

Matthew 18:21-35

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[0:00] I'm going to read the text.

As a whole chunk. It's important that you listen now. Because like stories, like illustrations, it's good to hear the whole thing, right? Because it all builds, right? So listen now. Then as we go through, we're going to kind of break it up.

And we're going to make applications and observations as we go. So starting in Matthew 18, 21 to 35. 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? And 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.

This is Jesus' illustration. So 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.

[1:20] And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold with his wife and his children and all that he had in payment to 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 the servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that 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 the fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, have patience with me and I will pay you. He refused and went and put him into prison until he should pay the last 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. And then the master summoned him and said to him, you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

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

[2:30] So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. Dear heavenly father, Lord, we thank you that we can open this text together.

God, we thank you for Jesus' kindness to illustrate spiritual truths for us in such powerful ways.

God, I'm humbled by this text. I'm humbled because it's a difficult call.

God, there's been lots of sin done against people that ought not to have been done. There's pain and there's hardship. And these pains and these wounds are real and they can be raw. But Lord, you call us to forgive.

You call us to high calling of forgiveness. One that does not hold other sins against them, but forgives because we have been forgiven. God, I'm humbled by this text because it speaks of glory. It speaks of the glorious forgiveness that we have in Christ. Lord, and so when the things come that are hard in life for us to deal with and for us to forgive, you give us a greater picture of a bigger message, a bigger story, one of Jesus' redemption of the world, of our hearts, of our forgiveness.

[3:36] And so God, I pray that you would empower us to hear your word and be changed by it. Help us to be people who mimic the forgiveness of our Savior in our interactions with other people. God, I pray that you would weight us down with the high calling.

Lord, it's a costly call and a hard call to forgive in some circumstances, really in all circumstances. But Lord, what I ask that you would hit us harder with is the marvelous gift of your grace and your forgiveness so that we can be a people equipped to forgive no matter how hard.

God, be with us. God, my words are so inept. God, without your help, I'm so ill-equipped to pass on this powerful message. But Lord, with your help, I pray that you would allow us all to gaze Jesus, gaze at him and see all that he's done, and be empowered to live as he has lived, and forgive as he has forgiven.

Amen. All right, so my aim in this sermon, you can go to the next slide. Don't get too excited about the slides.

It's just the text. My aim in this sermon is just simply to walk through the text, chunk by chunk, to kind of explain some of it and to apply it.

[4:50] So we're just going to try to regurgitate Jesus' teaching together as we walk through the text in small chunks. So read the first one. 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?

And Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times. So at this point, I mean, I'm going to make a case for this, but at this point, we should be leaning in a bit, because we can relate to Peter.

Two weeks ago, Dave taught us about church discipline, right, and how we as a church are supposed to take sin seriously and pursue our brother in sin to restore him as a brother and to restore him to Christ, right?

But Peter is putting the pieces together. So he says, hey, if we are going to be a church that is serious about sin, this is really going to push my limits of personal forgiveness, right? So it's going to push us where we're not comfortable to be.

So Peter, he puts these pieces together before our eyes. And for Peter, this was not simply a theoretical question, right? Peter was a man of action and a man of passion.

[5:55] He thought as he spoke, and when he spoke, he spoke from the heart. And it is Peter's passion and his realness that draws us in. As one author puts it, do you hear Peter suffering in this question?

He is not speaking theoretically. Other people batter him, and we can identify with that. Peter does not and cannot trust his nearest and dearest brother. Being wronged once would be enough, but it happens repeatedly.

These sins against Peter hurt him. They aggravate him, weary him. Essentially, Peter is asking, when can I start to put up boundaries between my brother and me? When can I start to protect myself?

When can I say enough is enough? And we all can identify with this pain and frustration. Peter's been hurt, and he's asking an earnest question. And I think we've all been in that place.

Maybe we're in that place now. We've been in that place in the past, right? But we move on to Jesus' response. But before we move on to his response, I'd like to make two quick applications. First, for the person who's inclined to separate the messy details of their life from the theological concepts presented in this passage.

