

Answers to Sermon Notes

Life Action Redux/Warm Up #4: "Forgiveness"

Matthew 18:21-35

5/15/22

1. What do you **know** about forgiveness, and where did you **learn** it?
 - a. In some ways the **entire** Christian **life** boils down to this question.
 - b. Yet so many walk around with **notions** about forgiveness that just **aren't so**.
 - c. And the destructive consequences of this, both for **now** and for **eternity**, are enormous.
2. So, today we turn our attention to the word of God here in Matthew 18 as **Jesus** seeks to set Peter **straight** (and all of us) about this all-important topic.
3. There six important things about forgiveness here that we need to look at.
 - a. Forgiveness is not **public** and general but rather **personal** and specific. (vs. 21)
 - i. It is about **my** brother and **me**.
 - ii. And it is about a specific **sin**.
 - iii. **No one else** can forgive your brother but you.
 - iv. You can forgive **no one else** but your brother.
 - v. Though others are **affected** and can share their concern and seek to help (vs. 31), you alone have the **power** to forgive that brother for his specific sin against you.
 - vi. Forgiveness must be employed **directly**.
 - b. Forgiveness is not **reconciliation** but rather the desire for it. (vs. 15-20)
 - i. The simple fact that reconciliation has not been **achieved** does not mean that forgiveness has not been **employed**.
 - ii. The entire process of vs. 15-20 is designed to restore **relationship**.
 - iii. However, relationship cannot be restored with just a **heart of forgiveness**.
 - iv. It also requires the **repentance** of the only one who can express it.
 - v. Even when forgiveness is employed, **broken** relationship may occur.
 - c. Forgiveness is not a **duty** but rather a **desire**. (vs. 21-22)
 - i. Jesus is not correcting Peter's **number**; he is correcting his **attitude**/motivation.
 - ii. It isn't about numbers or **limits**; it is about **reconciliation**. (Luke 17:3-4)
 - iii. This is the only way we can go from **score** keepers to **peacekeepers**. (Col. 3:12-13)
 - d. Forgiveness is not a matter of **justice** but rather of **mercy**.
 - i. Justice **demands** recompense. (vs. 28-30)
 - ii. Mercy **desires** restoration through repentance. (vs. 32-33)
 - iii. Though we may have a "**just**" claim against a brother, we do not take the path of "**justice**" in seeking to address it.
 - a. A **concern** for justice (that righteousness be done) is a good thing; a **demand** for justice (that recompense be paid) is not.
 - b. If you want to bring two parties together lead them in the pursuit of **mercy**; if you want to divide them lead them in the pursuit of **justice**.
 - e. Forgiveness is not **optional** but rather **essential**. (vs. 35)
 - i. For it reveals a heart that has learned forgiveness at the **throne** of **grace**. (vs. 32-34)

- ii. This servant went through the **motions** of having his debt forgiven but showed that he had not **learned** anything about forgiveness in the process.
 - a. This was already **indicated** in his crazy plea that if given a chance he could pay back **everything**. (\$10,000,000,000?) (vs. 26)
 - b. He obviously didn't really understand what he had been **forgiven**.
- iii. Anyone who has been forgiven the **massive** debt that we had with God could never demand the relatively small debt (\$15,000) others have had with us.
 - a. Though these debts are not **insignificant**, they simply do not **compare**.
- iv. Though hurt and scars may **remain**, only the path of forgiveness from the **heart** can begin to **heal** these. The path of justice cannot.
- v. Refusing to forgive, then, is not **understandable**; it is **wicked**. (vs. 32)
- vi. Is your primary identity "**forgiven**" or "**offended**"?
- f. Forgiveness is not **human** but rather **divine**. (vs. 35)
 - i. From a **human** perspective it is impossible.
 - ii. From a **divine** perspective it is not.
 - iii. **God** is the great forgiver.
 - iv. Allow his **Spirit** who lives in you to lead you through it.
 - a. The first stop will be the **cross**.
- 4. What do you **know** about forgiveness, and where did you **learn** it?
 - a. May each of us show in our true **desire** to forgive that we know all these things about forgiveness and that we learned them at the **cross**.