

## THE BIG IDEA: Forgiven people forgive people.

### The Take-Off

FLOODGATES is a series we're doing that looks specifically at areas in our lives that commonly block the flow of God's blessings to us and through us.

We know that there is a cost to opening the floodgates, and that cost is our obedience.

Last week, we talked about finances and how our faithful obedience in tithing allows God to "open the floodgates of heaven" and pour out blessings on us that we can't contain.

**It's not about being vaults, but vessels. We want to be rivers carrying God's blessings to others, not reservoirs keeping God's blessings to ourselves.**

Today, we're going to be talking about the floodgate of forgiveness, and we'll see in Matthew 18 how unforgiveness blocks the move of God in our lives.

Unfortunately, a lot of us in the room and watching online already know this because we've seen it happen in our lives, but this morning you'll see from the Bible why it happened.

Let's tackle this by studying the text, and then by applying some takeaways.

### 1. The text

- a. Let's read **Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)**
- b. Now, let's really study it
- c. v. 21 / Peter actually threw out a number more than twice the expectation (rabbis said to forgive 3 times) - Jesus had just talked about how to handle sin in the church - sounds like Peter was wondering how often he'd need to do that with someone
- d. v. 22 / 77 times, or 7 times 7 times, or 70 times 7 - the point Jesus was making was that the best we can do doesn't even come close (also that forgiveness isn't a finite, checklist idea - we're forgiven by God through the cross, and yet still told to seek His forgiveness daily)
- e. v. 24 / 10,000 talents - a denari was one day's wage, and it took 6,000 denarii to equal 1 talent - this man owed 60 million days' worth of wages to the master - the point is that it was an unpayable amount - at the average American daily wage of \$200, this was a 12 billion dollar debt
- f. v. 26 / if it depends on us, we'll never pay the debt that we owe - people who want to earn their way into the kingdom, no matter how good we are, we'll never be good enough - sin is a BIG debt, far beyond our ability to pay (and forgiveness is beyond us, too) - both the man and the master knew he'd never have enough time to work it off
- g. vv. 27-28 / the best and worst verses of the story / v. 27 - the master was moved (in the bowels) with compassion and released the man - that's what happens when we forgive - we release others and ourselves / v. 28 - BUT (what a sad word!) he demanded the equivalent of a 1.7 millionth of 1% of what he'd been forgiven of moments earlier
- h. v. 29 / the second man said the same thing that the first man had said
- i. v. 30 / But he refused - some say he was unwilling / why didn't he believe this man? Probably because he knew that he himself was insincere
- j. v. 31 / don't think for a second that others aren't watching and aren't impacted by how we treat those who have wronged us / they were "distressed" literally means that they were grieving
- k. v. 33 / being forgiven should change us, esp in the area of forgiveness / forgiven people forgive people - the answer to the head-scratching question of how this happened is simple: the first man believed that he deserved to be forgiven and believed that the second man didn't deserve it
- l. v. 34 / Can we please dispel karma from the Christian worldview? Too many see this ending and think, "Karma. He got what he deserved." But the point of the story is that he didn't get what he deserved, and that getting what he didn't deserve should have impacted his other relationships. Followers of Jesus don't operate based on karma, but on grace. We give what others don't deserve and haven't earned. That's the love that reflects the kingdom. That's one reason why "churched" people still fall for and hold on to offense: our operating system is based on the wrong dynamic. We're karma-driven more than grace-driven.

### 2. The takeaways

- a. **How we forgive is directly related to how much we needed forgiveness**

- Most of us don't think we were that bad
  - We read stories like these and think we'd never do that
  - Romans 12:1-3 (NIV) / We see ourselves correctly (v. 3) through sacrifice (v. 1)
- b. **We can't make others earn what we were given**
- Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) / How were we forgiven? Freely.
  - Matthew 10:8 (NIV) / "Freely you have received; freely give."
- c. **Unforgiveness undoes forgiveness**
- Everything given to that man was taken away
  - We don't like to talk this way, but listen to these verses
  - Matthew 6:12 (NIV) / "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
  - Matthew 6:15 (NIV) / "But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."
- d. The last takeaway is our Big Idea: **forgiven people forgive people**
- Remember the huge amount of debt that was forgiven? We can never find forgiveness in ourselves; it must be given to us so that it can be given through us.
  - If you have unforgiveness in your life, it is because you haven't released the hurt to the only One who can give you the forgiveness that you need to give someone else

## The Landing

As we wrap up, let me give another practical truth: forgiving someone doesn't mean trusting them again

When we forgive, we step out of the judge's chair and allow the One true Judge to sit there

Forgiveness leaves room for God's wrath and justice

Romans 12:17-21 (NIV)

Forgiven people forgive people, and place those people in the hands of God so that evil can be overcome with good.

Let's pray.