Love That Forgives (From Grudges to Grace)

Love In Action

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Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Forgives (From Grudges to Grace)

Sermon Text

Matthew 18:21–35 (KJV)[21] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? [22] Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. [23] Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. [24] And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. [25] But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. [26] The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [27] Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. [28] But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. [29] And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. [30] And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. [31] So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. [32] Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: [33] Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? [34] And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. [35] So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Introduction: When Love Must Confront the Offense

One of the greatest tests of Christian love is not how we treat people who love us, but how we respond to those who hurt us.

"How many of you have ever experienced a grudge? Either you've held a grudge against somebody, or somebody has held a grudge against you?"

A grudge is a persistent feeling of resentment, bitterness, or anger toward someone because of a past offense, hurt, or perceived wrongdoing.

A grudge develops when we continue to hold someone emotionally accountable for something they have done to us, even after the offense has passed. It is when we allow yesterday's offense to hold today's emotions hostage!

In contrast, Grace is the unearned and undeserved favor of God, demonstrated through His willingness to forgive our sins and extend mercy that we could never earn.

In our relationships, grace is demonstrated when we choose to extend forgiveness and mercy to others, even when they have wronged us. It is when we stop demanding that others pay for the very kind of debt God has already forgiven in us!

We've looked at Love That Serves, and Love that Gives, now we will look at Love that uses God's Grace to Forgive.

Our lesson text begins with Peter's thoughts on forgiveness, thinking that forgiving seven times was being generous. But Jesus responds with seventy times seven, teaching that forgiveness is not about counting offenses but cultivating a merciful heart.

Jesus then tells the parable of a servant forgiven an enormous debt who then refuses to forgive another servant's much smaller debt.

This servant owed his lord 10k talents. What is that worth today?

1 talent = approximately 6,000 days of wages, or roughly 20 years of work, or $900,000. 10k talents today would be word $9 Billion Dollars.

He could not pay it in his lifetime. He could not pay it in a hundred lifetimes! Yet the king forgave him the entire debt!

But when this same servant found someone who owed him the equivalent of just $15,000, he refused to forgive him! He received forgiveness for billions but refused to extend forgiveness for thousands! And isn't that what we sometimes do?

We celebrate the enormous debt of sin that God has forgiven us, and yet we refuse to forgive the comparatively smaller offenses of others; we hold on to our grudges.

The lesson is clear: We have been forgiven a debt we could never repay, so we should extend the mercy we could never earn. We cannot celebrate the grace God has extended to us while refusing to extend that same grace to others.

In order for God's love moves us from holding grudges to releasing grace, we must make three spiritual decisions: Stop Counting Offenses, Stop Holding Grudges, and Start Revealing Mercy.

Series and Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Forgives (From Grudges to Grace)

(Stop Counting Offenses, Stop Holding Grudges, and Start Revealing Mercy)

I. Recognize the Debt (Stop Counting Offenses)

Matthew 18:[21] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Matthew 18: 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents... 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The first decision we must make to walk in the love of forgiveness is to stop counting offenses.

Before we focus on what others owe us, we must remember how much God has forgiven us.

Like Peter, too many of us count up our offenses. We count what was done, we count who did it, we count why they did it, we count when they did it. And when we count, the cost becomes insurmountable – we convince ourselves that we can't take it, can't let them get away with it!

But God Love doesn't keep count: 1 Corinthians 13:4–5 (NLT)[4] Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud [5] or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it ***keeps no record of being wronged***.

In our lesson text, the servant owed ten thousand talents, a debt he could never repay. Yet when he pleaded for mercy, the king did something extraordinary: he canceled the entire debt.

The servant asked for patience, but the king gave him a pardon.

We all have a sinned and fallen short of his Glory, and we can't pay it off in a lifetime!

Ephesians 2: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

When we remember how much God has forgiven us, we begin to see the offenses of others through the lens of grace.

Before you rehearse what someone did to you, remember what God has done for you!