[6:59] Please don't do that, right? The concepts are not that hard to grasp in this passage. They're just hard to do, right? No amount of information is going to change our hearts and enable us to forgive people when it's hard, right?

And so Jesus is aiming his application at our hearts, which is, you'll see that throughout the text, but that's also one of the reasons why he illustrates it with the story. Second, for the person who is currently wrestling with a painful situation where forgiveness is hard.

You're not at risk of only listening to your mind. You're at risk of being overcome by your current suffering. Well, for you, this text provides a really helpful but small indication of the beginning.

It's important to note that Peter, when he was frustrated over the sin of others, when he had concerns and questions about forgiveness, where does he go? He goes directly to Jesus, right? And so I think sometimes within the church, when we have hard questions, we go everywhere but Jesus himself, right?

God has given us a great resource in the church and we should absolutely invest in the church. But we also need to take it straight to Jesus because he is the one who understands our hearts and he

is the one who can empower us to forgive and to do the things that humanly we couldn't do. [8:07] So if you're in this place and you're suffering and it's hard and there is costly forgiveness that God is calling you to do, Jesus is the one who can enable that. You can't do that on your own. No amount of information is going to do that. So go to him.

He's the source. And yeah. So let's look at Jesus' response to Peter's inquiry. Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times but 77 times.

Yeah, we'll stay here for a bit. So Peter, right? Peter had been around long enough. He'd been walking with Jesus long enough, right? The common religious practice of the day was that the religious teacher said that you ought to forgive three times, right?

So Peter's like, well, I've seen Jesus and I've seen his ministry long enough. I know he's calling us to a higher standard than that. So I'm going to offer up seven times. Should I forgive seven times? And Jesus says, no, 77 times.

Basically he's saying, Peter, I want you to be profoundly and persistently merciful. I want you to be unrestrained in your forgiveness. And Peter must have been stunned and so are we sometimes.

[9:11] He must have been perplexed thinking, yes, you know, you might think, yes, forgiveness sounds great. And yes, I desire to be merciful and generous in my forgiveness. But you don't know the hurt that she has caused. If I forgive him, he will just continue to do what he's doing.

You just don't understand how hard it's been. Well, make no mistake, Jesus is definitely saying that we are to be extravagant in our forgiveness. So you might be saying, well, I know that Jesus wants me to forgive this person, blank.

Right? But that's not that easy. I don't have forgiveness for this person. I'm too hurt and too angry. I don't even like this person. And it's here where Jesus says, well, let me tell you another story.

And as we listen to this story, things will become clearer. Moving to the next slide, verse 23.

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

Here again, Jesus' response surprises us, right? Peter is coming to him with an earnest question about personal forgiveness, right? Most of us, what we would do is we're just like, so what happened? How did it make you feel?

[10:24] How many times did it happen? Right? No, Jesus doesn't deal with that. Instead, he works to tell a story to reorient Peter's perspective. And in reorienting Peter's perspective, he is reorienting ours.

And the point may be subtle, but Jesus is reorienting us to remind us that we live in God's kingdom and not our own. Now, this is really important for us because in the face of sin done against us, isn't it true that we like to place, move ourselves into the place of God, right?

Isn't it true that if I refuse to forgiveness, I'm acting as if I was the king? In my heart, I take the place of God and seek to defend my own kingdom. Jesus knows that we are all naturally all about our own kingdoms.

And when we are concerned with our own kingdoms, we fiercely seek our own protection and fight for the justice that we desire. Again, Jesus reminds us who we are and who he is. We are servants of the true king.

He is our father. In the midst of your pain, he is still on the throne. And he cares for you. You are valuable to him. He sees us and he knows us. He sees your pain and he knows your pain.

[11:36] He is just, he will repay. Leave room for his wrath. Let him be God and trust him. This is what we saw with Joseph in that text in Genesis 50, right?

Joseph's brother sold him into slavery because they didn't like him. They wanted to get rid of him, right? Joseph finds himself in power in Egypt and his brothers actually need him to sustain their lives, right?

And so they come to him and when they discover that he's their brother, this man who's in power, they're fearful that he's going to take out his anger on them, right? And Joseph's response is, do not fear for am I in the place of God.

