

INTRODUCTION

1. The subject of "Forgiveness"

a) Divine forgiveness

We read about how God is able to forgive our sins (Psalm 32:1-2; 1 John 1:9)

i) It is in the nature of God to forgive sins

ii) He is gracious, merciful, compassionate

b) Human forgiveness

i) Not so easy to exercise forgiveness

ii) We do not have it within us to exercise forgiveness easily

2. Forgiveness is an important quality to cultivate

a) It is taught by the Lord Jesus

Matthew 6:14-15

b) It was encouraged

Colossians 3:13

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION RAISED

1. It was Peter who raised the subject of forgiveness to the Lord Jesus Christ

"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?
Up to seven times?"

Matthew 18:21

2. The reply of the Lord Jesus to Peter

"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:22

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

Matthew 18:23-35

1. First part of the Parable

a) A king finds that one of his servants owed him 10,000 talents
In our currency (millions)

b) His servant was unable to pay this debt

c) The king ordered:

- i) The servant is to be sold
- ii) His wife too
- iii) His children
- iv) All his property would be sold off too

d) The servant's response

- i) He fell down before the king (prostration)
- ii) He asked for patience
- iii) He promised to pay his debt

e) The king's response

- i) He was moved with compassion
- ii) He released him
- iii) He forgave him the debt

2. The second part of the Parable

a) The servant went out and found a fellow-servant

b) This servant owed him 100 denarii

c) The response of the servant

- i) Laid hold of him
- ii) Took him by the throat
- iii) He demanded payment

d) He responded aggressively

Far differently from the treatment he received from the king

e) The indebted fellow-servant

- i) He fell at his feet

- ii) He begged him
- iii) He asked for patience
- iv) He would pay his debt fully

f) The unforgiving servant

- i) He would not listen
- ii) He put his fellow-servant in jail
- iii) Until he could pay his debt

3. The third part of the Parable

- a) The other servants of the King
- b) They were aggrieved
- c) They reported the matter to the king

4. The fourth part of the Parable

- a) The King called his servant
- b) He addressed him firmly
 - i) You wicked servant
 - ii) I forgave you all that debt because you begged me
 - iii) Should you not also have compassion on your fellow-servant just as I had pity on you?
- c) The anger of the King
 - i) And his master was angry
 - ii) And delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him

THE MAIN LESSON OF THIS PARABLE

“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”
Matthew 18:35

APPLICATION OF THE LESSON ON FORGIVENESS

1. Forgiveness must be practised
2. Forgiveness must first be fully understood:
 - a) The degree to which we are indebted to God
 - i) Forgiveness of the multitude of our sins
 - ii) Incalculable amount
 - b) God's forgiveness must be fathomed:
 - i) Heart
 - ii) Mind
 - iii) Soul
 - iv) All the implications
3. Understanding of Forgiveness
 - a) To be measured by our response to people
 - b) To be measured by our ability to forgive others
4. How Forgiveness may be practised:
 - a) Out of compassion
 - b) Out of pity
 - c) Out of the heart
5. Vital Truths to remember and bear in mind:
 - a) What God can do to us if we do not practise forgiveness
 - i) If we do not forgive
 - ii) How may we expect forgiveness?
 - b) God reserves the right:
 - i) To withhold forgiveness

ii) To judge our sins

iii) To mete out consequences

WHY WE FIND IT SO HARD TO FORGIVE

1. Anger in the heart
2. A hardened heart
3. A prideful heart
4. An unforgiving heart