

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ The Parable of the Unprofitable Servants

Last time...the rich man and Lazarus

- 2 real men
- 2 real lives and deaths
- 2 real destinations (heaven and hell), unchanging for all eternity

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;
and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

The Lord will judge without mercy those who had no mercy
Those who had mercy will rejoice

This time...After hearing Jesus teach on

- the parable of the unjust steward
- the kingdom of God (the Pharisees unworthiness of it)
- the rich man and Lazarus

the disciples/learners/students of Jesus (and us) must pause to examine their lives

In that vein, Jesus turns to His disciples to teach on (Luke 17:1-10)

- stumbling others in their following Him
- forgiving each other
- faith
- expectation of servants

Jesus has previously discussed these things, but they are things in need of
continual discussion for His disciples (God repeats Himself...we need Him to)

v1-2 offenses...woe... millstone:

In this corrupt, sin-stained, fallen, and cursed world
(the kingdom of the liar, murderer, thief, and slanderer where his children
do as he does),

it is only logical that offenses will come...

people and things that cause His disciples to trip, stumble, fall as they
follow Him (His way is contrary to the ways of the world)

But when they do, woe to them that cause others to trip, stumble, fall

Implied: speaking of the Pharisees and those of their ilk

Remember: 1st order of business by the King of the kingdom of God was
to cast out demons...into hell...woe

Then: repeatedly telling the usurping Pharisees they will be excluded
from the kingdom of God (heart of devil vs heart of God)

Soon: Jesus will pronounce “Woes” upon the Pharisees (Matt 23)

Better than causing a little one...a child, innocent and pure and trusting...
to trip, stumble, and fall into sin
is to have a millstone...very large stone turned by an ox...
as a neck tie and thrown into the ocean

Repeating what He had taught previously in Galilee (Matt 18:1-7)

Jesus’ message to His disciples: Do NOT be like the Pharisees!

Now...a common stumbling block in the offense-laden world is

- unforgiveness
- bitterness

v3-4 Take heed...forgive:

If: When (in light of v1-2)

a brother: loved one, someone close to you, a brother/sister in the Lord

trespass against you: offend you, sin, fall short, miss the mark

rebuke him: lovingly with meekness, not anger or self-righteousness

Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are
spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;
considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one
another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ

if/when he repent: considers/receives the rebuke and thinks and acts differently

forgive: do not hold a grudge but do your part to restore health to the relationship

Heb 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;
lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and
thereby many be defiled

seven times in a day: he keeps offending, falling short, missing the mark

I repent: agrees with you, yet obviously struggles in an area of weakness

forgive: keep letting it go, not holding a grudge or getting a hard heart...

7 times a day for 70 days...continually, every time

Repeating what He had taught previously in the Galilee

Matt 18:21-22 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

Matt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful for they shall be given mercy
Matt 6:14-15 **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses**

Practically speaking, is there a “threshold” for rebuke and forgive?

Forgive – no, always and without fail

How many times a day do we sin against God?
How many times a day does God forgive us?
How much do we need God’s mercy?
May our “outer limit” of forgiveness with others be as God’s is with us!

Therefore, may we learn this (as Jesus commanded the Pharisees):

Micah 7:18 He is the God who delights in mercy
Hosea 6:6 He desires mercy and not sacrifice
James 2:13 no mercy for those who have no mercy

Prov 3:3-4 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Mercy is a much better neck tie than a millstone! (keeps heart soft)
Let’s be as merciful to others as we want God to be merciful to us!

Rebuke – probably

What is significant and worthy of rebuke, and what is petty?
Can I just graciously let it go and have a duck’s back
or must I call attention to this matter?

Understanding, as I think about that

- what I may want to say could also be said of me
- we are all like Mr Magoo when it comes to our shortcomings (beam in our own eye)
- none of us have “arrived”
- all of us are works-in-progress

Most times, the relationship's health can be better maintained by
letting the petty things go, giving them to the Lord
brushing them off with a forgiving spirit
turning the other cheek and moving forward

But, if the issue is significant, it must be addressed
for the health of the relationship

v5-6 Increase our faith:

Fresh off a real story about real final judgments and everlasting habitations,
and now hearing about

- causing another to trip, stumble, fall as they follow Jesus and being fitted with millstone neck ties
- continual forgiveness and mercy as better neck ties

the apostles/ambassadors, the 12, respond to "other-worldly" instruction with...
"Help! Increase our faith!"

To which Jesus replies with hyperbole regarding how little faith they/we have.
(Anybody done that? Anybody seen that?)

Sound familiar?

Repeating what He had previous taught in the Galilee

Matt 17:19-20 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you**

Wow! How small is our faith!!!