So though Joseph had every power, all the power he needed to enact judgment upon his brothers, he says, no, you must understand, I am but a servant of the true king, right?

And we need to have that mentality when we're faced with difficult things. We need to understand that it is God who's in control. We may not understand God's plan.

[12:34] When another person means evil against us, God means it for good. He even uses another sin against us in redemptive ways. It is God's will, not the will of people who hurt us. That is the control and reality of the details of our lives.

If God isn't sovereign, then bitterness, self-protection, or revenge makes sense. But when we perceive and embrace God's sovereignty, we are able to forgive even the deepest wrongs. This is why we cannot bear a grudge or take revenge.

This is at the heart of true forgiveness. So the idea is, right, we recognize that we're not the king, right?

And we recognize that God is actually in control and God can use even broken things for his glory and for our good. It frees us to forgive, right? And when we forget that, when we place ourselves on the throne, the only thing that makes sense is retaliation, is to hold a grudge against somebody. But we need to take ourselves out of our little kingdoms and remind ourselves that we are in the kingdom of God and we trust him because he is a good king. And it might not be what we want, right?

[13:40] Because sometimes things come into our lives that are harder than we want and they really rub against us. But we got to understand, it's what we need and God is good, right? So even if somebody hurts us, our only alternative other than to trust the Lord and to forgive is revenge, right?

We might take this out in subtle ways, give them silent treatment, talk behind their backs. We might do it in more blatant ways, right? We lash out in anger. We do these things to hurt or malign this person, right?

But in the grand scheme of things, if we step back, we understand that this does nothing in the grand picture. This does nothing to secure the justice that we desire, right? I've been wronged and this justice needs to be played out.

But when I play it out in my mind or in my actions, no true justice is served. We need a God who is in control. We need a God who can bring real justice and real comfort and real help and real power, right?

And so though we aren't the center of our kingdoms that we want to be, we actually don't want to be. We want a God who's in control. We want a God that we can trust. And so we need to remember just where we're oriented in the grand story of the world.

[14:45] Make sense? Everybody tracking? Yeah? I'm getting some active listening. That's good. All right. So Jesus continues in verse 24.

When he began to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold with his wife and his children and all that he had in payment to be made. So Jesus continues to press in this idea of the kingdom of heaven and he drives it down to a personal level.

So those of Jesus telling a story about this servant, he's really answering Peter's question about forgiveness. And he's therefore answering our questions, right?

And so this illustration is meant to be understood personally and we are meant to place ourselves in the midst of this story. So what is happening, right? Just like this king, this master who's settling accounts, he's settling accounts for 10,000 talents, right?

So if you're not up to date on your ancient currency exchange rates, that's about 200,000 years of labor for an average worker, right?

[15:58] And so if you make assumptions and translate that to current dollars, it'd be about \$14 billion. But it doesn't really matter the amount of money, right?

The point is Jesus is talking to his disciples. He's talking to people that that money is more than they could ever fathom, right? If we think \$14 billion, we know people out in the world can pay \$14 billion.

But he's talking to fishermen, right? This is more than they can imagine and that's the idea of this illustration. There is a debt that needs to be paid that is greater than that they could ever pay. So

even if you sell yourself, your spouse, your kids, your house, your cars, your camper, liquidate your retirement fund and savings account, it would only still be a drop in the bucket towards paying back your debt.

So what Jesus wants us to see, the point is clear, the servant owes more than he could ever pay. And what Jesus wants us to see is the amount of debt that we have incurred, right?

And we don't naturally believe or grasp the amount of guilt that we have incurred before holy God. But the reality is that we all have a massive and ever-growing debt before the Lord.

[17:04] the master initially orders this man to be sold along with his wife, children, and everything he has. But when this happens in the story, note the master's demeanor.

He is not angry. He is not sharp. But he's factual about the need to liquidate everything of value in this man's life in order to recoup some of the loss. So why does the master do this?

Because he wants his servant to recognize the depth of his debt. And likewise, Jesus wants to mercifully awaken us. He wants to highlight your need for mercy.

He wants the reality of your standing before him to transform you. He wants you to understand the weight of your guilt so that you might turn from your unforgiving heart and respond to others' sin with humility and gentleness and kindness.

