

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 31 – Forgiveness – An Act Of Obedience

MONDAY

OPEN

Does it seem, Beloved, as if you've lost your intimacy with God? Could it be that there is something in your heart against another person? Maybe someone's wounded you. Maybe someone has hurt you or offended you or snubbed you and all of a sudden you find a little bitterness, a little unhappiness against that person. Could it be, Precious One, that you have not forgiven them as Your Father in Heaven wants you to forgive them? If you don't forgive you are going to lack intimacy with God. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

I'm sitting here, Beloved, on Mount Arbel in the Galilee. And I thought it would be so good since this passage, Matthew 18:15, happened during Jesus' Galilean ministry, that it would be good for us to look at it today. He's going to talk about: "What do you do when your brother sins against

you? How do you handle it? How do you deal with sin in the group, in the church?” And then He is going to talk about forgiveness. And this is such an important passage and it can be so liberating to you in your life, Beloved. So let’s look at it. He says in verse 15, **“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private....” (Matthew 18:15)** That is the first thing that you are to do if a brother sins, if he sins against you or if he sins against anyone else. If you know that your brother is sinning then it is your responsibility to go to that brother and show him his fault. But you do it in private. And it says, **“...If he listens to you, you have won your brother.” (Matthew 18:15)** He knows that you’ve come. He knows that you care about him. He knows that you see him overtaken in a fault. You’ve gone to him, in the right spirit. You’ve won your brother. The sin is stopped and all is well. But what if he does not listen? He says, **“But if he does not listen to you, [then] take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.” (Matthew 18:16)** Now it’s so important to have witnesses. And it’s so important to have more than one witness. I want to take you back to Deuteronomy chapter 19. And remember Deuteronomy is the second giving of the Law. It’s the giving of the Law to those who have wandered and survived the wilderness wandering. And he is giving this to them as they prepare to come into the land and he tells them in verse 15. **“A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or...sin which he has committed....”** in other words one man can not come and accuse another in front of others of a sin that he has committed. You cannot go by a single witness. It says, **“...On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days.” (Deuteronomy 19:15-17)** Now this is talking about a single malicious witness. And that witness then has to go, **“...before**

the priests...[before] the judges [that are] in office in those days. The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he...intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.” (Deuteronomy 19:17-19) It is evil to bear false witness. It is to tell a lie. It is evil to defame a man. It is evil to try to destroy a man with your false witness. And God makes that very clear. So he’s saying, “Okay, here is a brother that sins. You go to him privately. He doesn’t listen so then you go back with two or more witnesses. [And you go with those one or two witnesses so that every fact may be confirmed about that conversation.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 18:16) **“If he refuses to listen to them...,”** those one or two that go together, **“...tell it to the church...,”** tell it to the whole congregation, **“...and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:17)** Now Matthew a tax collector is writing this and he knows what it’s like to be an outcast. Now he says, “You are to treat that man like an outcast. You are to treat that man like the Jews treat the Gentiles as unclean. You are to have nothing to do with them.” Why? Because you’ve gone through the proper procedure and the man refuses to confess his sin. So he goes on to say, **“Truly I say to you....”** Now remember “truly” is “I’m telling you the truth.” Jesus is speaking. **“...Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)** Now he has said this before and he is saying it again. And it’s just executing the authority of the Word of God here on earth. It’s you and I living according to the Word of God. [And so these people can treat this man like a tax collector. They can treat him as a Gentile and they can bind on earth what heaven says is to be done in respect to this man. If this man confesses then they can loose on earth what has been loosed in heaven.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 18:17-18) In other words, sin unconfessed, un-repented for will not be tolerated. And then he says, **“Again I**

say to you...if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in [the] midst.” (Matthew 18:19-20) Now does this sound like all of a sudden He shifted to prayer? That all of the sudden He’s changed the subject? No. And yet so many times this verse is used as a promise in prayer. And you will see people getting on their knees and saying to God, “God we agree that so and so should have this or so and so should have that. And because two or three of us are agreeing we know that you promised that you’ll do it.” The context here is not the context of prayer. The context here is the context of a brother who sins. And you can see that, Precious One, in the next verse. It says, **“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother[s] sin against me and I forgive him...?’”** (Matthew 18:21) In other words the conversation, the subject, has not changed. The subject is about a brother that is sinning and how do you treat the brother. Now Peter wants to know, [“Okay Father, how often should I forgive my brother?”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 18:21) Now the Jews were saying three times is plenty, three times and then that’s it. You don’t have to forgive them anymore, but it’s like Peter is being magnanimous. It’s like he’s being so generous, [“Should I do it up to seven times Lord?”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 18:21) Now watch, Jesus, I think, throws him for a loop with His answer. “[And] **Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”** (Matthew 18:22) Seventy times seven, hey! That is 490 times I am to forgive. Who can keep track of whether it’s 351 or whether it’s 354. How am I going to get up to 490? And that’s the point. Jesus continues speaking, He says, **“For this reason the kingdom of heaven....”** (Matthew 18:23) Now remember, the Gospel of Matthew is all about the King. It’s all about the kingdom of heaven. It’s all about repenting because **“...the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** (Matthew 10:7) It’s all about who is going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. It’s the righteous that

