

Kingdom Parables – Week 5 Discussion Questions

The Unforgiving Servant Mt. 18:21-35

1. Tell about a time someone did something really nice or wonderful for you. How did you feel?
2. Tell about a time someone betrayed you or did something terrible to you? How did you feel? How did it impact the way you saw or interacted with other people?

Read the parable in Matthew 18:21-35

3. What questions might you ask about this parable of a Bible scholar or seminary professor?
4. What does the bag of gold/10,000 talents represent in the parable? What about the 100 coins/denarii?
5. Why does the king forgive the loan of the servant? Why does the servant *not* forgive what his fellow servant owes?
6. How would you describe the king in this parable? What does this parable teach us about God?
7. How would you describe the servant in the parable? What does this parable teach us about ourselves?
8. What does the parable teach us about the relationship between ourselves and God? Ourselves and others?
9. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray, "Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." How does this parable shed light on this petition in the Lord's Prayer?
10. The servant in the parable is angry with his fellow servant, grabbing him by the throat. Why is it so difficult to forgive when we are angry?
11. Have you read or heard of stories in the news that involve great forgiveness for a terrible act? If so, share them with the group. How did these stories make you feel when you heard them?
12. One of the hardest things God calls us to do is to forgive other people. How have you seen forgiveness at work in the church? How have you experienced forgiveness in your life?
13. What is the cost of failing to forgive as we have been forgiven? What understanding is needed to forgive as we have been forgiven?
14. How are thanksgiving and forgiving related?
15. Our Vision Statement says that we are called to respond *in gratitude* to God's love and grace as we follow and serve Jesus in the world. If the servant had responded in gratitude to the king's forgiveness, how might his actions have been different toward his fellow servant?
16. (Not necessarily for discussion) Are there any wrongs or hurts done to you that you have refused to let go of? Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? What do you need to do to make that happen?

Matthew 18:21-35

Parable of the unforgiving servant

²¹ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Should I forgive as many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said, “Not just seven times, but rather as many as seventy-seven times. ²³ Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle accounts, they brought to him a servant who owed him ten thousand bags of gold. ²⁵ Because the servant didn’t have enough to pay it back, the master ordered that he should be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, and that the proceeds should be used as payment. ²⁶ But the servant fell down, kneeled before him, and said, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I’ll pay you back.’ ²⁷ The master had compassion on that servant, released him, and forgave the loan.

²⁸ “When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred coins. He grabbed him around the throat and said, ‘Pay me back what you owe me.’

²⁹ “Then his fellow servant fell down and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I’ll pay you back.’ ³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he threw him into prison until he paid back his debt.

³¹ “When his fellow servants saw what happened, they were deeply offended. They came and told their master all that happened. ³² His master called the first servant and said, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you appealed to me. ³³ Shouldn’t you also have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ His master was furious and handed him over to the guard responsible for punishing prisoners, until he had paid the whole debt.

³⁵ “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if you don’t forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”