Forgiveness begins when we stop counting the offenses of others and start considering the grace we have received.

II. Release the Debtor (Stop Holding Grudges)

Matthew 18: 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

The second decision we must make to walk in the love of forgiveness is to stop stop holding grudges.

Forgiveness means releasing others from the personal debt of resentment rather than keeping them imprisoned by their offenses.

After receiving extraordinary mercy, the servant encounters another man who owes him a much smaller debt.

Instead of showing compassion, he grabs the man by the throat and demands repayment.

The same man who had received mercy refused to extend it.

This is what happens when we hold grudges. We continually rehearse the offense, demanding emotional repayment for the pain someone caused.

But forgiveness requires us to release our grip on resentment.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Forgiveness does not mean the offense was acceptable, nor does it eliminate appropriate accountability or boundaries. It means surrendering bitterness and personal vengeance to God.

You may not be able to change what someone did to you, but you can stop allowing what they did to control you!

Stop waiting for someone else to change before allowing God's grace to begin changing your heart.

III. Reflect the Deliverer (Start Revealing Mercy)

Main Text: Matthew 18: 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

The final decision we must make walk in the love of forgiveness is to start revealing God's glory.

The greatest evidence that we understand God's forgiveness is that His mercy begins to shape how we treat others.
We have plenty of Mercy, we just have to reveal it.

Lamentations 3:[22] *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [23] *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness.

Psalm 23:[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Romans 8:[18] For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Matthew 18: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

God's forgiveness should produce a forgiving spirit within us.

Colossians 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Luke 23: [34] Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

When we forgive, we demonstrate the character of the One who forgave us.

Grace was never intended to stop with you. What God poured into your life should flow through your life!

Let your willingness to forgive become a visible testimony of the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: From Grudges to Grace

But God never intended for yesterday's offenses (betrayal or pain) to control tomorrow's peace.

Today, we must make three declarations.

1. ***I Have Been Forgiven — So I Will Remember His Grace!***
    a. Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
    b. If God has forgiven my sins, I must remember His mercy when others offend me.
2. ***I Am Being Freed — So I Will Release My Grudges!***
    a. John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
    b. I may remember what happened, but I do not have to remain imprisoned by it.
3. ***I Will Become Forgiving — So I Will Reveal His Glory!***
    a. Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
    b. When I forgive, I demonstrate the love of the God who forgave me.

You cannot change what happened yesterday, but you can change what you carry into tomorrow! You may have been hurt, but you do not have to remain held hostage! You may have been wounded, but you do not have to remain bound by bitterness!

Recognize the Debt! Remember how much God has forgiven you!

Release the Debtor! Let go of the grudges that have held you captive!

Reflect the Deliverer! Show others the mercy Christ has shown you!

Because the same grace that forgave you is the same grace that can free you!

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Love That Forgives (From Grudges to Grace))

Lesson Text

- **Primary Text:**
  - **Matthew 18:21–35**
- **Supporting Texts:**
  - **Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6:14–15**

Sermon Outline

- **I. Recognize the Debt (Stop Counting Offenses)**
- **II. Release the Debtor (Stop Holding Grudges)**
- **III. Reflect the Deliverer (Start Revealing Mercy)**

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know "Me"

1. What are your hobbies and how did you get into them?

2. Do you like to go to the movies or do you prefer to watch at home?

II. Into The Bible

1. Read Matthew 18:21–22. Why did Jesus respond to Peter's question about forgiveness with "seventy times seven," and what does His response teach us about the limits of forgiveness?

2. Read Matthew 18:27–35. Why did Jesus emphasize the difference between the two servants' debts, and what does this reveal about the relationship between receiving God's forgiveness and extending forgiveness to others?

III. Life Application

1. Is it possible to fully forgive someone who never acknowledges the hurt they caused or apologized? Why or Why not?

2. Which emotion is hardest for you to overcome when trying to forgive: a) anger b) hurt pride or c) fear of being hurt again?