

## FORGIVENESS

DECEMBER 26, 2021

## WORSHIP

Joy To The World (Unspeakable Joy),  
10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord), Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

## WELCOME

What was the most expensive gift you received this Christmas? How about the most priceless gift? For you, what makes the difference between "expensive" and "priceless"?

## WORD

**(READ MATTHEW 18:21-34 AHEAD OF TIME)**

**MATTHEW 18:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus \*said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times."

Christmas is a season of giving and receiving gifts among friends and loved ones. Today, we will also talk about heaven's priceless gift. It is something we all desperately need, and something we will all be glad to receive. However, it's also something we find difficult or refuse to give to other people. What is heaven's priceless gift? It's forgiveness.

In **Matthew 18:21-22** Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive someone who sinned against him. Jesus answered him not only up to seven times but seventy times seven! Jesus was instructing His disciples how to handle people who commit sin (**Matthew 18:15-16**). The Jewish law required people to forgive up to 3 times, and Peter was raising the bar by forgiving up to 7 times. Yet no one can raise the bar higher than Jesus. Jesus was simply reminding Peter, as well as you and me, that we are not to keep score nor count how many times we forgive others. Jesus proceeded to tell of a parable about a king who had a slave who owed him ten thousand talents (**Matthew 18:23-24**).

What is a talent? (Source: *World Mission Society/Bible Hub*)

**1 talent** = 6,000 denarii

**1 denarii** = a worker's daily wage

**1 talent** = a worker's daily wage for 6,000 days (around 20 years)

**10,000 talents** = a worker's wage for 60,000,000 days!

In other words, this slave owed the master a debt that was beyond calculation! It's surprising enough that this slave incurred a huge amount of debt, but this slave unabashedly begged his master for mercy. In an astonishing turn of events, the master not only showed mercy, but he also had compassion. He released the slave and forgave him all his debts! Did the debt magically disappear? No. Someone had to absorb the weight of that debt, and it was the king himself. What is the connection of being financially in debt and forgiveness of sins? We need to realize that sin is a moral and spiritual debt that we owe God (**Matthew 6:12**). And just like in the parable, our debt is incalculable.

### 1. WE OWE GOD BIG TIME

There are 14 mountains or summits around the world that are at least 8,000 meters high. Experts tell us that when mountaineers reach 8,000 meters high, they are in what is called the "**death zone**". Similarly, we owe God a mountain of debt that we cannot scale, and it brings us to the death zone. In **Romans 6:23** it says "**for the wages of sin is death...**" Not only would death be our wage, but also sin separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**).

What makes sin so bad? It's because we commit it against a holy God. This means that God cannot tolerate or co-exist with sin, and we will not have enough reason to say that based on our own merits we can stand before God (**Psalm 5:4-5; Romans 5:10; 1 Timothy 6:15-16**). Both Old and New Testaments talk about the holiness of God (**Isaiah 6:2-3; Revelation 7:11**). What is the implication of God's holiness to sin? **James 2:10** says that it takes

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only one sin to eternally separate us from God. In the same way that the slave in the parable incurred a huge amount of debt he cannot pay, so did we sin as much against a holy God (**Galatians 5:19-21**).

### 2. JESUS PAID OUR DEBT ONE-TIME!

We cannot pay our debt, but that's the reason that Jesus came and pay our debt one-time (**1 Peter 3:18**). From the very moment that Jesus stepped out in His public ministry, His goal and mission was very clear, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**). Lee Strobel pointed out that Jesus did not only say "**Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing**" (**Luke 23:34**) only once, but that He kept saying it until He gave up His last breath. What is the implication of Jesus' final declaration of "**It is finished**"? (**John 19:30**)? In the original Greek, "**It is finished**" is "**Tetelestai**". Tetelestai would be written in business documents and receipts to show that a bill has been paid in full. It also implies that a goal has been achieved and a task has been perfectly fulfilled. Jesus paid and perfectly fulfilled His task when He died on the cross for our sins and paid our debt one-time with His life.

### 3. WE MUST FORGIVE ALL THE TIME!

What are we to do in response to Jesus' sacrifice? We must also forgive all the time. The slave, after receiving pardon, went out and sought his fellow slave and demanded he paid him what was owed. Despite the second slave's pleading, the first slave harshly threw the slave to prison until what was owed be paid. Other slaves, seeing how the first slave treated the second slave, were deeply grieved, and reported what had happened to the master (**Matthew 18:31**). Here we see that when there is one or more persons who refuse to forgive and hold a grudge against another person, there will others who will also be grieved. The master called on the first slave and rebuked him of his deeds and gave this slave over to the torturers until he paid back what he owed.

What should our application be? **Ephesians 4:32** says, "**Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you**". Do we really understand, or have we forgotten the tremendous debt we owe God and how Jesus paid our debt big time? May we learn to forgive from the heart, just as Christ forgave us.

#### Forgive from the heart:

1. Forgive all offenses without limit.
2. Forgive all offenders without exception.
3. Do not seek personal revenge.
4. Do not take sins against them.

May we end the year right by accepting God's forgiveness and extending forgiveness to others also.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

#### 1. Self-Check.

What is your most important realization based on this parable?

#### 2. Setting It Right.

How can you best respond to Jesus for having fully paid our debt of sin?

#### 3. Living It Out.

Who are the people that you still need to forgive?

### WORKS

#### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people who have difficulty in extending forgiveness to those who have hurt them. Share the gospel to them that they will come to the realization that they were forgiven of the huge debt of sin, and that Jesus showed them great mercy by sacrificing His life for theirs. Share God's truth to them so that they'll see their offenders through God's eyes, and end the year right by seeking reconciliation with God and others.

### WEEKLY

### PRAYER POINTS

#### I. Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

#### II. Country and the World

Upright and moral governance of Public Servants  
A God-centered Philippines  
Repentance and Salvation

#### III. Church

That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples  
Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families  
Ministries and Churches worldwide

#### IV. CCF Facilities

Worship and Training Center  
Prayer Mountain

#### V. Personal Concerns

Deeper intimate relationship with God  
Righteous living  
Salvation of family and friends

### MEMORY VERSE

#### Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.