. And the reason is that persistent, unrelenting, unforgiveness is evidence that we have not known God's forgiveness.

And that's the point that Jesus makes in verse 34. Verse 34 says, And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all that debt.

[33:16] So how long was he going to be in jail? Forever. And the reason is if he was out of jail working every single day, working his fingers to

the bone, he would die before he paid the debt off.

Being put in prison, he doesn't have a chance of paying it off. He was going to die in prison. And when we liken the kingdom of heaven to that part of the parable, what that speaks about is eternal damnation.

That speaks about eternal lostness. And brothers and sisters, these are strong words to be spoken in the household of faith. these are strong words to be spoken among those who would profess to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

But see, it is only when we extend forgiveness to others that we give evidence that we have received forgiveness from God. And this is not to say that we don't struggle with unforgiveness. This is not to say that there are times when we have been sinned against in particular ways that we struggle to extend forgiveness. There's a difference between struggling to extend forgiveness and being steeped in unrelenting, deep-rooted unforgiveness.

[34:46] It's a big difference. God knows. God knows our frame. He knows that we are dust. He knows from the depths of our hearts when we desire to extend forgiveness, but in our flesh, in our weaknesses, we're struggling to do that.

We are moving in that direction, but we're not making much progress, but we are in the direction of extending forgiveness. forgiveness. But when we are steeped and we are unrelenting in unforgiveness, we have given evidence that we do not know God's forgiveness.

And that's the point that Jesus makes. You know, sometimes we can say, oh, you don't know how badly I've been sinned against.

Jesus says this, so also my heavenly father will do to every one of you without exception.

Some of you have heard me share this before, but I remember for many years as a pastor, whenever I taught on forgiveness, forgiveness, I would really have a hard time understanding why people didn't forgive.

[36:12] Why do you struggle with forgiveness? Little did I know that that was based on my own experience. I thought I had experienced the degrees and the extent to which people could sin against me, and I would be willing to forgive.

forgive. But some years ago, I had a very difficult experience where someone sinned against me. And I struggled to forgive.

Wanted to, but I struggled. Struggled for a long time. And I remember we had a guest speaker to come and he stayed with us and he said he was prompted to bring a book for me.

He brought me a book on forgiveness. And I'll never forget. I took that book in the bedroom. I thanked him for it. Took the book in the bedroom and I threw it on the desk.

That was where my heart was. I didn't want to read a book on forgiveness because my heart was so steeped at that point in unforgiveness.

[37:26] But God had mercy on me. forgiveness. And I was able to come to a place to genuinely from my heart extend forgiveness.

But there are no exceptions here brothers and sisters. He said this is what God the Heavenly Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

heart. It's from the heart. Not from the lips. It's from the heart. Jesus says forgiveness must come from our hearts because that is true forgiveness.

And we can only forgive from our hearts when our hearts have been transformed. because that is true forgiveness. And when you think about it, do you realize that to truly forgive, to truly forgive someone who has sinned against you, to truly forgive, that is a miracle.

That is an act of God working in our hearts, working in our lives to enable us to truly forgive. No strings attached.

[38:50] Not I'll forgive you but don't do it again. But to truly forgive, to truly release it when we have been hurt, sinned against, offended by the actions of another.

When we forgive, that is a miracle. That is an act of God's divine mercy at work in our hearts and in our lives.

And so I want to ask you this morning, how aware are you of the magnitude of your sin and your rebellion against God that he has graciously forgiven in Jesus Christ?

And I would say this morning that if you are in a place where you're not forgiving, you're in a place where you feel that that hundred denarii is something to hold on, then you need to look back and reconsider again the magnitude of your own sin and how much God has forgiven you because somehow you've lost focus of that.

Are there individuals in this local church who have sinned against you but you're struggling to forgive? forgive. And if there are, our starting point is to do what Jesus says in Matthew 18, 15 through 20, to go to that individual and speak with that individual and seek to win that individual through admission of sin and the extension of forgiveness and taking the process as far as it needs to be taken.

[40:47] Scripture tells us in Proverbs 19, 11 that we are to, it says that it is the glory of a man to overlook an offense. Meaning that we demonstrate our belonging to Christ in a transformed heart when we are able to overlook offenses.

And overlook doesn't mean I just won't say anything to you but I'll harbor it in my heart. Overlook means that we're able to truly release it, we're able to truly extend forgiveness in that situation. We can relate to that person and that situation is not going to impair our relationship.

If it is impairing it and you are having difficulty related to that person then what you need to do is you need to recognize that's something you cannot overlook. You need to speak with that person. You need to seek to make that right.

And be aware at times too that some of the things that we may be bothered by may not be sin. And we may go to a person and say hey you know here's what you did and then it just is a preference thing.

It's a matter of perspective and it may not be you may be persuaded in your mind that the person sinned against you. There are some things that we just have to leave to the Lord knowing that there's going to be a day when he will make all things right.

[42:10] but to truly overlook a minor offense to truly overlook it we have to truly forgive it.

Not just from here but from within the core of our very being. And that requires divine help as well. None of us is good enough to truly forgive on our own.

that God does not help us to forgive we will not forgive. When we think of this call to forgive our brothers from our hearts let's remember that when we consider this parable and we try to liken it to the kingdom of heaven and liken it to God himself God the father knows all things so he doesn't need anyone to report to him about any kind of injustice about any kind of wickedness that we may be doing without extending forgiveness.

He knows our hearts. I can say to you I forgive you and the people around can say wonderful wonderful that he forgave but God knows whether I truly did for my heart.

