

## Parables of Jesus

### Week Seven

*What's your life like at the bottom of the stairs?*

Matthew 18:23-35

Pastor Steve Treichler

June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (8:30 and 10:30am), FB Live (10am)

*For His Glory and our joy!*

TEXT:

### **Matthew 18:23-25**

<sup>23</sup>"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup>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.

<sup>26</sup>"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' <sup>27</sup>The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.

<sup>28</sup>"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

<sup>29</sup>"His fellow-servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

<sup>30</sup>"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

<sup>32</sup>"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup>Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?' <sup>34</sup>In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

<sup>35</sup>"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Message Notes:

**Introduction** – *“Best joke ever!!”*

**Today’s Message:**

**The Parables of Jesus: Uncovering Good News**

*The Gracious King and the Unmerciful Servant*

Matthew 18:23-35

**The Context:**

Matthew 18:15-20

**The Magnitude of the Parable**

Matthew 18:21

**The New Standard of Forgiveness**

Matthew 18:22

**The Parable** - *The Standard of Forgiveness Explained*

***Scene One – Accounts Need to Be Settled***

Matthew 18:23-25

***Scene Two – “But I can’t pay!”***

Matthew 18:26-27

***Scene Three – “Pay me back what you owe me!”***

Matthew 18:28-31

***Scene Four – The master’s response to the servant’s lack of forgiveness***

Matthew 18:32-34

**Jesus’ ultimate point:**

***Forgiveness is not optional for those who have been forgiven***

Matthew 18:35

## **Two Big Questions:**

**Theological** - *Is God's forgiveness of me contingent on my forgiveness of others?*

**Practical** - *How in the world do I actually forgive someone who has deeply hurt and wronged me?*

## **What Forgiveness IS:**

### **Matthew 18:27**

Took Pity  
Canceled Debt  
Let him go

## **What forgiveness is not:**

1. Forgiveness is not the absence of hurt or anger at sin. It is not feeling good about what was bad.
2. Forgiveness is not the absence of serious consequences for sin.
3. Forgiveness of an unrepentant person doesn't look the same as forgiveness of a repentant person.

***"We are not bound to trust an enemy; but we are bound to forgive him."***

~ Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581

## **The journey of forgiveness – Five 'steps':**

1. Prayer for the reminder of how much your debt was and for a fresh remembrance of the mercy of Jesus Christ. [THE TOP OF THE STAIRS]
2. Prayer for the Holy Spirit to move you to forgive.  
[THE DESCENT DOWN THE STAIRS, part 1.]
3. Pray for them, wish well upon them. [THE DESCENT DOWN THE STAIRS, part 2.]
4. Release, through prayer, them from any debt of hatred, malice or anger you have against them and hand them over to God.  
[THE INTERACTION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS]
5. If possible, seek reconciliation with the individual. This may NOT be possible.  
[THE ULTIMATE GOAL – RESTORATION]

## The Hiding Place

**Gospel Application** – *Do you need to capture or recapture your life with Jesus at the Top of the Stairs? How's your life at the Bottom of the Stairs?*

### Scripture Passages used (New International Version)

#### **CONTEXT:**

#### **Matthew 18:15-20**

<sup>15</sup>"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup>"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup>"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?

Up to seven times?"

<sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

#### Quotes (used or referred to):

Christ is not saying that we are forgiven based on merits we get from forgiving others. Nor is He saying that it is possible that people can lose their salvation once they have been truly forgiven. Christ does not get into an in-depth discussion of soteriology at this point. He does not mention imputation, righteousness, or faith, as the Apostle Paul does in Romans 3–5. Christ is speaking here not of the way of salvation but rather of the result of salvation...

~ Dr. Gerald M. Bilkes, *The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant*, found in February 2020 issue of TableTalk online issue - <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2020/02/the-parable-of-the-unforgiving-servan>

When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.

~ Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581

"I believe [unforgiveness] is keeping more people from having power with God than any other thing -- they are not willing to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. If we allow the root of bitterness to spring up in our hearts against someone, our prayer will not be answered. It may not be an easy thing to live in sweet fellowship with all those with whom we come in contact; but that is what the grace of God is given to us for."

~ D.L. Moody, *Prevailing Prayer*, p.46

"In the final analysis, forgiveness is an act of faith. By forgiving another, I am trusting that God is a better justice-maker than I am. By forgiving, I release my own right to get even and leave all issues of fairness for God to work out. I leave in God's hands the scales that must balance justice and mercy."

~ Philip Yancey, *What's so Amazing about Grace?* p. 83

### **Corrie Ten Boom Story on Forgiving – "I'm Still Learning to Forgive"**

"It was in a church in Munich that I saw him—a balding, heavyset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

"It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land, and I gave them my favorite mental picture. Maybe because the sea is never far from a Hollander's mind, I liked to think that that's where forgiven sins were thrown. 'When we confess our sins,' I said, 'God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. ...'

"The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room.

"And that's when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. *Betsie, how thin you were!*

[Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of

Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent.]

“Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: ‘A fine message, Fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!’

“And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?

“But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

“ ‘You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,’ he was saying, ‘I was a guard there.’ No, he did not remember me.

“ ‘But since that time,’ he went on, ‘I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein,’ again the hand came out—‘will you forgive me?’

“And I stood there—I whose sins had again and again to be forgiven—and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

“It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

“For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. ‘If you do not forgive men their trespasses,’ Jesus says, ‘neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.’

“I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

“And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless

of the temperature of the heart. '... Help!' I prayed silently. 'I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.'

"And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

" 'I forgive you, brother!' I cried. 'With all my heart!'

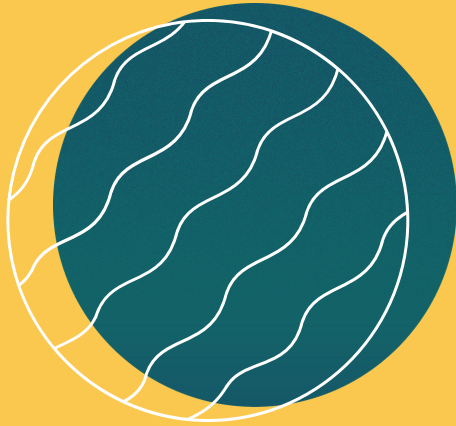
"For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely, as I did then"

(excerpted from "I'm Still Learning to Forgive" by Corrie ten Boom. Reprinted by permission from *Guideposts* Magazine. Copyright © 1972 by Guideposts Associates, Inc., Carmel, New York 10512).

*the*  
**BEST  
JOKE  
BOOK**  
*Ever*







# PARABLES

Uncovering Good News



Today's Message:  
*"The Gracious King and the  
Unmerciful Servant"*

Matthew 18:23-35

# The Context of the Parable

## Matthew 18:15-22

<sup>15</sup>“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

# The Context of the Parable

## Matthew 18:15-22

<sup>18</sup>“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

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# The Magnitude of the Parable

**Matthew 18:21**

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”

# A New Standard

**Matthew 18:22**

<sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times,  
but seventy-seven times.

# The Standard Explained

## *Scene One – Accounts Need to Be Settled*

### **Matthew 18:23-25**

<sup>23</sup>“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup>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.

# The Standard Explained

## *Scene Two – “But I can’t pay!”*

### **Matthew 18:26-27**

<sup>26</sup>“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ <sup>27</sup>The servant’s master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.



