

Chapter Eighteen

Forgiveness

I. Introduction

- A. The truths and the teachings of Jesus are getting deeper, and meatier, and more practical as you go through Matthew!
- B. This chapter is an intense series of truths that will never be fathomed!
- C. We will learn about:
 - 1. Conversion
 - 2. Servant Leadership
 - 3. Not offending children as well as each other
 - 4. Forgiving each other
 - 5. How to handle offending church members
 - 6. The dangers of unforgiveness

II. Lesson

A. Jesus Explains the Value of Being a Child (18:1-6)

- 1. Greatness in the coming Kingdom
 - a. It is wired into men to be great – nothing wrong with that (Job 1:3)
 - 1) Important
 - 2) Most powerful
 - 3) It is _____ to be mediocre, or nominal, or slothful (Mt 25:26)
 - 4) We must be faithful for sure, but as believers, we must do more than expected (Luke 17:10)
 - b. It was a logical question if “the kingdom” was coming – physical, literal kingdom
 - c. But Jesus defines what is the greatest greatness (Cf Mk 9:33-35)
 - 1) Be last, lowest (as in of no reputation like Christ, Philp 2:7)
 - 2) Be the servant of _____ – of absolutely anybody and everybody – even to the point of letting people walk all over you! What a fight Matt 23:11 should be!
 - 3) _____ as little children – talking to grown men
 - 4) This is the description of humbling yourself
 - 5) This is the _____ Concept – not dictator, tyrant, self-focused megalomaniac
- 2. Conversion
 - a. Repentance is being _____
 - b. Converted means _____
 - 1) Changed from know it all adult, to trusting, simplicity of a child
 - 2) There is no entrance into the kingdom without conversion – not baptism, belief, Bible knowledge, power, money, successes – only a change on the inside – a NEW BIRTH (John 3:3)
 - c. To most cultures, children were a nuisance (still are), except in Christ’s kingdom – it is FULL of them!
 - d. So:
 - 1) Accept children as readily you would accept Jesus
 - 2) Actually value children more than adults (“women and children first” is a Biblical mindset)
- 3. Just beware of offending, _____, causing to stumble a child
 - a. It would be better to commit suicide than hurt a child
 - b. Also refers to young believers – weak in the faith

B. Jesus Warns About Sinning Against Others (18:7-14)

1. The world is full of sin and hurt (it goes hand in hand)
 - a. Full of woe, cursed
 - b. Offenses are Transgressions, things we say and do that cause others to fall, give up, go astray
 - c. Offenses are part of our human nature – occurs naturally in the old man (Rom 7:17,20) – inherited from Adam
 - d. But individual acts _____ be blamed on Adam!
2. The seriousness of offenses
 - a. If your hand, foot, eye _____ you, _____ it off
 - b. It is better to be maimed than go to _____
 - c. Speaking of things that would stop you from getting saved, getting into the kingdom of heaven
 - d. Great principle – applies to Christians:
 - 1) Anything that would hinder you needs to be dropped, mortified, cut off
 - 2) What you do and _____ do affects your rewards and place in heaven
 - 3) Out of fear of being cast away, or brought to heaven early and empty handed (1Cor 9:24-27; 2Cor 5:10,11)
 - e. Children ____ have guardian angels – you cannot hurt them without hurting almighty God!
 - f. Jesus saves sinners, offenders (18:11)
 - 1) He is the Shepherd who goes after wayward sheep (not the other way around)
 - a) Leaves and ignores the needs of the 99
 - b) Goes after one that is _____ from God – away from church
 - c) Rejoices more over finding and bringing him back than over us 99 who have never left
 - d) Simply because of the value of that one soul
 - e) And simply because ____ all have been that “stray sheep”
 - 2) We too should go out of our way to not hinder someone from getting saved (18:14)

C. How to Handle _____ Church-Members (18:15-20)

1. Here is the second mention of the Church Concept – this time it is _____
2. How to handle someone trespassing against you – offending you – hurting you
 - a. Got to him/her _____
 - 1) Respectfully, not vengefully
 - 2) Wanting to regain the relationship, not destroy it
 - 3) Tell him of the wrong (Cf Luke 17:3-5)
 - 4) If he listens and understands, and accepts responsibility, you have gained your brother back (Pr 28:13)
 - 5) Forgive him – no matter how many times he sins against you/offends you!
 - b. If he doesn't listen, go get 2 or 3 people who have also _____ the offenses against you
 - 1) Not just people who believe your story, but people who are witnesses
 - 2) If there are no other witnesses, then have grace as much as possible
 - 3) Again tell him of his wrong
 - 4) If he listens and understands, and accepts responsibility, you have gained your brother back
 - 5) Forgive him
 - c. If he again puts off getting right with you, then go to the _____
 - 1) The church here is a local body of believers, who as a unified group of believers, have authority over accepting the offender or rejecting him
 - 2) They also have the authority to believe or reject the offended person
 - 3) The person had better have just cause before bringing a matter before the whole church
 - 4) If he accepts the rebuke by the church, then he is forgiven