To be

- ever-mindful of others vs mindful of Self (as God is)
- merciful when someone offends, falls short, misses mark (as God is)
- continually forgiving of others (as God is)
- (cast out demons, as Jesus did)

requires

- help from God, for those things are His nature and not natural to us
- faith
 - faith to obey, which is in our control, our choice (faith is obedience in action)
 - faith that God can do for/thru us what we cannot do for ourselves

v7-10 thank that servant... We are unprofitable servants:

As the Master speaking to His servants, the Lord puts the apostles/servants in the shoes of a master

You have a servant (i.e. you are the master) working in your fields

When he comes in from the fields, do you say

a. Have a seat, eat dinner before I do.

or

b. Fix my dinner and when I am done you can eat.

(Obviously, the latter)

When the servant serves you... does what he is commanded to do...

does the master thank the servant for his obedience?

I think not; obedience is expected of a servant

Then Jesus puts them back in their shoes/place, servants of the Master

When you have done all you have been commanded, you will say:

a. We have but done what we were commanded to do.

Our obligation to our Maker: obedience

Our duty is to "do"/obey (Eccl 12:13)

We do not do God a favor when we obey Him,

He expects us to obey Him...

then gives us unmerited favor when we do

for He is worthy and we are unworthy

b. We do not stand before You (salvation, in the kingdom of God)

based on our merit/profit, for we have no such merit...

(we are unprofitable servants, have no merit)

Rom 3:10, 23 us at our very best without Jesus

Is 64:4 our merit is as a filthy rag

James 2:10 Lawbreakers, one and all

Matt 5:48 profoundly imperfect

Eph 2:8-9 salvation is a gift, not a work/merit

c. (In context of v1-6) We stand before You based on

- Your goodness
- Your mercy
- Your forgiveness
- Your faith
- Your help
- Your merit

We need to understand “our place” –

We are unprofitable servants, servants without merit
Our Master/Lord Jesus Christ is THE Profitable Servant of God

John 13:3-5, 12-17

Jesus is the Model, our example

Mark 10:43-45

His service: give His life a ransom

1 Cor 1:30

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of
God is made unto us wisdom, and
righteousness, and sanctification, and
redemption

We do not do God a favor when we obey Him, He expects us to obey Him
Then He gives us unmerited favor (grace) when we do...
unmerited, for He is worthy and we are unworthy

There is a false doctrine in Christianity that contradicts Jesus’ direct teaching to
the apostles (and all disciples) regarding their (our) utter lack of merit to
stand before Him...and redefines “grace”

"works of supererogation"...performance of meritorious acts that go
beyond what God requires, whereby God will give
supererogation...

pay in addition’, from super- ‘over’ + erogare ‘pay out’

In Roman Catholic theology, these meritorious acts
(performed by Mary and the Saints)
contribute to a heavenly bank account known as the “Treasury of Merit.”

- the excess of merit of the Saints which is effective for salvation
of others and is available for dispensation through
indulgences
(which are sold for money, unrighteous mammon)
- actions believed to form a reserve fund of merit that can be
drawn on by prayer in favor of sinners
- The Pope can make withdrawals from this Treasury in order to
shorten a person’s time in purgatory

This false doctrine also contradicts Jesus’ teachings of

- The unjust steward
- The rich man and Lazarus...unchanging everlasting habitations

btw...what is required of us by God?

- Obedience
- Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth
the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love
mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

This entire passage/message...

not offending any, forgiveness of those who offend, faith...

is about Christ-likeness...being

- like Christ so we do not cause anyone to stumble as they follow
- like Christ when we are offended
- the faith of Christ, not “our faith”
- the merit of Christ, not our merit

Jesus Christ is the end of the matter of v1-10,

He is the sum of the matter

To be

- ever-mindful of others vs mindful of Self (as God is)
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- help from God, for those things are His nature and not natural to us
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 - faith to obey, which is in our control, is our choice
(faith is obedience in action)
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How are we, disciples/followers of Jesus Christ, to live our lives?

NOT like the unbelieving inhabitants of the world!

We deny Self, we die daily to Self and follow Jesus (Matt 16:24)

In this corrupt, sin-stained, fallen, cursed world, offenses will come and we will be tempted by the tempter...

But we now have the power of the indwelling Spirit of God to

- say No to sin (our nature)
- deny Self
- forgive others...as we have been forgiven

By so doing (obeying), we please God rather than please Self

By so teaching others, we also please God

Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ

We increase our faith...the measure of faith given to us...by

- reading/meditating on/studying the Word of God (upward
- increased obedience (expected) of His Word spiral)

We understand our place before God...not on our merit but on Jesus Christ's merit
Jesus is the Center of everything, we are the center of nothing

We 2 Peter 3:18

How do we grow in grace?

By spending time with others (imperfect and prone to miss the mark)!

How do we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

By spending time with Him (Perfect, He is the mark)!

How will the world know that we are disciples of Jesus Christ?

By our love, one to another

By loving one another as Jesus loves us

This agape love is manifested in

- grace
- mercy
- forgiveness
- faith
- obedience

What does such a disciple have to show for his/her life when he/she takes his/her last breath?
Jesus!!!

Matt 10:24-25a *The disciple is not above **his** master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.*

Matt 25:23 *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord*