

# sermon study guide

Speaker: Neil and Sharol Josephson (Family Life Canada)

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Sermon Title: The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like... Part 5: The Forgiving King(dom)

## IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What would you do to celebrate if all of your debts were suddenly canceled?
2. In our culture (e.g. movies, social media, in the workplace, etc.) what key messages are communicated about forgiveness or unforgiveness?

## UP - PURSUE GOD

Read *Matthew 18:21-35*

3. What is the comparison between the two servants' debts? Their pleas? The decision about their case? What emotions do you feel at various points in this parable? Contrast the king's reactions to his servant.
4. How does unforgiveness affect both the one who committed the wrong and the one who refuses to forgive?

## OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Share what granting forgiveness looks like in your life. In your experience, is forgiveness a quick or lengthy process? Does it involve the emotion or the will?
6. Neil and Sharol highlighted three truths from this parable:
  - The King's heart is to forgive
  - The King expects His people to forgive
  - The King enables forgiveness

Which truth do you need to hear most? What action do you sense God prompting you to take?

### **For Personal Reflection/Prayer:**

Neil and Sharol said, "Forgiveness is the key to life in the Kingdom. And the key to forgiveness is living daily in the grace of God. When we stop needing grace it won't be long before we stop giving it." Reflect on the grace and forgiveness of God in your life.

For Daily Reflections from CSC, visit <https://www.cschurch.ca/daily-reflections/>

## THE WORD (NIV)

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

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. 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."

# sermon study summary

## The Kingdom of Heaven is Like – Part 5: The Forgiving King(dom)

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The harmony experienced in marriage (and healthy relationships in general) correlates more closely to forgiveness than anything else. And forgiveness is not easy.

The parable for this weekend comes in response to a specific question from Peter: "How many times should I forgive someone who sins against me?" (Matthew 18:21). Did Peter have someone in mind? How many times must I forgive someone...7 times? Certain Rabbis taught to forgive 3 times. Human nature wants payback, getting even, justice. Jesus tells Peter to forgive 77 times. Jesus teaches a new way to live - the kingdom of God was in their midst.

While Jesus spent much time describing what this kingdom is like, his parables also describe how kingdom-dwellers are to live: for wherever his people are, that's where the kingdom is. Three things are important to understand, receive and respond to today:

**1. The King's heart is to forgive.** In v. 23, the king is settling accounts: a servant is called to account, owing much money, about 165,000 years' wages. He pleads for time and the King "felt compassion" and forgives the debt. The king doesn't make a financial, judicial or political decision, but that of a heart moved by compassion. The good news is that the King's nature is compassionate, his heart merciful and His desire to forgive.

**2. The King expects His people to forgive.** Shockingly, the forgiven servant demands a fellow servant repay 100 days' wages. The king is angered by the unforgiving servant. He was not doomed by debt but by his unwillingness to forgive; and is handed over to jail and torture until the debt is repaid. Jesus ended with "and this is what my heavenly Father will do to you if you do not forgive a brother or sister from the heart" (v.35).

**3. The King enables forgiveness.** We all have shame and pain that change us as individuals and continue to damage marriages and lives for decades. How do we forgive that? We often have no answer. But we can know that Jesus would not ask us to do the impossible. He promised His disciples He would leave the Holy Spirit with them - the Enabler. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul asks: "Do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you?" The key to living life in the forgiving kingdom is to allow Jesus to do through us and in us what we cannot do on our own.

But first we have to receive forgiveness ourselves. We can say we are forgiven but still live as debtors. The more fully we live as forgiven people the more fully we can live as forgiving people. It is important to respond to Jesus; have you asked for His forgiveness? New life begins when we stop trying to atone for our sin to put our faith in Jesus. Acts 10:43, "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins in His name." Our challenge is to live into it, and extend it to others. We don't pretend there's no sin. We acknowledge the sin, but because we have experienced forgiveness, we can now do the same and live daily in the grace of God.