

THE SIN OF UNFORGIVENESS
(The Parable of the Unmerciful Slave)
Matthew 18:23-35

INTRODUCTION. "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Jesus' answer is a lesson on forgiveness...one of the most important lessons ever learned by a believer.

I. The Man and His Debt (18:23-27)

(A picture of the supernatural, merciful forgiveness of God made available to us in Christ.)

A. His Plight (18:23-25 "one who owed him ten thousand talents" = 75,000 pounds of gold)

- He owed a debt that was so large he would never, in a hundred lifetimes, be able to repay it: (@ \$1,000 oz. this would = 1.2 billion)

B. His Plea (18:26a "the slave prostrated himself...have patience with me...")

- He knew that his only recourse was to appeal to the one whom he owed. (appeal for mercy and forgiveness, not apply for an extension)

C. His Pledge (18:26b "I will repay you everything" - and he never could)

- In his pride and presumption, he made a promise he could never keep.

D. His Pardon (18:27 "the lord felt compassion, released him and forgave him the debt.")

- In spite of his presumption, he found mercy and forgiveness from the one to whom he was indebted.

II. The Man and His Deed (18:28-30)

(A picture of the blatant disregard of God's forgiveness when we are faced with the opportunity to forgive.)

A. What He Demanded (18:28 "fellow slave owed him a hundred denarii...")

\$10,000 today)

- He demanded that one who owed him should pay immediately and in full... showing no forgiveness or mercy at all.

B. What He Discovered (18:29 "Have patience with me and I will repay you" - and he could)

- He discovered that his debtor actually could have repaid him, given some time and patience.

C. What He Did (18:30 "he threw him in prison until he paid back what was owed.")

- He placed his debtor in prison, making it impossible for his debtor to re-pay the debt.

III. The Man and His Doom (18:31-35)

(A picture of God's justice toward the weak and abused and His vengeance toward those who refuse to forgive others.)

A. The Story (18:31 "his fellow slaves reported to their lord all that had happened.")

- "Be sure your sins will find you out" (Numbers 32:23)

B. The Summons (18:32-33 "should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave?")

- Be certain that God knows precisely the sin of which you are guilty.

C. The Sentence (18:34 "his lord handed him over to the torturers...")

- God severely judges and punishes the sin of continual unforgiveness.

D. The Summary (18:35 "My heavenly Father will do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.")

- We must always be ready and willing to forgive others, remembering that we ourselves have been forgiven by God. (Ephesians 4:32)

CONCLUSION. Ellis J. Crum wrote "He Paid A Debt He Did Not Owe:" I owed a debt I could not pay; I needed someone to wash my sins away. And, now, I sing a brand new song, "Amazing Grace." Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.

— rrc