

Week 5: Relationships among church members (Part 3)

Part 1: In Matthew 18:16-17, what obligation does a church have when a member does not respond to reproof in private and puts his daily walk with Christ and the church at risk? According to the verses we've studied previously, what is the church's motive in doing it?

According to Matthew 18:18-20, with what authority does the church fulfill these steps commanded by the Lord?

Peter, reflecting on what Jesus has just taught about a member led astray by sin, realizes that some will be reproofed for their sin, will repent and will fall again. Therefore, what question does Peter ask Jesus in Matthew 18:21, and how does He answer in 18:22?

To give more detail, Jesus tells His disciples a parable. Notice that in Matthew 18:23, Jesus mentions "the kingdom of heaven" just as He did in Matthew 18:3-4. There, what is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven? And therefore, what do we need to forgive a brother in Christ as Jesus requires?

In the parable in Matthew 18:23, who is the king? To whom must we give an account? (If you need help with your answer, read verse 35.)

Whom do the servants in the parable represent?

Notice that these servants are representatives of the king who receive taxes and are responsible for their receipts. Matthew 18:24 explains that one owes 10,000 talents. Note that a "talent" was a monetary unit of that time like the "dollar" or "peso" today. Note too, that 10,000 was the highest number in the Greek language of the time. "Ten thousand talents" means that you almost can't put a number on the amount he owed. Think of the US national debt... owed by only one person!

What debt do we have that cannot be counted, that is unimaginable and impossible to pay? Read Ezra 9:6 in the Old Testament to see Ezra's reaction as he recognizes this debt and what it is.

Read Matthew 18:25-27 and note three options to pay this debt:

- 1) The king can sell his servant and family and all he has to receive only a small part of what the servant owes (verse 25);
- 2) The servant himself begs for another option, that he be given time and patience to repay everything – a desperate and impossible request (verse 26);
- 3) The king can let him go and forgive the debt (verse 27).

In verse 27, why does the king choose the third option? Was it because he owed the servant a big favor, or because the servant was a nice guy, or some other reason?

In Mateo 18:27, who suffers the loss of the 10,000 talents?

How should the forgiven servant feel and react?

(Personal) Do you trust in Jesus' death on the cross as the only means of paying the debt you owe for your sin? Or do you insist, like the servant in Matthew 18:26, that given time and patience, you can repay it all yourself?

(Personal) If you have received the forgiveness of sins only by the mercy of Jesus and received it only through faith in Him, how should you react now?

Part 2: In Matthew 18:28, how does the newly-forgiven servant react?

Notice that he finds a fellow servant, one with the same master he has. Notice too, that he owes him 100 denarii. A denarius was what a common laborer received for a day's work; that is, his fellow servant owed him a little more than 3 months' salary of a day laborer – a significant amount personally, but how does it compare with 10,000 talents?

What does the fellow servant say in Matthew 18:29, and who said the same in verse 26?

How does the first servant react in Matthew 18:30 to his request?

According to Matthew 18:31, how do the other fellow servants react... and how should we react when we see one Christian who does not forgive another?

In Matthew 18:32-33, why doesn't the first servant forgive his fellow servant?

According to Matthew 18:34-35, how does the servant's lord react (and our Heavenly Father react) if we do not forgive our brothers in Christ?

According to Matthew 18:35, how must we forgive our brothers? Does Jesus mention any exception?

(Personal) Is there someone whom you need to forgive for an offense that he or she has committed against you?