

Mini Study – Forgiveness (part 1 of 2)

Amazing Grace

Our need of God's forgiveness is an affront to our desire to pay our own debts. To atone for our sins with our own good works, blind to our sinfulness before the most holy God, and those destined for His eternal punishment.

However, the Good News is that it doesn't have to be this way. That God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has made a way for us to be brought back into right relationship with Him, to know His mercy, our sins forgiven, if we would but come with empty hands to Him and receive it.

In this a **two-part** mini study we begin by looking at the gift of God's grace (unmerited favour) offered to us in Jesus, before exploring in **part two** how we who have come to know the Father's mercy are called as His beloved children to be merciful like Him.

OBSERVE

READ Matthew 18:21-27 and:

- underline every reference to *forgive / forgave*.
- circle every reference to *pay / payment*.

²¹Then 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?" ²²Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

²³"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And 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. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

Talent – a monetary unit worth about twenty years' wages for a labourer. To owe 10,000 talents was an impossible debt to repay.

DISCUSS

V21 – What did Peter want to know about *forgiveness*?

V22 – What was Jesus's reply?

No limit - Jesus is not giving Peter a limit to how often we forgive others. No three strikes you're out policy here. Rather, by saying seventy times seven, the number seven signifying completeness, Jesus is declaring that there is *no limit* to how often we forgive those who sin against us. Jesus then tells a parable to illustrate why this is case for all who are in God's kingdom.

V23-25 – What *impossible* situation was the servant in?

V26 – What did the servant implore his master to do?

V27 – How was the master *amazingly gracious* to his servant?

OBSERVE

READ Matthew 18:28-35 and:

- underline every reference to *forgave / forgive*.
- circle every reference to *pay*.

²⁸But 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."

Denarii – a denarius was a day's wage for a labourer. A debt of 100 denarii was a reasonable sum to owe, but pittance compared to a debt of 10,000 talents.

Jailers – a word that refers to torturers.

DISCUSS

V28 – What did the servant do next?

V29 – What did his fellow-servant plead with him to do?

V30 - How did he respond?

V33 – How should he have responded?

What do you think his lack of mercy showed?

V34 – How did the master then punish him? When would the debt be paid off?

V35 – Similarly, what will the Father do to every one of us if we do not forgive others from the heart?

Jesus's statement in v.35 makes for sobering reading. That unless we forgive others from the heart we will be punished eternally by God, recipients of His wrath not mercy. However, Jesus is not speaking here about earning God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Rather, if we don't forgive, we show we have never received the Father's mercy and therefore remain under His judgement.

For it is those who have received God's mercy, forgiving our sin-debt we could never repay, who will and are able to forgive others. A divine mercy that came at great cost. The Father in His great love sending His Son to bear the punishment for our sins on the cross, enduring the Father's wrath, so that we through faith in Jesus could be reconciled to God. What mercy!! What love!!

REFLECT

Have you received the Father's mercy?

The topic of forgiveness is huge, and in the next study we will explore briefly, not exhaustively, how as God's children we are to respond to those who sin against us. But for now, let's continue to reflect on and rest upon God's grace to us in Christ and so be empowered by the Spirit to live in a manner worthy of our calling.

FURTHER STUDY

If you would like to explore further about how to know God's forgiveness through Jesus, then please read on. And if you have already come to know the Father's mercy then why not take

time now to further renew your mind with the truth of God's amazing grace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

READ Romans 3:20-23 and:

- underline every reference to *justified* or *righteousness*.
- circle the phrase *all have sinned*.

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Works of the law – all the works commanded by God's Law.

Justified – sinners declared by God to be righteous, whose sins He has forgiven and credited with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, His Son.

Righteousness of God – God's holy and perfect character.

V20 – How is no one justified in God's sight? Why?

V21-22a – What do we learn about the *righteousness of God*?

V22b-23 – Why do we need to be justified, to receive God's righteousness?

Trying to keep God's Law, His commandments, will never make us right with God, but instead through the Law comes knowledge of our sin. For there is no distinction, for we all have sinned and fall short of living as those created by God for His glory. But the Good News is that we can be justified *apart* from keeping God's Law – a gift of God's grace to be received through faith in Jesus and what He has done to save us from our sins.

READ Romans 3:24-26 and:

- underline every reference to *justified* or *righteousness*.
- circle every reference to *faith*.

²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Redemption – to pay a debt to release someone from slavery, here referring to how Jesus Christ who through His sinless life, death for our sins, and glorious resurrection has made a way for us to be set free from the guilt of our sin, to live holy lives, and when He returns to be done with the influence of sin in our lives for good.

Propitiation – Jesus, the Son of God, enduring the Father's wrath on the cross that we deserved as punishment for our sins so that through faith in Him we don't have to.

V24-25a – How does God *justify (declare righteous)* sinners like us?

V25b – How is this amazing gift of God's grace received?

V25c-26 – Why did God do it this way?

RESPOND

So, there we have it. Jesus has paid for our sins in full. God Himself, through His Son, bearing the just punishment from the Father that we deserved for our sins, so that through faith in Him our sinful slate might be wiped clean and credited with His righteousness, and to be adopted into God's family as beloved children of the Father forever.

Have you trusted, put your confidence in Jesus to save you from your sins? If not, will you?

And if you have – do you struggle with guilt over past sin? Then rest in the complete forgiveness of sins that is yours in Christ - see that sin as punished, as cancelled, and know the Spirit's power to put it to death and have victory over it.

“...The only sin that you can defeat is a defeated sin... the only way to defeat it is to see it as a punished sin, a covered sin.” – John Piper