



BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

INTRODUCTION

This study guide will be most helpful if you work through it slowly with an open Bible, looking up all the references. Grab some friends and do it together!



KINGDOM STORIES

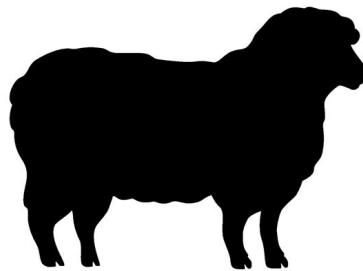
PARABLES THAT
INFURIATE OR INSPIRE



Matthew chapter 18 is about The Father's heart. Jesus is explaining the differences between how people on earth think and act compared to how the Father thinks and acts. Last week's parable was the parable of "The Lost Sheep".



Quickly skim back over the beginning of chapter 18. What are some themes from last week Jesus highlights?



This is a parable that is meant to show us the attitude and action of God toward those the world sees as "less than." In the Kingdom of God EVERY son or daughter has great value.



What do we know about the nature of the Father through last week's parable?

The Parable

Intro

Read Matthew 18:21-35 and record your thoughts below:

Main Idea

This is a parable that is meant to show us the great forgiveness that the Father offers to us, even though we do not deserve that forgiveness (In the Kingdom of God EVERYONE is the first debtor. We all owe God an unpayable debt). His forgiveness towards us should influence how we forgive others.

Jesus teaches a radical system of forgiveness!



Peter thinks he is being generous by offering forgiveness UP TO seven times. What did Jesus think about Peter's idea?



What are some barriers to this kind of forgiveness? (think deeply here, for example: not trusting God's justice, pride, selfishness, etc)

**Forgiveness is found all throughout the Bible, it is the heart of God.
Read the following verses about forgiveness:**

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Daniel 9:9

The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;

In the parable the king forgave a great debt. What did forgiveness mean for the man and his family?

Read the following verses on God’s forgiveness toward us:

Micah 7:18-19
Psalms 103:10-12
Isaiah 1:18

Can you explain the people/items in the parable?

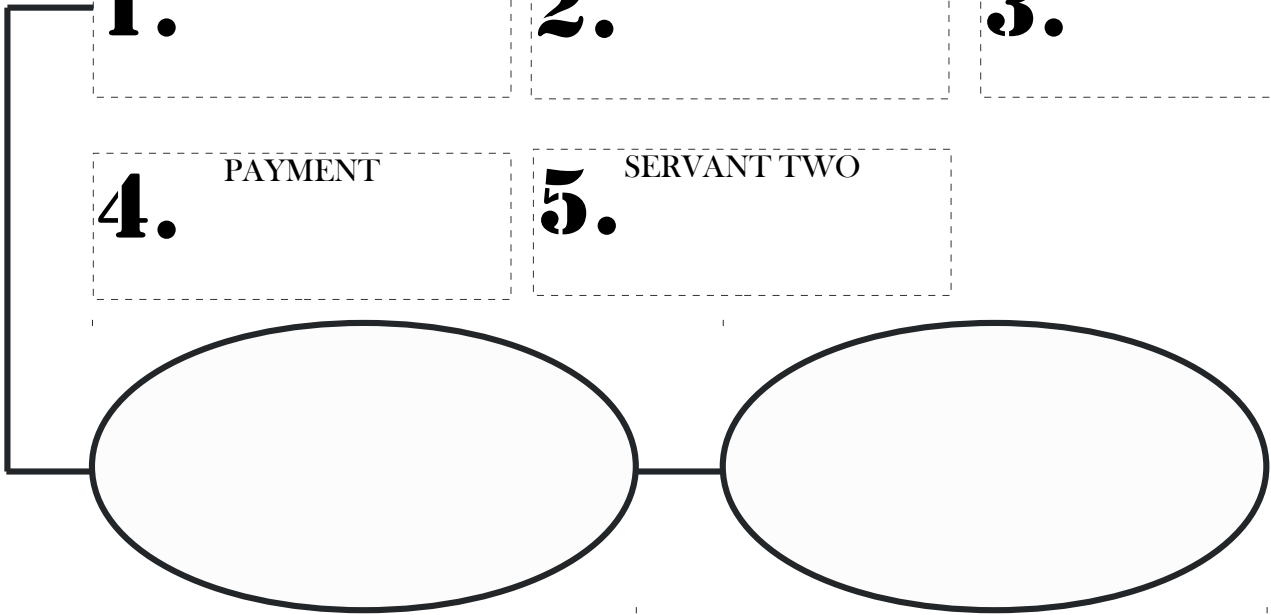
1. KING

2. SERVANT ONE

3. 10,000 TALENTS

4. PAYMENT

5. SERVANT TWO



Share about a time you received undeserved forgiveness from another human?

Name a specific time you received undeserved forgiveness from God?



Has being forgiven by that person changed how you relate to them? Has being forgiven by God changed how you relate to Him?

Does God always require us to forgive others? What does the parable teach concerning this question?



What do we learn about the heart of God in Matthew 18:33?

The Lord's Prayer

This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. **And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

God expects forgiven people to forgive! When we understand why God forgave us, it makes it easier to forgive others.



Tell of a time when you forgave someone. What was the process like? How did you feel afterwards?

Make a list of some difficult to forgive wrongs:



How do we know if we have truly forgiven ‘from our hearts’ (Matthew 18:35)?



Thomas Watson's Seven Tests of Heart-Forgiveness: (*Body of Divinity*, p. 581)

1. **Resist thoughts of revenge:** [Romans 12:19](#), "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."
2. **Don't seek to do them harm:** [1 Thessalonians 5:15](#), "See that no one repays another with evil for evil."
3. **Wish well to them:** [Luke 6:28](#), "Bless those who curse you."
4. **Be sorrowful over their sufferings:** [Proverbs 24:17](#), "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles."
5. **Pray for them:** [Matthew 5:44](#), "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."
6. **Seek reconciliation with them:** [Romans 12:18](#), "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."
7. **Be always willing to help them:** [Exodus 23:4](#), "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him."



Can you think of a time when you held a grudge or didn't want to forgive someone for a hurt or pain they caused you?



Is there anyone who you have never truly forgiven for something they have said or done, or not said or not done?



Maybe you don't want to forgive. Maybe you find it too difficult. From the parable, what words of encouragement (challenge and motivation) does Jesus bring to that situation?

Remember that this parable came after Jesus taught about being reconciled. Forgiveness and reconciliation are closely related, and both are important actions Christians should pursue.



According to Romans 12:18 (See previous page), is reconciliation always possible? Explain.

Jesus and reconciliation:

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Proactive reconciliation

Forgiveness and reconciliation is not passive. We are not called to only respond and react to others, we are called to be the one who goes and seeks reconciliation.

What makes reconciliation awkward or difficult?

How do you see forgiveness and reconciliation happen in the life of Joseph? In the life of Jesus?

Those who have been seriously (and repeatedly) hurt rightfully feel hesitant about reconciling with their offenders. When your offender is genuinely repentant, however, it's important to be open to the possibility of restoration (unless there is a clear issue of safety involved).

-Steve Cornell



If you have forgiven someone today what are some next steps that could lead to reconciliation?

“If man had his way, the plan of redemption would be an endless and bloody conflict. In reality, salvation was bought not by Jesus' fist, but by His nail-pierced hands; not by muscle but by love; not by vengeance but by forgiveness; not by force but by sacrifice. Jesus Christ our Lord surrendered in order that He might win; He destroyed His enemies by dying for them and conquered death by allowing death to conquer Him.”

-AW Tozer



**EXTRA
DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

1

After reading Matthew 18, what have you learned about God's nature as a Father and as a King?

2

Share with the group how you came to faith in Christ. Was there ever a time when you had an encounter with God's love and forgiveness that changed the way you see others?

3

Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew chapter 18 that He cares about community and relationships between brothers and sisters in the Lord. Why does Jesus care so much about how we get along with each other?

4

Jesus wants us to forgive everybody who wrongs us, but what are the reasons it becomes so hard to forgive sometimes? What are some times when you didn't want to forgive someone, or you did even though you didn't want to.

5

Read Ezekiel 36:23-27. What is the Lord's message to Israel in this passage? What does this passage say about the Lord? Was he faithful to fulfill this promise?

6

Are Jesus' comments at the end of Matthew chapter 18 scary to you in any way? What do they tell us about how Jesus sees forgiveness. Do you think we should treat forgiveness as a joke? Why or why not?

SERMON
NOTES:

INTRODUCTION

It's easier for us to forgive once we have understood the barriers to forgiveness.

1 We don't understand forgiveness.

QUESTION

How you define forgiveness? Has your understanding of forgiveness changed in any way?

2 We underestimate forgiveness.

QUESTION

What are some of the benefits of forgiveness? What are some negative consequences of not forgiving?

3 We forget how pleasant it is.

QUESTION

Have you ever felt the joy of being forgiven and of forgiving someone? If so, share with your group.