And so he is not limited in his knowledge. he doesn't need anyone to report the facts to him. He knows our hearts.

[43:43] And let me say this as well. Sometimes we extend forgiveness and we have to renew that forgiveness.

We extend it and we have to renew it. See we don't we don't not forgive. We can we can forgive truly.

We can forgive sincerely. We don't forgive perfectly. We do no perfect act. Nothing that we do is perfectly right and righteous in God's sight.

Our best acts of righteousness are tainted by sin. God knows our sincerity.

And he knows whether our lips express forgiveness when our hearts harbor unforgiveness. And he knows like the psalmist says in Psalm 103 he knows our frame.

[44:52] He knows that we are dust. dust. And he knows what it's like to look down and to see his dust creation seeking to extend forgiveness and doing it in a far less than perfect way than he does.

He understands. I'm aware this morning that the message may not apply to many of us.

Perhaps it applies to some of us right now. But I can tell you this. If we live long enough it will apply to us. Where we need to extend forgiveness and we need to be aware of God's forgiveness of us to extend that forgiveness and we need to be aware that we need his help to truly forgive from our hearts.

As I said earlier this message and the power that Jesus teaches is really in the context of the local church. It's in the context of brothers and sisters in Christ.

But it can be extended. The principles are still the same. It can be extended. We probably cannot take it to its final conclusion if there's some unbeliever who we are in relationship with maybe at work or a neighbor and we have differences and they've sinned against us in particular ways and we may be able to take it to a certain point.

[46:22] Maybe we can't go beyond just showing them their sin. Maybe there is nobody else who we could bring in who they would respect to take it beyond that. But the whole point is that we don't want to have unforgiveness in our hearts.

So when we consider the point of what Jesus teaches us in this parable, the point is this, those who receive God's forgiveness must extend God's forgiveness.

Those who receive God's forgiveness must extend God's forgiveness. So to put it another way, forgiven people must be forgiving people. Forgiven people must be forgiven people.

Again, when we forgive, we give evidence that we have been forgiven. Unforgiven people cannot truly forgive from the heart.

And so the question for us this morning is, have you been forgiven? And if you have been, are you forgiving? We should be able to say yes to both.

[47:45] one. If we can only say yes to one, then we have some work to do before the Lord. As a matter of fact, it's an impossibility to say yes to the first question, have you been forgiven?

And then say no to the second, are you forgiven? forgiven? It is possible to say yes, I've been forgiven.

And acknowledge sincerely before the Lord, but I'm not forgiving, not forgiving as I should. And cry out to God for help. We need divine help to do that. And again, one of the ways is to reflect on the magnitude of our own sin.

Then ask the Lord to help us to extend the same mercy and grace. grace that we receive. I thought I would do something a little differently this morning knowing that we, I felt the sermon would be much shorter than normal.

And I've been talking for some time about allowing for a short time of question and answer after the sermon. And I should have announced it before I started so that if you had a question you could just jot it down.

[49:06] But I just thought I would allow for that. Any questions? I know it's a complex matter and you may have a lingering question or two and I'll do my best to try to answer.

Anyone has a question on this? there's a question. Could we get a mic to Faye? It's right there, Faye. She'll be right on the front row. Thank you.

That's interesting because actually I just decided to jot questions down which is not something I normally would do during the sermon. One of the questions that I have here is what if you have concluded that a person...

What if you... What if you have come to the conclusion that the person who would have sinned against you is not a brother or a sister? Though they may profess to be a brother or sister but based on whatever, fruit, whatever.

You've come to the conclusion based on what you think is solid reasoning that this person is really not a Christian. That's a very good question. And I think we see the wisdom of the teaching of Jesus in the context that we have here in Matthew 18.

[50:44] Coming to that conclusion what Jesus says in the household of faith is not a personal opinion. We only come to that conclusion after a process.

You've gone to that person. They didn't hear you. You take two or three others. This is what Jesus says in Matthew 18, 15 through 20. Those two don't hear you.

He says, then you take it to the church. He says, and then if, that person doesn't hear the church, then to you, you're to treat that person as a Gentile, as an unbeliever.

So you wouldn't, so you wouldn't arrive at the point to say, well, this person just is not a believer on your own. Are you defining, how are you defining household of faith?

Say again? How are you defining here household of faith? Are you defining that broadly? Well, if you think about it, outside of kingdom life, for example? I don't think that we can. I don't think that we can because it just wouldn't work.

[51:48] I mean, even if we tried to go right next door to a new life to a Baptist church and try to resolve something like this, it probably is going to be filled with all kinds of issues and differences of doctrine and other kinds of things.

So I'm referring to a person outside of kingdom life. Yeah, so that's why I was saying Jesus addresses this in the household of faith. When we go outside of the household of faith, some of the principles may work, but not all of them.

So the most you can do, I believe, outside of the household of faith is to go to that person one on one. Now, let's say it's in a family. Maybe there is one or two other believers who you have in that family who you might be able to take to help you to resolve that situation.

But outside the family of faith, there's no way that you can take it to its final conclusion to treat that person as an unbeliever. Anyone else? All right.

Well, thanks for writing. I see Amanda looking like she had something, but you're not sure. Not sure. All right. Well, I will try to do this with more notice so that if you do have questions, you can answer them.

[53:08] But I think we all agree this is not an easy thing to do, but it's what the Lord calls us to do. He calls us to do this as Christians.

This is a part of the Christian life. And we can't do it on our own. We need the crowd to God for grace. Let's pray.