**ROAD TO THE CROSS**

**Week 2- Forgiveness, Matthew 18:21-35**

Sunday, March 27, 2022

**WE Slide 1 ROAD TO THE CROSS- Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem for His final time so that He can be arrested, beaten, put on a cross and 3 days later rise from the dead and doing all of this to save you/me from the eternal consequences of our sin- an eternity in hell.** As we learned last week He’s the only one who can do this because He is both 100% God and 100% man- perfect man. **Jesus said He is building His church- He’s calling people out of the world into a relationship in Him to become citizens of His kingdom.**

**The disciples have confessed that they believe Jesus is God and their Deliverer so now He focuses His teaching on preparing them for the mission of bringing this message to the world.** The key to the mission is the issue of FORGIVENESS- God forgives us for sinning against Him when we place our faith in Jesus and ask God to forgive our sins- WE LOVE THAT TRUTH! **But then God says we’re to show others what He’s like by FORGIVING others- we don’t love so much.** Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 18:21, pg 978.

**Last week Jesus told Peter he was thinking like Satan when he voiced his opinion/disagreed with Jesus’ plan to be arrested, killed, buried, and rise the 3rd day.** Jesus said Peter was thinking like someone who doesn’t believe Jesus is God and Deliverer. **Jesus went on to explain that if you’re going to follow Me then you’ve made the choice to deny yourself and pick up your cross- in other words we’ve died to our opinion of how we should think/do life and are to think like Jesus/live how He says to live- new/old believers we need to hear what Jesus is saying here.** This issue of FORGIVENESS, forgiving someone for sinning against us/hurting us, is probably one of the most difficult areas on which to not voice our opinion. **But that’s exactly what Jesus says.** Look how Jesus answers Peter’s question on how often we should forgive someone. **Slide 2-3 We’ve all been there right?** Someone seems to continually sin against us/hurt us in some way, how should we as Christians respond to them? **Peter offers…**

**GOD**

1. **WHAT JESUS SAID- “Forgive Your Brother 70 x 7 Times”**
2. **Peter Offers to Forgive 7x-** over twice the number the Pharisees said to forgive someone- 3x.
3. **Jesus says “490x”-** not saying keep count up to 490 which would be a lot, He means forgive as often as you’re sinned against. **What does Jesus mean by forgive?**
4. **Slide 4 Forgiveness Defined**
5. Aphiemi- to release from legal/moral obligation or consequence, cancel a debt, pardon.What it’s not
6. It’s NOT forgetting- God doesn’t say forget, can’t forget anything and usually we don’t either.
7. It’s NOT trusting someone- set boundaries and don’t walk back to this kind of person. **Talk to me**
8. It IS choosing to not use it against them/hold a grudge
9. It IS leaving the door open for true repentance/restoration; not shutting them out/burning bridges.

**Jesus goes on to tell a parable to explain WHY WHAT HE SAYS MATTERS.** Before I read let me give you some important information- purpose of parables: teach one spiritual principle; not every detail has spiritual significance; parts of this parable- **Slide 5 As we read keep these things in mind.**

1. **WHAT JESUS’ PARABLE MEANS**
2. **The Parts of the Parable**
3. The Kingdom of Heaven- what the kingdom of God looks like on this side of heaven; today= church.
4. The King is God
5. The Debt is sin- what we have done wrong toward God or what someone has done wrong toward another person.
6. Slaves are those who profess to follow Christ.
7. Torturers- refers to the emotional/spiritual consequences of unforgiveness one experiences. Explain more later **Slide 6**
8. **The Point of the Parable-** Christians are to always forgive others, especially other Christians, because they understand how much God has forgiven them.

**OK, with that set let’s read Jesus’ parable. Slide 7-15** Man! You read that and you realize that God’s really serious about our sin/forgiving others, and that being a Christian is not an easy thing. **WHY DOES IT MATTER that we who are Christians always forgive others? Slide 16 REMEMBER- Jesus is building His church through you and me so our response will either draw someone to Jesus or repel them from Him.**

1. **WHY IT MATTERS, Jesus’ Parable, Matthew 18:23-35**
2. **Because God Has Forgiven Us an Infinitely Large Sin-Debt**
3. Sin against a person lasts as long as you or they are alive; after that nothing can be done.
4. Sin against an eternal/infinite God means our sin is eternal and infinite.
5. We think our sin is not so bad/so much, God says it’s an uncountable amount; one we could never repay.
6. We’ve sinned against God and when we sin against others we sin against God; it adds to our debt.
7. We’re in a world of hurt/deserve to be judged by God for our sin; we’ve got no chance to free ourselves.
8. But God freed us from that debt when we placed our faith on Jesus Christ that He paid our debt.
9. We did nothing to earn it/pay it off, all God’s grace, now He says do the same for others.

**The next reason Jesus says it matters is… Slide 17**

1. **Unforgiveness Closes the Door to Restoration**
2. Slave #1 wouldn’t forgive, then He threw Slave #2 into prison- **How can he repay debt/restore?**
3. Unforgiveness does nothing except keep restoration from happening.
4. God didn’t withhold forgiveness from you/me when we asked Him for it and neither should we when dealing with others.
5. The name “Christian” means “Christ-one”; people who live like Jesus Christ, which means we’ll forgive others as we’ve been forgiven by God.
6. Jesus said last week that His followers “follow Him”- walk along with Him, do life like Him.

**A 3rd reason WHY IT MATTERS is that UNFORGIVENESS hurts others- not just the 2 who are at odds. Slide 18**

1. **Unforgiveness Hurts Others**
2. The other slaves saw what the unforgiving slave did and were deeply grieved.
3. Deeply- sphodra: high on a scale of intensity; a 9 on a scale of 1 to 10
4. Grieved- lupeo; to become sad, sorrowful, distressed.
5. Unforgiveness, especially from one who professes to be a Christian, will negatively impact your spouse, children, extended family, friends, church family, all who are aware of it.
6. One of the greatest deterrents to people to turning to Jesus is Christians’ failure to forgive- **Who wants to worship a God whose followers don’t respect Him enough to obey Him?**

**Finally… Slide 19**

1. **Unforgiveness Only Hurts Us, Not the Other Person**
2. Normally these types of parables end with a judgment on someone- death, cast into outer darkness, or into a fiery hell, but not this parable. **Why?**
3. The Slave is a Christian who is a servant of God/part of God’s kingdom and God doesn’t throw His people out of His kingdom- even if we choose to not forgive people.
4. However He will allow us to feel the pain of our disobedience which is what He means by Torturers.
5. basanistes; guard in prison, oppressive jailer, merciless jailer.
6. The Holy Spirit will convict a Christian who won’t forgive which puts that Christian at odds with God Himself.
7. God will allow that conviction to stay and increase until we obey because He loves us too much to let us sit in that place of disobedience.

**We won’t be covering this but it’s interesting that Matthew places Jesus’ teaching on marriage/divorce right after this parable on forgiving which is a huge part of a healthy marriage.** **So what are our TAKEAWAYS for today? Slide 20** As the band comes let me give you a couple. We say we trust God to take us to heaven and if we do we’ll show that trust by doing what He says and forgive others.

**YOU TAKEAWAY**

1. **Write down the name of the person who you need to forgive- to whom you need to show Jesus and keep the door open to restoration.**
2. **Commit to God to show them Jesus and keep the door open to restoration.**

**PODCAST: Why does forgiving others matter? Matthew 18:21-35**