# The Standard Explained

*Scene Three – “Pay me back what you owe me!”*

## Matthew 18:28-31

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

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# The Standard Explained

*Scene Four – The master's response to the servant's  
lack of forgiveness*

**Matthew 18:32-34**

<sup>32</sup>“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup>Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow-servant just as I had on you?’ <sup>34</sup>In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

# Jesus' ultimate point:

*Forgiveness is not optional for those who have been forgiven*

## Matthew 18:35

<sup>35</sup>“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

A word cloud on a dark, textured background. The words 'WHO', 'WHAT', 'WHERE', 'WHEN', 'WHY', and 'HOW' are repeated in various sizes and orientations. 'WHAT' is the largest word, appearing twice. 'WHO' and 'WHERE' are also large. 'WHEN', 'WHY', and 'HOW' are smaller. A hand is visible in the bottom right corner, pointing towards the word cloud.





# THEOLOGICAL

*Is God's  
forgiveness of me  
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# PRACTICAL

*How in the world  
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**What forgiveness is:**

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# What forgiveness is:



**THOMAS WATSON** (c.1620-1686)

## What forgiveness is:

When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.

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# The journey of forgiveness:

1. Prayer for the reminder of how much your debt was and for a fresh remembrance of the mercy of Jesus Christ.

## THE TOP OF THE STAIRS



# The journey of forgiveness:

2. Prayer for the Holy Spirit to move you to forgive.

## THE DESCENT DOWN THE STAIRS, part 1.



# The journey of forgiveness:

3. Pray for them, wish well upon them.

## THE DESCENT DOWN THE STAIRS, part 2.



# The journey of forgiveness:

4. Release, through prayer, them from any debt of hatred, malice or anger you have against them and hand them over to God.

## THE INTERACTION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS



“I believe [unforgiveness] is keeping more people from having power with God than any other thing -- they are not willing to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. If we allow the root of bitterness to spring up in our hearts against someone, our prayer will not be answered. It may not be an easy thing to live in sweet fellowship with all those with whom we come in contact; but that is what the grace of God is given to us for.”

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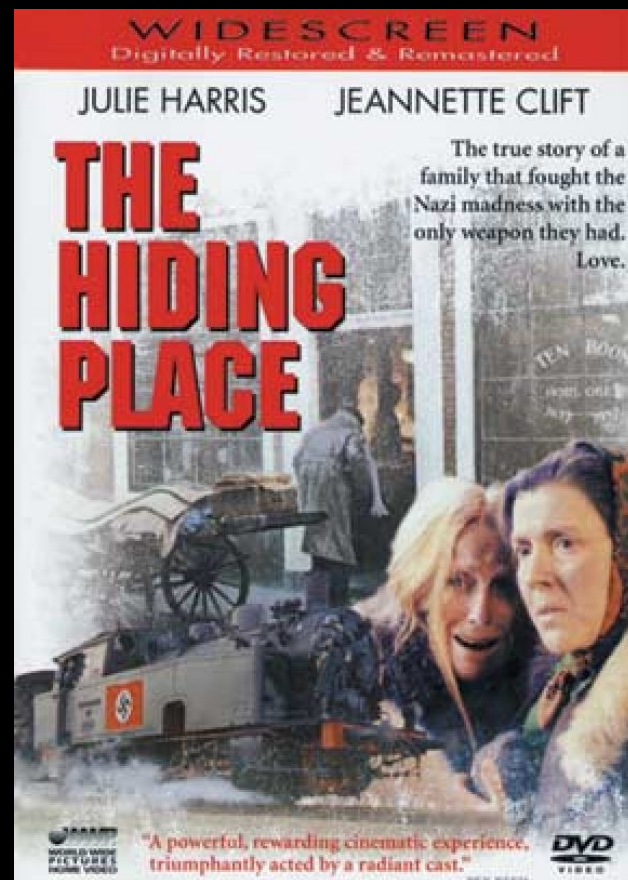
5. If possible, seek reconciliation with the individual.

This may NOT be possible.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL - RESTORATION







# Gospel Application

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*Do you need to capture or recapture your life with  
Jesus at the Top of the Stairs?*

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*Do you need to capture or recapture your life with  
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*How's your life at the Bottom of the Stairs?*