are going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. It is the merciful, **“Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”** (Matthew 5:7-8) Remember the beatitudes? Remember what He talks about inheriting the kingdom of heaven and the character of those that belong to that kingdom? (See Matthew 5) He goes on to say, **“...the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. [And] when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.”** (Matthew 18:23-24) Now this ten thousand talents is like millions of dollars and here is a man and he owes millions and he’s coming and he doesn’t have the means to repay and you can understand that. It says, **“[And] when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had and repayment to be made.”** (Matthew 18:24-25) I want everything that this man owns including his family to be sold, everything to be sold in order to repay me this tremendous debt that this man owes me. And it says, **“So [that] the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me [have patience with me] and I will repay you everything.’”** (Matthew 18:26) It was an impossible debt and yet what is he asking for? He’s asking for mercy. He says, “Have patience with me; don’t throw me into prison. Don’t sell my wife. Don’t sell my children. Don’t sell what I have. Have mercy with me, **“...and I will repay you everything,”** and it says, **“And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.”** (Matthew 18:26-27) Can you imagine the relief! Can you imagine the release that that man felt? All, all of a sudden it wasn’t that you have to repay me; you are totally, absolutely, completely forgiven! Why? Because the one that was owed the debt felt compassion. Do you remember the times we have seen the word compassion? Do you remember how Jesus has been

so compassionate? Now it says, **“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a [mere] a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, [and say], ‘Pay back what you owe....’”** Pay back what you owe! Look at what he’s doing. Look at what he’s saying. **“...So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’”** (Matthew 18:29) Well obviously he’s going to have patience with him. Obviously he’s going to give him mercy. He just received mercy. Isn’t that what you would do? We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Our lesson today is about sin and it’s about forgiveness. And it’s about unforgiveness and the consequences when we do not forgive. Jesus has just told Peter, [“That you are to forgive your brother seventy times seven.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 18:21) That’s 490 times. He’s using a hyperbole. And now He tells a story to make a point. He tells a story about a slave that owes his master ten thousand talents. One talent was about a 15 years wages. So you can imagine how he owes him. It’s like a hyperbole, there’s no way it can be repaid. And yet when he is threatened to have his wife and his children sold and everything that he has and be put in prison, the man falls on his face and asks for forgiveness. And the master forgives the slave. He doesn’t have to pay the debt, he sends him away absolutely free. I just don’t want you to miss this whole point here, because it it’s so significant. Well he walks away. He’s just been forgiven an impossible debt, one he could never pay, as a slave. And then a fellow slave comes up to him and this fellow slave owes the man that has been forgiven, one hundred denarii. A denarii was one day’s wage. And he’s saying, “Give me back, pay me what you owe me.” Verse 29, **“So his fellow slave fell to the ground....,”** even as he did before his master, **“...and [he] began to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you [have patience.] But he was**

unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what [he] owed.” (Matthew 18:29-30) In the first place how could he pay back what he owed if he was in prison? He certainly couldn’t work. Where was he going to get the money from? And yet to get the money was possible. His friends could collect it. It was only a hundred days’ wages. And yet this forgiven slave refuses to forgive a man that owes him a pittance in comparison with what he’s been forgiven. Jesus tells the story. He gives it a big exaggeration because He doesn’t want you to miss the point. What is the point? Well watch what it says. It says in verse 31, **“So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and [they] came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord...,”** the one who had just forgiven him this humongous debt said to him, **“...You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?”** (Matthew 18:31-33) Did you get it? I want to read it again. I don’t want you to miss it. It’s crucial to understanding what God wants you to understand today. **“Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?” (Matthew 18:33)** Remember what we saw in the beatitudes? Remember what we saw in Matthew chapter 5? **“Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)** It says in verse 34, **“And his lord, moved with anger....”** And it is a righteous anger. It is a righteous indignation. **“And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.” (Matthew 18:34)** His lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. What is the bottom line? It’s this, **“My Heavenly Father...,”** Jesus is speaking, **“My Heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” (Matthew 18:35)** Now this is the bottom line of the lesson today. The bottom line of this lesson is that God

has forgiven you. God has forgiven you a debt that you never can pay. God is righteous and you owe him absolute righteousness and you were born in sin and you have sinned. **“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned [each] one to [our] own way; and ...[God]... laid on [Jesus] the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6, KJV)** He paid the debt. And when He paid that debt, He paid it in full. He’s forgiven you and He tells you that you have forgiveness of sins. Now a brother comes to you and that brother has sinned against you and are you going to withhold mercy from him? Are you going to withhold forgiveness from him? What is Jesus’ word to you? Jesus is saying, that if you withhold mercy from that person, if you refuse to forgive, number one; He is going to turn you over to the torturers, and number two; He is going to do this because you did not forgive your brother from your heart. It can’t be a verbal kind of “I forgive you.” It’s got to be from your heart. It’s got to be sincere. Now I want to compare this with Ephesians chapter 4. In Ephesians chapter 4 he’s telling us how we are to walk. In Ephesians chapter 4, verse 32 he says, **“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)** I am to forgive just as in the same way that God has forgiven me. That’s the whole point of the story that Jesus just told. It says, **“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as [just as] Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, [as] an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)** If you and I, Beloved, are going to walk in love then you and I need to forgive just as God has forgiven us. Listen to me very carefully: Forgiveness is your response to God. Forgiveness is your response to God. It’s not merely your response to your fellow man. Because if it’s just a response to your fellow man, it’s just between you two, but who is it that told you to be merciful? Who is it that told you that He would bless you if you were merciful? Who is it that told you that you are to forgive just as God in Christ Jesus has forgiven you? You have been forgiven a debt you can never ever

repay. Another person comes and they have sinned against you and you are a sinner. What is the kingdom of heaven made up of, Beloved? It's made up of people whose sins have been forgiven. We've all sinned. We've all been forgiven. We are all in turn to forgive and if we don't, our heavenly Father is going to do as that Lord of the slave did to that man who refused to forgive. He's going to hand us over to the torturers and the one that is going to be hurt is not the one that you refuse to forgive, but it's going to be you because you refuse to obey God.