

Jesus' Teaching Concerning Forgiveness

Text: Matthew 18:21-35

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I. THE QUESTION (v. 21). How often should we forgive someone?

1. The question was private (v. 21 - "Then came Peter to him.")
2. Peter's question was not just a question but a reflection of a struggle that we all face.
3. Peter's question was not just a question but a demonstration of what he considered a generous spirit. He asked, "Should I forgive my brother seven times?"

II. THE ANSWER (v. 22)

1. Jesus' response was undoubtedly not what Peter or most people today would have expected when forgiving a wrong.
2. Jesus' answer tells us that forgiveness must be limitless.
3. To drive home his point, Jesus then tells a parable called "The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant."

III. THE PARABLE (vs. 23-35)

1. Forgiveness is required regardless of the debt owed (v. 24).
2. Forgiveness comes through compassion (v. 27).
3. An unforgiving spirit comes when one leaves the Lord (v. 28).
4. An unforgiving spirit comes from a hard and selfish heart.
5. God is angry with those who refuse to forgive (v. 34).
6. God will punish those who refuse to forgive (v. 35).

IV. CONCLUSION

1. In Matthew 5 in the Beatitudes, Jesus says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."
2. In our Lord's model prayer, he states, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
3. *Ephesians 4:32*