

Matthew 18:21-22 Forgiving Without Limit

Introduction: Jesus instructed the disciples that if a brother should do them wrong, the offended brother is to go to the offender and seek to make peace. This would require forgiving the offending brother. Peter understood this, but it led to a question.

I. The question by the apostle Peter, verse 21.

- A. Peter did not question the fact that we are to forgive.
 - 1. He would remember that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that we are to be forgiving, Matthew 6:14-15.
 - 2. But he thought there ought to be a limit.
- B. To his credit, he wanted to please the Lord. (He did not want to displease the Lord and did not want to stop short of what would please Him.)
- C. His short coming was that he did not want to go one whit beyond what the Lord absolutely required. (He would not tolerate one wrong unnecessarily.)
- D. Peter suggested the possible limit of seven times.
 - 1. He must have thought he had gone to the extreme limit.
 - 2. The Pharisees taught a limit of three times, but this was only tolerance and not forgiveness. (One time, two times, three times, four times wham-mo!)
 - 3. He must have been rather proud of himself for being willing to go so far.
 - 4. But His seven was no better than the Pharisee's three. (Four times, five, six, seven, eight and wham-mo!)

II. The Lord's surprising answer, verse 22.

- A. Jesus said, "No Peter. I do not agree to a limit of seven times." (That would result in no forgiveness at all.)
- B. Jesus set a limit of seventy times seven. (This was His way of saying there should be no limit at all.)
- C. But in case somebody should take the numbers literally, note how it would work.
 - 1. $70 \times 7 = 490$.
 - 2. Can you imagine a countdown on 490 times?
 - 3. Soon one would get confused and give up.
 - 4. The idea is that you had might as well go ahead and forgive no matter how big the number.
- D. Can you imagine how it would affect the fellowship of a church if all members put this into practice?
- E. Can you imagine what this would do to a neighborhood? (It would turn almost any neighborhood into a paradise.)
- F. Can you imagine what this would do to a nation? (It would put most lawyers and judges out of business.)
- G. Can you imagine what this would do to the homes?
 - 1. Divorce would be virtually unheard of.
 - 2. There would be a vast improvement in the homes that stay together. (A lot of hell holes would become "Home Sweet Home.")
- H. Can you imagine what this would do to the nations of the world?
- I. Can you imagine what it is going to be like in the millennium when all nations will settle their differences peaceably?

III. The problem as far as we are concerned.

- A. We have no problem acknowledging the truth.
 - 1. We know that we should be willing to forgive.
 - 2. We know that we should forgive repeatedly.
 - 3. And with our understanding we acknowledge that we should forgive without limit.

- B. But once somebody has wronged us and we are hot under the collar, it is a hard matter to be forgiving.
- C. What we need to do is to turn to God and seek His help in forgiving others.

Conclusion:

- 1. There may be some of you who right now are harboring grudges and nursing wounds that you ought to forgive.
- 2. There are, no doubt, some of you who stand in need of forgiveness from God.
- 3. There might be some of you who have wronged somebody else and you need to ask their forgiveness.
- 4. Everyone of us who is saved needs to seek to please God.

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