And this is a big concept for us to understand, right? Because when we come at a hard thing and we don't understand that the depth of our sin before the Lord and the greatness of our forgiveness, these little things seem so big to us, right?

[18:17] Little things compose our minds when we forget that we've been forgiven a debt that we could never pay. So moving on to verse 26.

This is the servant's response. 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 his debt.

It's kind of interesting, right? We talk about this debt, right? That's way bigger than this servant could ever fathom. So his response is really interesting. When his debt is exposed, what's he asked for? He asked for a payment plan.

He asked for patience. That's 200,000 years of labor. So it's kind of a ridiculous request, right? And I think that's part of the point. The servant still doesn't understand the amount of debt that he's incurred.

And this, he's delusional. He's lacking understanding. He underestimates his debt, his debt, pretending or believing, or pretending to believe that he can actually pay it off.

[19:27] And friends, this is where forgiveness short circuits. The servant is still delusional as thinking. His hope is not in the king's forgiveness. Rather, it's in himself and his ability to work his way out of debt.

But what's even more shocking than this servant's pitiful offer is the generosity of the king. Right? In kindness, the king gives him far more than he asked for.

He asked for time and the king forgives him his entire debt. Right? So in mercy, the king gives him far more than he asked for. But the question is, why would the king do this?

The only sense we can make of this outrageous act of forgiveness is that the king is compassionate, merciful, and gracious. The motive must come from who he is. When Jesus says, out of pity for him, we learn a lesson about forgiveness, that forgiveness comes from the tender heart of the forgiver and not the merit of the sinner or the quality of his confession.

So, in this parable, right, Jesus is using a monetary illustration, financial illustration to show us a spiritual truth. Right?

[20:39] And that helps us to see the grandness, the greatness of our debt, to help Peter see the greatness of the debt. But it also does something else. Right? When we have a debt that needs to be fulfilled, you can't actually, you can't just haphazardly forgive a debt.

Right? Sometimes we think relationally we can just say, oh, I forgive you, it's good, whatever. You know, but with a debt, like in order to forgive, in order for this king to forgive this man's debt, the king had to suffer loss.

The king had to put his own well-being at risk to forgive this servant's debt. Right? And so, so that's this idea, that's this transactional thing. Right? And, and just so we're not missing the point, the king can't absorb the debt without absorbing the loss himself.

And just so he doesn't miss the reality, spiritual debt also requires payment. This payment is the holy wrath of God against all sin. Offenses against a holy God cannot simply be minimized, forgotten, or washed away.

For God to remain just, he must account for all sin. But for those, he graciously forgives. He settles accounts by pouring out the just wrath for our sin on Christ.

[21:49] His perfect, spotless, righteous son, the very son who is telling us this story, the very son who is telling Peter this story, the very son who longs for you to know the depth of your forgiveness that he has purchased for you with his blood.

He absorbed the loss and in love and compassion he offers you forgiveness that can never be undone. Christian, will you be humbled by his gift for you? Will you be softened? I hope so.

For the only true response for softness and returning forgiveness is the only true response for somebody who has received his grace. And as fellow sinners, our only hope lies in the character and compassion of God.

those of you who have turned to trust in Jesus, we know this both biblically and experientially.

We've all confessed things to before the Lord.

We've all come to him and we know that even in the midst of our confession, we still have impurity in our hearts. And so praise, thank the Lord for his goodness because the fact of our forgiveness has nothing to do with the quality of our confession but on the graciousness of our king and his completed work for us on the cross.

[22:59] And so this is something that we see in this story about the king. Jesus continues his story 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.

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

And then as soon as the servant leaves the presence of the king, he finds another servant who owes him a hundred denarii. Now a hundred denarii is about \$15,000, three months late wages in that time, right?

And so that's a real debt. That hurts. \$15,000 hurts. And I think Jesus is kind to use this illustration for us, right? It's not chump change that this guy was forgiving.

Like it was something that was going to be painful and costly to him, right? And so this shows that Jesus sympathizes with us in the hardness of our need to forgive, right? Sin done against you, sin done against others, has real consequences, real pain, right?