- 5) If he doesn't take the church's warning seriously (neglects to hear), then put him out of the church
 - a) Does not call him as a sinner, because we all are such
 - b) But treat him as a lost man: A _____, A _____
 - c) No longer as a brother, a believer
 - d) Deliver him out of the church's protection to the dominion of Satan (1Cor 5)
 - e) All with the design to see him broken and repentant and wanting to get saved, or to come back into fellowship with the local church

D. Jesus Teaches About Forgiveness (18:18-35) – More Important than learning about the Kingdom!

1. Continues on with the theme of forgiveness
2. "Binding" and "Loosing"
 - a. If you do things Scripturally, you will have authority and power
 - b. Binding is _____ and locking away – making guilty
 - c. Loosing is _____ (2Cor 2:10)
3. A Church is when you have just 2 or 3 believers, gathering in _____ and _____ to the Person of Jesus Christ (18:20)
 - a. If we just had Biblical unity about issues, we would have such power!
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - b. Jesus is in the midst of such a _____ group – not in the massive crowds!
4. The Problem with Forgiveness (18:21-35)
 - a. Peter is concerned – about _____ forgiveness
 - 1) Sets the marker at forgiving someone SEVEN times
 - 2) "We all have our limit you know"
 - b. Jesus responds with 7 x 70 times = 490 times (Cf Luke 17:3,4)
 - 1) God _____ his pardons, so should we (Ps 78:38,40)
 - 2) Christianity is about giving beyond our abilities!!!
5. The Parable of the Two-Debtors (18:21-35)
 - a. The kingdom concept again – so Jesus has the full attention of the disciples
 - b. Taking Account – an employer checking on the performance and accounts of his stewards
 - c. **The First Steward's Debt**
 - 1) Had gotten way over his head in debt
 - 2) Indebted to the sum of 10,000 talents – impossible to do at that day!
 - 3) 10,000 x €10,000 each talents the Equivalent of €100,000,000 euros!
 - 4) That's pretty hard to imagine a single person getting into that much debt
 - 5) Jesus chose an impossible amount to show our debt account with GOD!
 - 6) The Concept of Sin and Wrong (Isaiah 59:1,2)
 - 7) Discovered, exposed his losses – he lost his Lord's money
 - 8) Unavoidable Ruin (Mt 18:25) - No bailout
 - a) Payment HAD to be paid – oh that people were _____ to repay their debts, and pay all their bills again!
 - b) His debt was going to ruin not only his life, but the lives of his wife and children
 - c) Payment was going to be made!
 - d) Was condemned to being sold, along with his family, and estate to try and recover anything possible of all that debt
 - e) It is right for people who lose other people's money to go to prison, and their estates being confiscated to pay back those who he embezzled
 - f) He had _____ to pay back – a picture of a sinner headed for hell for sure!

- g) To pay off such a debt would have been forever (picture of hell) because in prison, how can you earn any money to pay off your debts?!

d. The First Steward's Contrition

- 1) From "secret sinner" that acted like nothing was wrong, to "broken sinner", who was condemned, and accepted it
- 2) Fell and worshipped – made his Lord right, and made himself totally to blame
- 3) Begged for mercy
- 4) Takes _____ for his sin, and asks the Lord to give him another chance

e. The Lord's Forgiveness

- 1) The king has great compassion towards the servant
 - a) Not because of his ability to pay – *he had no ability*
 - b) But because the king was moved – something pulled Him towards forgiving the entire debt
 - c) Psalm 130:3,4, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." – thank God for His mercy and compassion!
- 2) It was _____ Forgiveness - The king forgave the entire debt
 - a) He didn't _____ the debt
 - b) He didn't _____ the payments
 - c) He completely _____ the entire debt (forgave it)
 - d) AND the king removed _____ for getting into such debt!
 - e) This servant was able to walk away, FREE of all debt – as if he had never been in debt – justified – pardoned! His forgiveness was PERFECT (Ps 103:12; Heb 10:17)
 - f) The King, who just moments earlier was the enemy of that servant, was now at peace with him (Rom 5:1; 8:1)
- 3) Look at what the king did:
 - a) The king was ready to forgive! Didn't live in vengeance. He wanted to forgive. God is so ready to forgive (Psalm 86:5; Isa 55:7)
 - b) The king waited for the servant to be repentant. The servant had to be repentant to receive forgiveness!
 - c) The _____ bore the debt now. The money did not appear from somewhere else. It cost the KING to forgive the servant!!!
 - d) Now you can understand how GOD forgives us! The price of His perfect forgiveness!

f. The First Servant's Failure (Matthew 18:28-34)

