

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Matt. 18:23-35

Introduction:

- A. One of two outstanding parables on forgiveness.
 - 1. Unforgiving brother.
 - 2. Unforgiving servant.
- B. Both parables illustrate 3 great principles.

Discussion:

I. The Seriousness of Sin.

- A. A “debt” we cannot pay. (Mt. 18:24,25)
- B. A “waste”, “death” and “lost” (Lk. 15:13,32)
- C. Always “against heaven” (Lk. 15:18,21).
 - 1. Transgresses heaven’s law. (1 John 3:4,5).
 - 2. Forgiveness must take place in heaven. (cf. Mt. 9:2-8)
- D. Sometimes against others as well. (Lk. 15:18,21, Mt. 18:15).
- E. It is more than mere “fault” or “mistake”
 - 1. All sins are faults and mistakes.
 - 2. Not all faults and mistakes are sin. (cf. 1 Cor. 7:28,31-38)
 - 3. May overlook fault - sin must be dealt with.

II. The Requirements of Repentance.

- A. It is the penitent that must be forgiven.
 - 1. Unforgiving servant & elder brother would not after repented.
 - 2. Forgiving father forgave after repentance.
- B. It is not best for impenitent to be forgiven.
 - 1. Else why does God require it. (2 Pet. 3:9, 1 John 1:9)
 - 2. Else why Lord make Lord say “If he repent” (Lk. 17:3,4)
 - 3. Else why “let him be as heathen”, etc. (Matt. 18:15-18).

III. The Fundamentals of Forgiveness.

- A. It is not automatic.
 - 1. Calvinists think so.
 - 2. Misunderstand Romans 4.
- B. It depends on our forgiveness. (Matt. 18:32-35).
- C. It is the right thing to do. (Lk. 15:22).
 - 1. In view of our blessings in Christ. (Lk. 15:32).
 - 2. In view of our own need for forgiveness. (Mt. 18:24,25).

Conclusion:

- A. Those who advocate forgiveness before repentance minimize seriousness of sin.
- B. Those who neglect forgiveness after repentance minimize seriousness of sin.