

10/4/26

Sermon Title: The Life of One Who Has Been Forgiven

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 18:15-35

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’

¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’

²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[h] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’

³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Jesus expressed His deep concern for those who have gone astray and taught His disciples that it is not the will of God for even one of the little ones to be lost. Therefore, He told them to humbly value, respect, and embrace even one of the little ones.

And then He gives them the teaching found in this passage.

It is a teaching about how to correct those who have gone astray and how to forgive them.

First, Jesus speaks about correction.

If someone in the community has sinned, He tells us to go to that person privately and point out the wrong.

If the person will not listen, we are to take one or two others with us and speak to that person again.

The purpose is to help that person recognize their sin, repent, and return to God.

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’

Here, the sin committed by the brother does not refer to an ultimate or fundamental offense against God, but rather to a moral offense committed against another believer.

This is the first step in seeking to restore someone who has gone astray.

The purpose is not to judge or condemn the brother who has sinned, but to help him turn away from his sin and become a true brother again.

Therefore, when we confront and correct a brother, we must do so with genuine love and concern for him, so that he will not fall away from the faith community but will be able to continue walking in faith together with other believers.

However, if these efforts fail to resolve the matter privately, Jesus gives us a second step: we are to bring the matter before the church and make a united effort to help restore that brother.

¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

However, if, despite these efforts, the person still refuses to acknowledge the wrong and does not repent, Jesus tells us to discontinue fellowship and interaction with that person at the church level and to avoid further contact with the brother who has sinned.

Even at this stage, however, we must remember that the purpose is not to condemn the brother.

Rather, by allowing him to experience the pressure of being separated from the community, we are giving him yet another opportunity to repent, reflect on his actions, and turn back.

Jesus promises those who are united in His name that He will be with them in a very real and tangible way forever.

He spoke these words with the understanding that He would soon leave His disciples.

These words reveal the eternal presence of Jesus, His omnipresence, and His unchanging nature.

Jesus says that when two people who confess Jesus as the Christ on this earth come together in agreement and pray, the glory of God will be present among them.

This is because the Holy Spirit is present in their unity, guiding their desires so that what they seek may be brought into accordance with the will of God.

¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

No matter where that gathering takes place, Jesus promises that He will be present there in spirit.

Now Jesus speaks about forgiveness.

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

At that time, the rabbis taught that one should forgive a neighbor’s offense only three times, but not beyond that.

Therefore, Peter thought that if he offered to forgive someone as many as seven times, Jesus would consider that more than enough.

But Jesus tells us to forgive without limits—to forgive again and again, without keeping count.

Jesus explains why by telling the parable of the servant who was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents.

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’

²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’

³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

As the king was settling accounts with his servants, he found one servant who owed him ten thousand talents.

The king knew that the servant had no way of repaying the debt, so he ordered that the servant, his wife and children, and everything he owned be sold to repay it.

The servant then fell on his knees and begged, "Be patient with me."

Moved with compassion, the king forgave the servant's entire debt.

At that time, a talent was the largest monetary unit commonly used in Jewish and Roman society.

One talent was worth approximately 6,000 times the daily wage of a laborer, which was one denarius.

Therefore, ten thousand talents was an absolutely enormous sum of money.

And yet the king forgave this enormous debt without requiring anything in return.

What an extraordinary act of grace!

But immediately afterward, something shocking happened.

The servant who had been forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents by the king went out and found a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii, and he had him thrown into prison.

A debt of one hundred denarii was certainly a significant amount.

But, as the fellow servant pleaded, it was a debt that could be repaid if he was simply given a little more time and patience.

By contrast, the ten thousand talents that the servant himself had been forgiven was an enormous debt that he could never possibly repay on his own.

Compared with the debt he himself had been forgiven, the amount owed to him was extremely small.

The servant should have remembered the great grace he had received and shown mercy to his fellow servant.

But he did not.

His fellow servant pleaded with him, asking him to be patient and promising to repay the debt.

But the servant ignored his plea and ruthlessly had him thrown into prison.

He had completely forgotten how, just moments earlier, he himself had pleaded with the king to give him more time to repay his debt.

He ignored the plea of a fellow servant who was in the same situation as he was. In fact, he did not merely ignore him.

He had him thrown into prison.

To have someone imprisoned for such a debt was an extremely harsh punishment. One hundred denarii was a debt that could certainly be repaid if the servant were simply given some time and patience.

The fellow servants who witnessed what had happened were deeply distressed. They went to the king and reported everything that had taken place.

When the king heard what the fellow servants had said, he was furious.

He said, "You wicked servant! I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me."

Then he said, "Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you?"

The king then handed him over to the jailers until he could repay all that he owed.

Thus, the wicked servant was imprisoned until he had repaid the entire debt.

But because he could never repay such an enormous debt, he had no way of ever leaving the prison.

This represents the punishment of hell.

The servant failed to do what he ought to have done.

Although he had received great grace and had been forgiven an enormous debt, he showed not even the slightest mercy to a fellow servant who was in the same situation.

Even though the debt owed to him was extremely small in comparison with the debt he himself had been forgiven, he refused to forgive it and even went so far as to have his fellow servant harshly imprisoned.

The master was angry with the servant because he had failed to do what he ought to have done.

Therefore, he handed him over to the jailers until he had repaid the entire debt that had previously been forgiven.

The master did not punish the servant because of the debt he had originally owed. Rather, he punished him because, despite having received such great mercy and having been forgiven such an enormous debt, he failed to show even the slightest mercy to his fellow servant.

He failed to do what he ought to have done.

When someone has received great grace, it is only natural that, remembering the grace he has received, he should extend that same grace to others.

But this servant failed to do what was only natural and right.

To do what one “ought to do” means to do what is naturally and properly expected of us.

Therefore, when we do what we ought to do, it is not necessarily something for which we deserve special praise.

But when we fail to do what we ought to do, we may rightly be held accountable and face consequences.

Jesus applies this parable to His disciples.

He teaches them that if we do not extend to our brothers and sisters on earth the same grace and love that we have received from God, our Father in heaven will be angry with us.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,
We were all sinners who owed an enormous debt before God.
The debt of our sin was so great that there was no way we could ever repay it by our own strength.
We had no choice but to face death.

But God had compassion on us and showed us His great grace.
He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, who was completely without sin, into this world.
He shed His blood and died on the cross in our place, paying the penalty for our sins.
Because of what Jesus accomplished for us, we have been forgiven of all our sins and have been declared righteous before God in the heavenly court.
We have received salvation, and we have become children of God.

Therefore, all of us who have been saved by the grace of God and have become His children are people who have received an immeasurable debt of grace from God.
Jesus tells us to remember the grace we have received and to live by forgiving the sins of our brothers and sisters, just as God has forgiven our sins.

Of course, forgiveness is not easy.
The greater the wound, the more difficult it is to forgive.
But, beloved brothers and sisters, remember how great a forgiveness we have received.
As we remember why Jesus, the Son of God, shed His blood and died on the cross, let us cover the sins of our brothers and sisters with love and forgive them.
Forgiveness is not an option.
It is the life that those who have received God's great grace are called to live.

So let us forgive as those who have been forgiven,
love as those who have been loved,
and extend grace as those who have received grace.

Let us remember the amazing grace we have received from God and become His people who allow that grace to flow through us to others.

May we all become people who live out the grace we have received and share it with others.

I bless you all in the name of Jesus Christ.