[24:08] And Jesus recognizes that. He knows that it's going to be hard to forgive. But what we see in this story is that even though there was a real debt to be paid back to this servant, even though the debt is large, humanly speaking, it does not even register on the scale of that which his servant was forgiven, right?

So it was three months late versus 4,000 lifetimes of work, right? So this servant had just received forgiveness over this huge debt that he could never pay. And he is incompassionate and ruthless towards this man.

And so this is where the story starts to pull at our hearts. We're like, how dare you? We say, how could you respond so harshly to a fellow servant after receiving such mercy from the king?

We say, did he already forget? And we say that and it's like, no, he didn't already forget. Because if you've received grace like that, you don't forget, right? And so the answer is not that he forgot.

No, this wicked servant never knew what it was to be, what it was to be forgiven in the first place. Somehow he does not feel the weight of his debt. He is blind to the debt that he has incurred. And unfazed by the king's generosity.

[25:21] Somehow he is presumed upon, felt entitled to, or deserving of the king's mercy. And so he remains unmoved. But what does move him? The servant isn't unmoved. What does move him?

The debt of his fellow servant. Right? He is enraged by the debt due to him. His fellow servant's debt is more real to him than his own. And in his heart, his fellow servant is less deserving of mercy. The text makes it really clear that the same words that this servant pleaded to the master are the same words that this other servant pleads to him. Have patience with me and I will pay you what I owe.

But he is so blinded by the hurt, by the offense, by the offense of his brother that he can't even see. He can't even see the debt that he was forgiven. And this happens to us when we deal with hurt without also recognizing the debt that we've been forgiven.

We are shown compassion and mercy yet are ruthless towards others. We choose to stay bitter, we hold on to resentment, or we lash out at others. We withdraw, we avoid contact, or we dish out the silent treatment.

[26:29] We are seduced by self-pity and though we recognize that we have some sin, our gaze remains fixed on the sin of another. And then forgiveness becomes impossible.

And unfortunately, like I said, we all identify with this. We are so hurt by the sin, by another sin, that the truth that we have been forgiven just vanishes from our sight. And we forget that our offender's debt is just as big and equally unpayable as ours.

But that debt isn't between us, that debt is between, primarily between that person and the Lord.

We forget that we stand in the same place before a holy God as a person who has offended us.

One author, writing on this text, records a counseling situation that he was a part of. A woman who had been pursued romantically by a spiritual mentor over time, for many years, she recognized this before anything blatant happened, but when she recognized it, went to the leadership of a church, she was really hurt.

She was really hurt by it because this man had gained her trust to use it for his own desires. And this is her response to this text. She says, he really did hurt me, but I have responded just like the unforgiving servant.

[27:49] All this time I have been on my high horse demanding that he come crawling to me on his knees, begging my pardon. I wanted him to pay for what he'd done, to be humiliated in front of the church, but I now see that we are in the same boat.

I too have a debt with the king. Who am I to demand payment? You see, it's all natural. It's natural for us to respond to hurt with hurt.

It's our fleshly tendency to want to return pain, right? Though we have been victimized by another person's sin, we can quickly turn into the victimizer. We have been sent against and then we sin by strangling, demanding repayment, and incarcerating others in our hearts forever, or at least until the debt is paid to our satisfaction.

This is what refusing to forgive looks like, and we'll continue in the text. Verse 31, when his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went on and reported to the master all that had taken place.

So this is kind of a practical note, right? Please recognize that bitterness and resentment do not stay hidden. People notice, your children are watching, and these onlookers, just like the onlookers in this story, have debts of their own.

[29:07] And when they watch you, what do they see? Your children know if your heart is a storehouse of animosity and resentment or of grace and forgiveness. They painfully watch you as you passively, aggressively lash out and hold resentment towards others.

Maybe you resent one of your children for an annoying habit. Maybe you have pent up bitterness against your in-laws, your wife, your roommate, your boss, right? These are kind of things that, I don't know, impact us and people around us.

So please recognize that your refusing to forgive has a demoralizing and disheartening effect on those around you. Just like it did to the servants, the other servants in this story, and they went to the master.

