

A Survey of the Parables of Jesus
Lesson 3 – Parables on Forgiveness
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Introduction: Jesus knew how to open hearts and show men what they needed to learn.

- A. Hardened hearts can be traced to a fundamental misunderstanding of God's nature.
 - 1. A willful forgetting of the mercy of God destroys the heart! (**Rom 1:21; 2:4-5**)
 - 2. The hardest heart often comes from those who are exposed to God's word.
- B. How great is the blessing of forgiveness? (**Ps 32:1-2**)
 - 1. Men can deceive themselves about what is in their hearts. How we treat others becomes a great test of who we really are.
 - 2. Simon, a Pharisee, was about to have his heart opened to his true thoughts!

I. The Parable of the two debtors. (Lk 7:41-43)

- A. Events leading to the parable -Somewhere in Galilee, late in 2nd year of His ministry.
 - 1. The rejection of the baptism of John by inaction! They never outwardly opposed John because of the people. (**Lk 7:29-30**)
 - 2. Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy and unmerciful criticism of His opponents. (**Lk 7:31-35**)
- B. The events at Simon the Pharisee's house.
 - 1. He was invited to Simon's house for dinner. Since no servants were present then there was no feet washed. (**Lk 7:36, 44**)
 - 2. A woman came boldly came to Simon's home and washed Jesus' feet with her tears and then anointed his head and feet with fragrant oil. (**Lk 7:38, 46**)
 - 3. These were tears of repentance and gratitude. Forgiveness meant everything to her! (**Lk 7:47-48**)
 - 4. Simon had an entirely different approach to the lost, as they were to be shunned. He thought that Jesus would too if He had known who this woman was. He concluded from this that Jesus was no prophet. (**Lk 7:39**)
 - 5. Jesus heard His unspoken thoughts and asked to speak to him. (**Lk 7:40**)
- C. The simple but direct parable of the two debtors. (**Lk 7:41-43**)
 - 1. Two who had "nothing which to pay" were forgiven of debts. One was 10 times the size of the other!
 - 2. Jesus asks Simon a simple question: "which of them will love him more?"
- D. Jesus explains the actions of the woman. (**Lk 7:44-50**)
 - 1. He contrasts what she did with what he failed to do. (**vv. 44-46**)
 - 2. He applies the principle of how much one is forgiven with how much one loves.
 - 3. He then startles Simon with proclaiming that He can and has forgiven the sins of this woman. (**Mt 9:5-6**)

Questions

- 1. How great is the blessing of forgiveness?
- 2. How did the Pharisee's react to John's baptism and teaching? Why?
- 3. Why did the woman react towards Jesus the way she did?
- 4. What is the application of the parable?
- 5. How much have you been forgiven? What is the real test as to what is in your heart?

II. The Parable of the unmerciful servant. (Mt. 18:23-35)

- A. Events leading to the parable -In Capernaum near the middle of 3rd year of ministry.
 - 1. Jesus gives instructs as how to approach a brother in sin. **(Mt 18:15-17)**
 - 2. Jesus answers a question about how often we should forgive another. **(Mt 18:21-22)**
- B. This parable would teach key truths about the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. The amount owed in the two accounts was of great difference. (Over 10 million dollars versus 17 dollars)
 - 2. God’s mercy knows no limits. In fact we all had accounts of great magnitude.
 - 3. God wants us to show others the mercy and kindness that we have received.
- C. Key details of the parable.
 - 1. If a man could not pay his debts then he, his wife and even his children would be sold into slavery. **(Mt 18:24)**
 - 2. The king was moved with compassion at a man who was going to try to do what he could not possibly accomplish! **(Mt 18:25-27)**
 - 3. The man forgiven of this enormous debt then threw a fellow servant into prison over a very small debt. **(Mt 18:28-30)**
 - 4. The reaction of those who knew both situations caused great grief. This was reported to the master. **(Mt 18:31)**
 - 5. The master points out the lack of compassion he had on another and then threw him into prison. This was accurately described as “wickedness.” **(Mt 18:32-34)**
 - 6. Jesus plainly tells us that this is how God will act towards us if we refuse to forgive. **(Mt 18:35; 6:14-15)**

Questions

- 1. How often should we forgive? Should we forgive another without repentance? **(Lk 17:3-4)**
- 2. Why would we want to approach a brother in sin?
- 3. What is compassion? Why do some people seem to lack it? How can we cultivate it?
- 4. What were the consequences of the man who could not repay the enormous debt?
- 5. How can a man grieve God?
- 6. How can a man hide the fact that he has not forgiven another?
- 7. What are the consequences of forgetting the forgiveness of God? **(2 Pt 1:9)**