

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Luke 7:36-50](#).
- B. Over the past several Sundays I have been talking about the power of forgiveness.
- C. There are three miracles of Luke, chapter 7:
 - 1. The physical healing of a servant (7:1-10).
 - 2. The raising of a young man from the dead (7:11-17).
 - 3. The forgiveness of sins to an immoral woman (7:36-50).
- D. The text of the parable:

And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." **41** "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" **43** Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." **44** Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. **46** You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. **47** For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." **48** Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." **49** Those who were reclining *at the table* with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this *man* who even forgives sins?" **50** And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

I. FORGIVENESS; WE ALL NEED IT.

- A. No one can battle Satan alone and be victorious (Rom. 3:10,23).

([Rom 3:10](#)) as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ([Rom 3:23](#)) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- B. Everyone who has reached the "age of accountability" is guilty of sin (Rom. 7:10).

...and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;
- C. Sins may be:
 - 1. Against the flesh (1Cor. 6:19).

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.
 - 2. Done by commission (Mt. 5:37).

"But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; and anything beyond these is of evil."
 - 3. Done by omission (Jas. 4:17).

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.
 - 4. Done publicly, others privately.
- D. But one needs to remember that we are all guilty of sin, whether we feel guilty or not!
- E. Simon, did not feel the need for forgiveness, the immoral woman did.

III. FORGIVENESS IS THE GRACIOUS GIFT OF GOD.

- A. See [Lk. 7:40-42](#).
- B. Forgiveness comes by way of God's grace. W/o grace there can be no forgiveness. God has extended grace so that we might be forgiven (Eph. 2:8,9).

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.
- C. In the parable, both debtors were unable to repay. No matter how good we think we are, we are too spiritually bankrupt to ever pay God back for our sins.
- D. Forgiveness also comes by the way of our faith. Jesus said (7:50) that this woman's faith had saved her. This completes the instruction of Eph. 2:8 where Paul says we are saved by grace through faith.
- E. **The two debtors.**

1. The first debtor is Simon. He owed little but was also forgiven very little by X.
 2. The second debtor is the immoral woman. She owed much, and was forgiven much.
- F. Unfortunately, Simon correctly understands the story but fails to apply it to himself. He even goes so far as to challenge Jesus authority to forgive sins, completely missing the point that he had sins to be forgiven and sat in the presence of the One who could forgive them.
- G. And it cost Jesus His very life to make the statement of **7:48**.

IV. FORGIVENESS IS TO RESULT IN A CHANGED LIFE.

- A. When we experience the forgiveness of God in becoming a Xian, we not only be different in God's sight, but it should cause us to live differently as well.
- B. Notice what the woman did (7:37,38):
And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, [38] and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.
1. Brought an alabaster box of perfume.
 2. Gave Jesus water w/her tears.
 3. Gave Jesus kisses of affection.
 4. Gave Jesus oil for His feet.
- C. The woman did not receive cheap forgiveness; neither did she give cheap worship! Our forgiveness is not cheap, it cost Jesus His life. May we return faithful worship to Him.
- D. God has always rejected cheap worship:
1. He rejected the strange fire brought by Nadab and Abihu (see Lev. 10:1,2).
 2. Israel's worship was rejected because there was no righteousness (Amos 5:21-25).
"I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel?"
 3. Malachi warned the priest about bringing the imperfect lambs and less than a tithe to God (Mal. 1:7-10; 3:8-10).
(Mal 1:7-10) *"You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled Thee?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' [8] 'But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?' says the LORD of hosts. [9] 'But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?' says the LORD of hosts. [10] 'Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you.*
(Mal 3:8-10) *"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. [9] 'You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! [10] 'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.*
- E. God rejects cheap worship today too:
1. The reluctance of giving of our time to be in Bible class and worship.
 2. The reluctance of giving of our financial resources (breaking our own alabaster box).
 3. The reluctance of being involved in the specific ministries of the church.
- F. Our faith and forgiveness should motivate us toward wholesome worship:
1. A crucified life of faith (Gal. 2:20).
"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.
 2. A sacrificial life of service (Rom. 12:1,2).
I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. [2] And do not be conformed to this world,

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3. A thankful life of obedience (Col. 3:17).
And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

V. CONCLUSION.

- A. The level of our involvement in the Lord's work and worship is one way to see our amount of appreciation for His forgiveness of our sins.
- B. Forgiveness: everyone needs it, it came at a great cost, and it should result in a faithful life.
- C. Two debtors in this story... which one is most like you?

THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 18:21-35**.
Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.
23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. **25** But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. **26** So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' **27** And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. **28** But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' **29** So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' **30** But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. **31** So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. **32** Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33** Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' **34** And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. **35** My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."
- B. "The World's Worst Prison."
- C. Alcatraz was from 1933-63 one of the most escape-proof prisons in the world. But a worse place that--a prison we put ourselves into by not forgiving others. Some, unfortunately live in a dungeon of an unforgiving spirit.

I. THE SETTING OF THE PARABLE (Mt. 18:1-20).

- A. The first lesson: **Humility** (18:1-14).
The one who is the greatest in the kingdom must be humble, learn to accept self, trust others, and be appreciative like a child. See Jas. 4:6,10; Mt. 5:3; 18:1-4; Col. 3:12.
(Jas. 4:6,10) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." [10] Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.
(Mt. 5:3) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
(Mt. 18:1-4) At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
(Col. 3:12) And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
- B. The second lesson: **Be open and honest with one another** (18:15-20).
If anyone sins against us we are to go to him. If that doesn't work we may find recourse in two or

three witnesses. Only as a last resort we should have to take it to the entire congregation. The “one another” phrase occurs 106 times out of 99 verses in the NT. See Mt. 18:15-17; Rom. 14:10-12; 12:3; Heb. 10:24.

(Mt. 18:15-17) “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** “And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

(Rom. 14:10-12) But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “**AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.**” So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

(Rom. 12:3) For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

(Heb. 10:24) ...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,...

C. The third lesson: Practice forgiveness (18:21-35).

Jesus taught there is no limit to the number of times we are to forgive others. Anyone who forgives “70 times 7” is in the habit of forgiving and will not try to set limits (see Mt. 18:21,22).

II. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE (Mt. 13:21-35).

A. The servant owed a debt that he could never repay. Yet because of the compassion and mercy of the king he was forgiven his debt. But there was something wrong with the forgiven servant’s heart.

B. X proceeds to teach about three levels of forgiveness: receiving, experiencing, and sharing.

C. First, receiving forgiveness:

1. The king’s forgiveness was not cheap, it cost a great deal; the servant was bankrupt.

2. The price of our salvation is very high; the life’s blood of God’s Son.

See Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13.

(Ac. 20:28) “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

(Eph. 5:25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

(Rom. 5:9) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

(Eph. 1:7) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

(Eph. 2:13) But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

D. Second, experiencing forgiveness:

1. Because we have been forgiven, we are a free people, not living as if still in prison.

2. We initially experience forgiveness when we become a Xian (see Ac. 2:38; 22:16).

3. Forgiveness is to be experienced daily (1Jn. 1:7,9; Col. 1:14).

(1Jn. 1:7,9) ...but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Col. 1:14) ...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

E. Third, sharing forgiveness:

1. We forgive others because we see our real need for forgiveness (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

(Eph. 4:32) And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

(Col. 3:13) ...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

2. The parable teaches that those who refuse to share forgiveness will not be forgiven (Mt. 6:15).

“But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

F. Let us always live in the realm of mercy and not justice.

III. LIVING THE PARABLE.

- A. An unforgiving heart always experiences torment. Instead of loving and caring many use their energy for hating and they waste their energy on enemies they cannot fight.
- B. Take inventory of your heart:
 - 1. Have you received forgiveness?... If not, then you need to become a Xian!
 - 2. Have you experienced forgiveness?... If not, they you need to live a faithful life!
 - 3. Are you sharing forgiveness?... If not, you will not be forgiven by God.
- C. Resentment and grudges put people into prison. Freedom only comes when they learn to show mercy and forgive from the heart.

CONCLUSION.

- A. The parable has a window and a mirror:
 - 1. The **window** (to see God) is to see how great His forgiveness is.
 - 2. The **mirror** (to see ourselves) is to realize how much we have been forgiven, and how we need to forgive others.
- B. May we learn to practice forgiveness in our lives and not live in the prison of an unforgiving spirit.