- 1) ***This is the Same Servant*** (Mt 18:28)
 - a) The same guy who had just been forgiven the most incredible debt imaginable!
 - b) This guy should be the happiest and most amazing man you would ever meet
- 2) ***He is an Angry Servant*** - Holding a Grudge (Mt 18:28)
 - a) Went out looking for someone who owed him money!
 - b) Grabbed him – took him by the _____!
 - c) Demanded him to pay him what he owed him that very moment!
 - d) This is _____.
 - e) Do Christians do such things? Oh yes indeed!
- 3) ***He has a Fellow Servant*** (Mt 18:28)
 - a) The man he grabs was not his own servant, or a slave, but a _____ – an equal. This man was at his level, so to speak – just like him
 - b) Yet, because he owed him a little bit of money, he was treated like dirt now

- c) Money, and especially debt, makes slaves out of anybody! Prov 22:7 says, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”
- 4) **He is Owed A Small Debt** (Mt 18:28)
- 100 pence – equivalent to 100 loaves of bread
 - Many people got this far in debt – it was normal for people to owe something to someone
 - Notice the comparison Jesus is making – between an incalculable debt, and a tiny debt. It should have been EASY to deal with this guy
 - It is most amazing how the smallest thing can become a large grudge in our hearts!
 - I have talked with people who are still holding things against people who are dead and gone. Of course the dead ones are no longer being harmed, but the living one is in great danger from the Tormentors. We know who the Tormentors are don't we? We are going to learn them. The fact that a person is dead and gone does not relieve us from the responsibility of forgiving them!
 - Many a family has carried on the grudges and bitterness of a generation that is dead and gone: see Northern Ireland, and Africa!
- 5) _____ **to Forgive** (Mt 18:29,30)
- In the face of an angry lender, the fellow-servant fell on his knees and begged for time so that he would attempt to pay it all back (sound familiar? See Mt 18:26)
 - Though forgiven himself, the first man does not forgive his fellow-servant.
 - Instead he holds him Accountable and “makes him pay” what he OWES!
 - He severely punishes someone who owes him only €1
 - Uh, wait a minute... Wasn't this guy forgiven of his great debt? I think he has forgotten it far too quickly, don't you? He has forgotten to forgive!
- 6) **No Mercy** - Only Punishment (Mt 18:30)
- Oh the power we take unto ourselves when we with hold forgiveness!
 - He didn't even give him a chance to pay it back
 - The fellow-servant probably only needed a few days to get together the money
 - Instead, he chose to TORTURE him – “made him pay!”
- 7) **Ultimate Justice** (Mt 18:31-34)
- Do you want justice? Do you really?
 - Then you will lose big time yourself!
 - This first man was held responsible for forgiving just as he was for his paying debts!
 - For that wrong attitude, “he” is tormented for the rest of his life!
- g. **The Saviour's Lesson** (Matthew 18:35) This is big!
- 1) **Forgiveness is a _____ deal**
- Unbelief is the biggest obstacle between us and God – the sin that keeps a man out of heaven!
 - Unrepentance is the second biggest obstacle – not giving up a sin!
 - Unforgiveness is third biggest obstacle between us and God – you have GOT to learn this!
- 2) **The Meaning of Forgiveness**
- _____. To pardon. To put away an offense, or a crime and restore peace between two enemies
 - What it is NOT:
 - It is NOT arbitrary, or random, but precise and exact
 - It is not piecemeal. Forgiveness does not cover a majority of a crime, it removes the punishment completely
 - It is not words you say – like when you were children and your parents made you say, “I'm sorry” and “It's okay, I forgive you”
 - It is not Denial – where the offended person just tries to forget something happened.

- c) It IS from God! Consider God's perspective.
 - (i) Nothing is hidden from His sight: the evil intent, the hidden lust, the damage done, the choosing of that which is wrong, etc. And yet He is the author and originator of forgiveness.
 - (ii) If we are going to really forgive, we are going to have to do it His way: with our eyes open, not an avoiding a person's hurt, but a dealing with it squarely, no matter how painful it may be.
 - (iii) If we are ever going to understand forgiveness, we are going to have to see just how much God forgives and how He forgives!
- d) Now, what is our part in forgiveness?
 - (i) The way we treat others OUGHT to be the way we have been treated by God
 - (ii) God sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins, so that we may be reconciled to Him, without spot or blemish. He asks that we give others the same forgiveness that paid for us.
 - (iii) Jesus is not saying that the person we are forgiving is not guilty. Quite often they are! But, forgiveness on our part is a simple DECISION to do so. We must not judge whether or not we have forgiven by an emotional test. We cannot control our emotions, but we can CHOOSE to obey God and forgive. When the Lord sees our heart felt desire to forgive He will sooner or later help our emotions to fall in line with our decision. It is then that the feeling of God's great Love floods our heart. Do not worry if this lovely feeling does not come at once, just hold fast to your decision and the Lord will certainly do His part.
 - (iv) Forgiveness MUST be from the heart!
 - (v) You lose in order to win! When you forgive, you let go of the power that you hold over that person!
 - (a) True Forgiveness will _____ you – maybe not the other person, but it will change YOU
 - (b) Unforgiveness will _____ you

E. What a tremendous chapter!