

Food for Thought

For the week of July 6, 2014

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. This week we heard about how mercy triumphs over judgment. When we remember our great need for forgiveness and God's incredible provision, we become more open and willing to show mercy and forgive others. Jesus addressed this issue in his response to a question Peter asked him. What insights and principles do you learn about forgiveness from Jesus' straightforward answer and insightful parable in Matthew 18:21-35?

What are some signs that a person may not have forgiven someone? What are signs they have forgiven someone?

Looking at this passage and your sermon notes, write down what you think it means to "forgive as the Lord has forgiven you." (Colossians 3:13)

2. An essential part of showing mercy means refusing to seek our own revenge. But doing so can be difficult because it can feel like the other person is getting away with something. In 1 Samuel 24:1-13, we see an example of David not seeking revenge even though he had been wronged by Saul. Read this passage and answer the questions below.

How and why do you think David was able to not seek justice for himself?

What is the most challenging aspect for you in not seeking justice or revenge?

How can this passage help motivate you to forgive and show mercy instead of seeking revenge?

3. Showing mercy does not necessarily mean we forget an offense or trust the offending person again. How could the following verses help a person be more discerning about who to trust and who not to trust in the future?

Proverbs 22:10

Colossians 2:6-8

1 Timothy 6:3-5

Matthew 7:18-20

1 Corinthians 15:33

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Matthew 18:21-35

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. 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." *[NIV]*

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2. An essential part of showing mercy means refusing to seek our own revenge. But doing so can be difficult because it can feel like the other person is getting away with something. In 1 Samuel 24:1-13, we see an example of David not seeking revenge even though he had been wronged by Saul. Read this passage and answer the questions below.

1 Samuel 24:1-13

David Spares Saul's Life

¹ After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En

Gedi.” ² So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

³ He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. ⁴ The men said, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’” Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

⁵ Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. ⁶ He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.” ⁷ With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

⁸ Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. ⁹ He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you?’ ¹⁰ This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ ¹¹ See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. ¹² May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. ¹³ As the old saying goes, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand will not touch you. [NIV]

How and why do you think David was able to not seek justice for himself?

What is the most challenging aspect for you in not seeking justice or revenge?

How can this passage help motivate you to forgive and show mercy instead of seeking revenge?

3. Showing mercy does not necessarily mean we forget an offense or trust the offending person again. How could the following verses help a person be more discerning about who to trust and who not to trust in the future?

Proverbs 22:10

10 Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended. [NIV]

Colossians 2:6-8

Spiritual Fullness in Christ

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. [NIV]

Matthew 7:18-20

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." [NIV]