Imagine your kids sitting at night in the privacy in their own rooms praying because they see the inconsistency in your life and with your words. Praying because they are disturbed that their father or their mother hold on to resentment and bitterness and don't forgive and that has huge impacts on their demeanor, right?

So our lack of forgiveness affects people that are close to us and we get to see that. It's kind of a practical point but I think it's helpful. So, been talking a lot.

[30:26] Is everybody following still? All right. So as I was thinking about this text, I was thinking what does Shoreline need? Where does this text really, really ping at us, right?

And I think here at Shoreline, praise the Lord, I think we have a good understanding of the gospel and we understand that we cannot withhold, willingly withhold forgiveness because we have been given forgiveness.

We understand the main point of this text, right? We understand that because we've received grace we must extend grace but I think sometimes we can be delusional in our thinking, right? We wouldn't willfully do that but we hold on to resentment.

We baby bitterness. We allow these things to seat in our hearts and I want us to be aware that the presence of bitterness and resentment in your heart shows that you are not truly forgiven or forgiving, right?

It shows that you are not living in this thing that Christ has called us to, right? Because you can't have those things and completely forgive, right? And so Jesus has been all about in Matthew, he's been all about going below the surface of outward religious activity, right?

[31:32] And I think we would understand like no, I can't hold that against that person. I'm not going to go out and do anything about that person's hurt but we might separate that from the resentment that we hold on to in our hearts and I think Jesus wants us to see that and that's kind of why I've used a lot of more the subtle examples of what a lack of forgiveness looks like.

Make sense? So don't be deceived, the resentment that you baby is a sign of a stronghold of unforgiveness in your heart. Verse 32.

How's everybody doing? Good? Is this, I forgot to start my watch so I have no idea how long I've been going so I won't be offended if somebody like hits their watch.

I really won't. I want this to be helpful and if it's not helpful then we'll keep going. All right, so in verse 32. Then his master summoned him and said to him, you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me and should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had had mercy on you and in anger his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt.

So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. So focus first on verse 32 and 33. And likewise, Jesus is saying this to you.

[32:56] Jesus is saying to you, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me should you not have mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you. Jesus says, you must remember that you have done nothing to earn your forgiveness.

I am the one who has paid your debt and you did nothing. Please don't treat this person who has sinned against you any differently than I have treated you. Instead, show this person mercy so that you might reflect the truth that I have forgiven you.

So in order for us to do this, we must understand the depth of our forgiveness. Right? I think Jesus wants to bring that front and center in our lives and I want to remind us of that. Right? Because we're never going to operate in the positive in interpersonal relationships if we don't first understand our primary relationship and the forgiveness we have in Christ.

So here's some practical ways to nourish the understanding of your forgiveness. Hmm. Not up there. I'm just going to read them. Enter God's throne room in prayer.

Right? Spend time there. Confessing the weeds of bitterness, resentment, self-protection, and vengeance, and spite in your heart. Consider the perfection of Jesus. Consider the glorious and gracious, his glorious and gracious demeanor towards you.

[34:13] Consider all the glory he left in heaven to walk this earth as one sinned against by those he came to save, rejected and betrayed by those closest to him.

He did all of this so that you might have forgiveness and he also did this so that he might be able to sympathize with you and your pain. You're absolutely right. Your spouse, your pastor, your best

friend, they don't understand the pain that you feel or the hardship that you've endured because of other people's sin.

But Jesus does. Jesus knows your pain. He knows all the dirty details and he knows its experience. No one can claim that the, no one can claim with integrity that Jesus does not understand their pain, the pain of this or that, for he does know it, but he knows it in a far greater intensity than you could ever fathom.

He knows the pain of every sin committed by and against his people and he suffered under the full weight of God's wrath against your sin so that he might extinguish its death-inducing consequences.

Friends, Jesus knows your pain and he has undone its effect on you. He has written you a new story, one full of glory, value, love, and power. Meditate on him and be strengthened.

[35:28] Meditate on him. Meditate on your, your, your, your debt before him and his gracious forgiveness so that you might be filled with that same attitude and strengthened to go and do likewise.

