

MORE THAN WORDS PART TWO

THE LESSON: MATTHEW 18

The call to repentance is central to the Gospel. And this “repentance”, this acknowledgment of sin, goes beyond merely feeling remorseful. Theologian and pastor J.I. Packer wrote, “The New Testament word for repentance means changing one’s mind so that one’s views, values, goals, and ways are changed and one’s whole life is lived differently”.

But if we have benefited from God’s forgiveness, we also must be ready to *share* that forgiveness with others. “Those who have been greatly loved must show great love to others; those who live by being forgiven must themselves forgive... In a word, God’s children must be like their Father and their Saviour” (J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology*). And it was our Saviour who, from the cross, spoke the words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

It is a part of human nature to remember when a harm has been done to us. When we are owed something, it’s in our nature to be sure to collect what’s owed. But Jesus showed us a better way. The Lord’s Prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples to say, asks God to “forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive them that trespass against us*”. In this prayer the forgiveness we receive is linked to our willingness to forgive others! The same message comes through in the parable that we’re going to look at today.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Once again ask God to bring to your mind the things in your life that you need to repent of, but focus especially on any resentment that you may be harbouring towards those who have wronged you. Ask God for his help in forgiving these others in the same way that he has forgiven you. Close your time with the following prayer.

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive: Receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen. (FROM PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS, BCP, P. 58)

MORE THAN WORDS PART TWO

MATTHEW 18: **YOU'VE BEEN FORGIVEN. SO FORGIVE.**

²¹Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

²³“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”