

1 DNA 10 Give second chances (Value)

1.1.1 The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Matthew 18.21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.^[a]**23** "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. **6** "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' **27** The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.**28** "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[c] He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.**29** "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'**30** "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.**32** "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' **34** In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.**35** "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Starts with a question from Peter – why sis Peter asking this question – v15-20 have a section Jesus describing what to do with your brothers and sisters – who have sinned. Divisions in bible not there. Can seem like a new section – v10 parable of lost sheep – told this on two different occasions for two reasons tax collectors – God pursuing sinners – here in Matthew v14 about little ones slight different emphasis – not about lost but about Gods people pursuing people have gone astray. This is the application of the parable of the lost sheep – any one offends you or sinned against you – you pursue them. Talking about out working of Jesus' call to go after people have gone astray. Outworking outrageous proactive pursuing grace. Talking about how do we love one another – pursue people with grace. Peter says do we do this seven times? Seventy seven times means endless number figurative. Heart that people get the fact there is no end to the grace and forgiveness we give people.

How do we build a culture of giving second chances

1.2 1 Size of our Debt

Some parables are cryptic but this one isn't. He wants the disciples to get this straight away. Kingdom of Heaven compared to a king. Starts with 10,000 talents – but we know this is a lot – how much is this one talent 20 years of labour – roughly 5 billion pounds. Not a small amount – outrageous amount of money. What ? He owes the master a huge debt that nobody could pay back – its completely unpayable. When they hear this they will think this guys in trouble – there's no way he can settle this account with the master. Tragic or laughable v26 – servants reaction is surprising. – do what you can to plead your case and ask for time – but must sound really hollow is one of utter desperation. Who is supposed to be who ? King is God and the servant is us. We are the servant who have an unrepayable debt which we cannot settled before God. Sometimes when we think about our sin we don't view it in these terms – we don't see it as so significant and so huge – we just need a little bit of grace as our debt is small – generally I am ok I am not too bad. But this is not what this passage teaches us – the weigh and size of our debt was colossal and crushing and unpayable.

What is the benefit of telling this ? Directly relates to our level of gratitude – our understanding of our level of debt and sin gives us more reason to give thanksgiving. Martin Segal operated for twisted bowel only when he heard people die of this did he grasp how wonderful the operation really was.

DO we grasp it ? How does grasping it inform forgiveness. For each and every one of us we are all in the same boat – we are all under the same condemnation – none of us are here through our own merits. None of us have the ability to settle our own debt. Because we are all the same there is no place for a sense of superiority or pride or hard heartedness towards one another. No place for unforgiveness. When we realise the size of the debt we need grace.

1.3 2 – Scope of Gods Grace

There is no hope. A shocking moment in parables. Here we have that. Our reaction should be wow moment when we received verse 27 – out of pity for him the master released him and forgave him the debt. Can't communicate what a staggering statement that is. 5 billion pounds so huge just like that forgives the debt and releases the servant from the debt. Debts don't disappear – it must be paid somewhere – even if it is wiped clean it has to be absorbed, Colossians 2.13 – you who were dead in your trespasses ...cancelling record of debt ...set aside nailing it to the cross. The debt wasn't just wiped clean without consequence – Jesus took our debt upon himself – he was pieced for our transgressions – he bore the sin of many upon himself even though he was debt free – the only person debt free he was the only person to take that debt upon himself.

What is our hearts response to this? Jesus paid it all washed it white as snow. Think if you were in this story – we would be overjoyed and exuberant – but with our salvation we can be non-plussed and diffident as opposed to being broken by it. My sin is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more – praise the lord, praise the lord oh my soul. Oh the bliss of this glorious thought that all my debt has been nailed to the cross. Christ has borne it for me. All we can do is praise the Lord. Is that truth a blissful glorious thought to you ? Are we overwhelmed by the thought of this and impact the ways he acts towards other people.

1.4 3- Scourge of unforgiveness

We love a twist. Parables often have a twist. This parable no different in v28 – tragic twist but when the same servant who has been forgiven seizes someone who owes him money and throws him in jail until he pays this back. Shocking

- a) Forgiven but grace has failed to have true effect on him. We would expect him to come away from being forgiven and be so full of joy – he would pass this on to other people – treat people as he has been treated – a domino effect of grace. Like Christmas Carl – Scrooge awakes afresh – gets a second chance – and he is so changed and so full of charity – as he has received grace he passes it on. But here this servant is throttling someone – his reaction to grace is violence. Something has gone wrong here. This is designed to make us outraged – the other servants were distressed and reported this to their master. The master condemns him and in anger cast him over to jailers – he can't pay debt back so he is imprisoned for ever. How on earth would he refuse to forgive others in the light of what he has been forgiven. This is what unforgiveness looks like in our life – it's scandalous that we would hold this back.
- b) Two debts are incomparable in their size – 5 billion pounds so huge . The 100 is 10 grand – not insignificant amount – could have been ten p Jesus doesn't want to undermine the impact of what happens when people sin or offend you. We can get really hurt and the pain of the offence is real and damaging – not insignificant. Jesus is not undermining this. Therefore the cost of releasing the person who has offended me is not insignificant – for us to forgive people it costs something from us. Talked to a couple about how they had been hurt – we get that in principle – but they said its not easy. But none of the commands are easy. How

much less does it cost us than it cost Jesus if we are not willing to pay this cost. Just as we have received mercy so we are to extend mercy to people.

- c) Effect of unforgiveness – causes pain and suffering to both parties – to the person not forgiven and the person who doesn't forgive. Both end up in prison – both parties are bound in prison – nothing like unforgiveness to rob us of peace and distress the community – unforgiveness in context of people of God doesn't just impact those involved it impacts the whole body and it causes distress to the body. God's heart is that there is a different ending to the story – think how different the story could have been if he had forgiven the debtor of 100 talents and released him of debt – jubilant. Our story must look different to the outcome of this story. How do we do this ?
- d) Application –
 - a. Build a rhythm of confession – to God and others – confession we are reminding each other of
 - b. Be quick to forgive – don't avoid the issues don't sweep things under the carpet – don't foster bitterness. Confessed but confident in grace we would be quick to forgive and confront.
 - c. Be willing to give people another go – forgive from our heart – must be heart felt can't be superficial – can be lip service but remain cold towards them. BE reconciled and willing to give them another chance. Don't write them off – the Grace of God is big and powerful enough to heal.
 - d. Don't allow people's flaws to define them – we can be too quick to see the worst in people. Look for the gold in people and not the dirt. Seek out the grace of God in people – how precious they are and not where they fall short.