It brings him glory. It brings him honor when his people walk in his ways. So fill our minds with the beauty of Christ and that will enable us to forgive when it's hard. Plus, Jesus moves on.

He gives us another motivation. He says, for the one who has received mercy yet refuses to extend it, please know that Jesus considers this wickedness. His statement is bold and direct, you wicked servant.

I don't know if there's another slide or not, but hey. So in an anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt.

So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. So at this point, we've covered a lot of content, but it's important for us to zoom back or zoom out again and remember who who Jesus is speaking to.

[36:30] Jesus is speaking to his disciples. He is speaking to the ones who are closest to him, the ones who identify with him, the ones who claim to be his. So his audience is us.

It's you. It's here. It's now. Forgiveness is a serious thing and Jesus wants us, his proclaimed followers, to know this. As one author writes, many people consider God's forgiveness to be an unconditional thing, but it is not.

Our forgiveness is conditioned upon our forgiving others. This is not a precondition, but an after condition. It's an evidence and a fruit. Forgiveness is the litmus test of the genuineness of our faith. Our willingness to forgive shows that we are passing on that which we have received. But if we are unwilling to forgive, well, that should cause us to question the genuineness of our salvation. Notice that Jesus uses my heavenly father instead of our father. Jesus is drawing a distinction here. He's drawing a distinction between wolves and sheep. The term used here for jailers is more commonly translated torturers throughout scripture.

[37:44] And so this master is not simply sending this wicked servant to a debtor's prison. He's punishing him for his lack of faithfulness.

And this idea actually fits Jesus' vocabulary in the New Testament much better concerning hell. So this is a sobering moment for Jesus and his listeners, and it should be sobering for us.

Jesus turns towards us warning us that if we continue to withhold forgiveness from others, we will arouse God's just wrath for despising his forgiveness.

This is an eternally significant warning to those stubbornly unwilling to forgive. And Jesus desires that we receive it as such. He makes this clear in his closing statement.

So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brothers from your heart. So, in conclusion, I'm going to read this because if I don't it's going to take a while.

[38:50] Probably. I can read it fast. Jesus is calling us to forgive our brothers from the heart. This is necessary if we are to live as a unified community of faith.

In the preceding passage about church discipline, Dave showed us that God desires that his church be a church that is serious about sin, but also personal and proactive in our pursuit of those caught up in sin within the church.

However, what this passage exposes is that church discipline cannot and will not be a gracious unifying process unless we understand the depth of our own personal forgiveness and extend it to

others.

Jesus desires that we be a people who forgive generously from the heart. And from the heart signifies a depth of forgiveness generated deep from within us. Our entire being must be unified in our forgiveness.

Our minds, our wills, our spirit, and our actions must be unified in our forgiveness of others. This is a high calling, a calling that Jesus equips us for. He equips us by exposing that which hinders our forgiveness, our tendencies towards self-protection and revenge, the selfish pursuits of our own kingdom, and the propensity to forget the gift of grace that we have received.

[39:59] Jesus does not simply call us out on our negative tendencies, but he equips us by pointing us to truth that can change us, and offers to walk with us through the dirty process. He reminds us that the glorious forgiveness we have received and the beautiful standing that we have with the Lord is solely on the basis of the merit of Christ.

We are empowered to forgive because we have been forgiven. He also sympathizes with us in the difficulty of forgiveness and beckons us, beckons that we bring our questions and concerns to him personally.

And finally, Jesus equips us through warning. He warns us that our unwillingness to forgive is a warning sign that we have yet to understand grace in a saving way.

So recognize that which hinders you, meditate on the cross of Christ, and assess your soul because interpersonal forgiveness is crucial for all within the family of God.

Dearly Father, Lord, we thank you for this text. God, I pray that you might work and use it in our hearts. God, not for our sake but for your glory.

[41:04] Lord, you died to redeem us. Lord, I pray that that truth would just permeate our entire being, that it would allow us to let go of the things that hurt us in this life, to trust you and to forgive others because those things are inconsequential compared to the grace that you've shown us and the promises that we have in Christ.

Amen. Amen.