

>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 40 <<<<<<<

- 1) Next, we see how NOT to do to others as you would have them do to you ...
- 2) We begin with the verse we talked about several times last time – Peter’s question about forgiving...

Matthew 18:21–35(ESV)

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

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?” ²² Jesus said to him, **“I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”**

- 3) The “At this time” or “Then” opening of the verse indicates it was very soon or immediately after Jesus had spoken the words, we discussed last time on forgiveness resolving conflicts.
- 4) This was likely not the answer Peter expected or wanted.
 - a) He most likely wanted a concrete number as he indicates in his question of like 7.
 - b) Instead, Jesus gives him a clearly understood number that meant as many times as needed – no real end.
- 5) So, continuing ...

²³ **“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ 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 to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 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.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ 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. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”**

- 6) First, this is a “Kingdom Parable” with earthly applications to Peter’s question.

We went over this at the end last time but just a quick review ...

- 7) So, to start, let’s get the money side into a perspective to which we can relate.
 - a) Hundred denarii
 - i) Roughly 3 to 4 months wages.
 - ii) In today’s money it would be about (depending on income) roughly \$6,000 to \$20,000.

- b) Ten thousand talents:
 - i) 60 million days labor (200,000 years).
 - ii) In today's money it would be about 15 billion dollars.
 - 8) The real idea behind this is of course that the debt that the master forgave was truthfully and logically unpayable.
 - a) No one in a workers position could ever expect to come near to paying that debt.
 - b) It is important to note at this point that the master before forgiving the debt was willing to settle this huge unpayable amount without throwing him in prison.
- He ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.
- 9) The payment that was made would not cover the debt but it would settle it because of the master's generosity.
 - 10) On the other hand, in comparison, the debt of the fellow slave was payable but with obvious difficulty.
 - 11) The punishments are significantly different as well.
 - a) In the case of the slave who owed the forgiven slave – he was thrown into prison.
 - i) With help from his family and friends, and selling off any property he might own, it was possible he could be free from prison at some point.
 - b) However, in the case of the slave that was forgiven the debt, had the master thrown him in prison, it would have been for eternity.
 - 12) Now looking at verse 35 - **So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.**

What must we take from this?

- a) We have to go back to Peter's question. In essence, this says to Peter, if you fail to forgive those 77 times (unending number of times) God will not forgive you the sin in your life.
 - b) Now, that's harsh but it says unequivocally that is what we must do.
- 1) O.k. let's get into chapter 19... The passage covers verses 1-12, we begin with the first 6 verses.

Matthew 19:1–6(ESV)
Teaching About Divorce

19 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "**Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,** ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

- 2) We will continue with 7-12 in a moment, but first a few comments ...
- 3) Jesus now leaves Galilee. This is the last time he will be there until after his resurrection.
 - a) The area he enters is north and east of Jerusalem where he is ultimately headed.
- 4) As usual at this point in his ministry where he is, large crowds gather to hear him teach and be healed.
- 5) Of course, here come the Pharisees to test him, hoping to trip him up and cause him to commit an offense that they could use against him.
- 6) The question this time is divorce - “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
 - a) The key part of this question is in their opinion the “for any cause.”
 - b) As you recall, this was one of those debates of the time which involved the two schools of Jewish thought on the Law – Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai.
 - i) Hillel said that a man could divorce his wife for basically any reason.
 - (1) This is a very liberal interpretation of the original law as laid down in Deuteronomy.
 - ii) Shammai on the other hand insisted that divorce could only be granted for reasons of adultery.
 - (1) Jesus is very clear on the subject – He is definitely in Shammai’s camp.
- 7) Jesus gives a more detailed answer to this question here than he did in the Sermon on the Mount back in chapter 5 and concludes by saying basically don’t do it.
- 8) However, when the Pharisees press this a little further Jesus gives the same answer he did in the sermon on the mount.
 - a) The only difference being that here the emphasis is on the man being in the adulterous relationship whereas in the Sermon on the Mount, the emphasis was more on the woman.

9) Continuing we read ...

Matthew 19:7-9(ESV)

⁷They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” ⁸He said to them, “**Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.** ⁹**And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.**”

- a) The key is that both parties are in the same situation regards remarriage.

10) Next, we see this doesn’t set well with the disciples either...

11) Then to finish out we read ...

Matthew 19:10-12(ESV)

¹⁰The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” ¹¹But he said to them, “**Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.** ¹²**For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who**

have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

- 12) When the disciples consider what Jesus has said, they conclude that if the marriage covenant is so strong and the problems so threatening, it might be better not to marry at all.
- 13) This is quite a startling statement when you consider that marriage within Judaism is one of the most important commandments.
- 14) There are some to whom this gift of marriage is not given.
 - a) Jesus then specifically speaks of “eunuchs.”
 - b) Eunuchs of course relate to celibacy and one’s ability to remain in celibate state should a divorce happen for other than the reasons Jesus has stated.
 - c) Paul brings this same point out in 1 Cor speaking to the unmarried and widows but this is the same principle that Jesus is putting forth here – self-control.

1 Corinthians 7:8–9 (ESV)

⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

- d) In other words, Paul is telling the Corinthians they must evaluate first their own abilities to deal with the situations that might occur and then act accordingly.
- e) This is in essence the same thing Jesus was saying.