



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions Greatest Stories Ever Told Series, Lesson 13

Lesson Title: Unmerciful Servant

Take Home Point: Forgive as you have been forgiven.

Warm-Up:

The mountain clans of the Hatfields and McCoys probably comprise the most famous story of feuding in America. Hatred and armed sniping have been passed from generation to generation. Some family members on each side have even been killed through the years because of some original wrong, now since forgotten or ignored. In fact, the original cause of the feud is no longer of importance, since through each generation new offenses pile up to perpetuate the animosity. There is no forgiveness, no hope of getting past the anger, bitterness, and malice with which each side regards the other. How sad that so much life, happiness, and peace has been thrown away to ensure that each clan carries on its ignoble tradition and attempts to impose its own version of justice delivered.

Read: Matthew 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32

Observation (What happened?):

What was the point of the parable Jesus told his disciples?

What is our motivation and measure for forgiving others?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What do you think Jesus means in Matthew 18:35?

What does it mean to forgive from your heart?

Insight:

I was once listening to a speaker who described the deeper meaning behind the original Greek of this Bible text. According to this speaker, when Jesus said "seventy times seven," he meant *for the same offense*. But it goes one step farther. The words Jesus used indicate that we were to forgive "seventy times seven" for the same offense each day, *in each 24-hour period*. That's a lot of forgiveness! But it really brings home that forgiveness is a lifestyle, not an instance. What does it mean to forgive? Well, how does God look at it? In Psalm 103:12, David says that, "as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." (NIV) In Hebrews 8:12, we are told God doesn't even remember our sins once he forgives them. I don't know about you, but I'm really glad that's how he deals with sin when we ask forgiveness! And that is how we are to forgive. Jesus says this to be so several times in the gospels. In fact, it is so important that Jesus included it in his model prayer that he taught the disciples (Luke 11). Our ability to forgive and forget clearly reveals the condition of our heart toward God and others.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Where in your life do you need to apply this lesson in forgiveness? Who do you need to forgive? What are you going to do?

Pray for your church to be a kind and compassionate church.

Kingdom Quest Year 1 - Lesson 12