

“Forgiven? Forgive.” Matthew 18:21-35

Relationships are demanding. Relationships are hard work. Relationships are messy. We have an uncanny ability to offend and be offended. In Matthew 18:21-35 we have another parable about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus uses this parable to teach his disciples how life under his saving reign radically reorients our relationships with one another.

The Point: We must extend forgiveness in light of God’s radical and measureless forgiveness toward us.

I. Recognize the radical forgiveness you have received from God (21-27).

- Exodus 34:6-7 “The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . .”
- What is forgiveness? Forgiveness involves “releasing someone of his or her liability to suffer punishment or penalty for their offense.” –Ken Sande, 207, *The Peacemaker*
- When we think about our lives before the King of the heavens and the earth, we must realize that we, like this servant, have accumulated an incalculable debt. We will not believe God’s forgiveness is radical until we see the enormity of our indebtedness. To put it another way: we will never believe God’s forgiveness is radical until we see the nature and depth of our sin.
- “If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.” (Psalm 130:3-4)

II. Distribute radical forgiveness in response to God forgiving you (28-35).

Do you see what Jesus is driving at all through the parable?

- He is saying that those who have experience vertical forgiveness (from God) should be the ones who are the quickest to extend horizontal forgiveness (to others). This is beauty of the gospel.
- Have you received mercy, then freely give mercy? Have you been forgiven? Forgive!
- Ken Sande says, “Christians are the most forgiven people in the world. Therefore, we should be the most forgiving people in the world.” – Ken Sande
- If you are struggling to extend forgiveness, ask yourself this gospel question: Is their sin against me more grievous and appalling than my sin against God?

What does true forgiveness look like?

Here are four promises that Ken Sande says forgiveness is willing to make:

1. “I will not dwell on this incident.”
2. “I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.”
3. “I will not talk to others about this incident.”
4. “I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.”

*To teach this material to kids, Sande’s wife, Corlette, came up with this poem: “Good thought, Hurt you not. Gossip never, Friends forever.”

- Is there anyone in your life that you do not want to forgive? In light of the gospel, is there any offense too great that you would not forgive?
- **Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”**

What is The Power of Christian Hope? The gospel provides radical forgiveness from God and radical grace that enables us to forgive others from the heart.