

University Heights Messenger

Volume 5--Number 28

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There's A Lesson Here

Matthew 18:21-35 records a parable about a servant who was forgiven a huge debt, a debt so large that payback was impossible. He, then, turned around and refused to forgive the debt of a fellow servant, a debt that was miniscule in comparison to his own debt. When we read this parable we find ourselves disliking the servant who was forgiven the huge debt. We dislike him, not because he fell on his knees and begged for patience. We dislike him, not because he said he would pay what he owed when he must have known that he would not live long enough or earn enough to even begin paying back the debt. We dislike this man because of how he treated his fellow servant.

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”
Luke 11:28

Looking at verses 26 and 29 of Matthew 18 we learn that both servants pleaded for patience and both servants said they would pay back what was owed. There the similarity ends. The first servant asked for patience and was released from his debt and allowed to go free. The second servant asked for patience and was assaulted and imprisoned. The master was not in the least obligated to forgive the first servant. His forgiveness was an act of pure mercy. The servant who was forgiven, however, was obligated to forgive the one who owed him. He was obligated simply because the master forgave him. Such is the lesson of the parable and is given in verse 35, *“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”*

But there is a principle established by the parable that has a wide application regarding how Christians are to treat one another. Why had the master not called for a settling of accounts with his servants earlier? The answer is that he was being patient with them. What did the first servant ask for? He pleaded for more time, for more patience. If the master could be more patient with him, then he would pay the debt. What was he not willing to give

GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10)
- Believe Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Repent from sins (Luke 13:3)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

List:

Needing Prayers: Louis Harrod has pneumonia in both lungs.

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Paul Atkisson, Lindsay Morgan, Jim Parsons

Others: Lenny Shepperson, Jan Hogen, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Rita Pagan, Vina Krassow, John Bennett, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Reese Worley, Doris Baker, Bill Childress, Susie Burton, Fred Dalton, Norma Hurt, Taylor Osterling, Vernon Johnson, Lavon Speer, Whitney Wright, The Dixons, Jacob Profit

WEEKLY READING		LEADERSHIP		SERVICES
Mon	1 Chronicles 22-25, Romans 5, Psalm 78	ELDERS	DEACONS	Sunday
Teu	1 Kings 1, 1 Chronicles 26-28, Romans 6	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Wed	1 Kings 2, 1 Chronicles 29, Romans 7	David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Thu	1 Kings 3, 2 Chronicles 1, Romans 8, Psalm 42	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	Wednesday
Fri	1 Kings 4, Proverbs 1-2, Romans 9, Psalm 43	Adam Litmer	Adam Litmer	Bible Study: 7:30 PM
		EVANGELIST	Bill Morelan	1st Fri. of Month
			Jim Parsons	Singing: 7:30 PM
			Pat Seabolt	3rd Fri. of Month
			Adam Daniels	Bible Study: 7:00 PM
			Jamie Powell	(Finished for the time being)

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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to the servant who owed him? He was not willing to be more patient. In fact, he was so impatient that he began the interaction by immediately laying hands on the servant and taking him by the throat. He changed from being intensely relieved by the patience of his master to angrily going on the hunt for the fellow servant. You know, we, too, sometimes change from experiencing the mercy and patience of God to being grossly impatient and perhaps even hostile to our brethren.

We owe a debt that cannot be repaid. But God is a patient and longsuffering God who provides a way for the debt to be forgiven. “*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and **longsuffering**; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*” (Romans 2:4) “*Which sometime were disobedient, when once the **longsuffering** of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*” (1 Peter 3:20) “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering** to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” (2 Peter 3:9) “*And account that the **longsuffering** of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.*” (2 Peter 3:15)

Because God is longsuffering toward us, so are we obligated to be longsuffering towards our brethren. “*With all lowliness and meekness, with **longsuffering**, forbearing one another in love.*” (Ephesians 4:2) “*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, **longsuffering**.*” (Colossians 3:12) “*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all **longsuffering**, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*” (1 Timothy 1:16) Patience is wonderful to receive from God, and a blessing to extend to our brethren.

The Elders

True Blessedness

An interesting exchange took place between Jesus and a woman listening to Him in Luke 11:27-28. “*As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!’ But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”*

Honest hearts could not hear Jesus without feeling great amazement and awe. This woman was overcome in her esteem for Jesus and, unable to restrain herself,

cried aloud, “*Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!*” Being a woman, she possessed a unique point of view that understood the importance of a mother’s role in raising her children properly. In Jesus she felt she was witnessing the finished product of an extraordinary mother’s tireless work and shining example.

Mary was blessed to have been chosen to bring the Son of God into the world (Luke 1:28, 45, 48). However, though Mary was an exceptional woman and rock solid servant of God, this blessing was a result of a choice made by God. The relationship involved was a physical, human one between Mary and Jesus. There would be a much more important relationship with Jesus Christ than the one he and Mary enjoyed. Our Lord’s response speaks to directly to that better relationship.

“*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!*” Note that our Lord does not deny the woman’s statement and claim that Mary was not blessed. Rather, instead of negating the woman’s sentiments Jesus sets forth a better statement containing a superior blessing than the one spoken of by this woman. Might this be the first inkling of a tendency to elevate Mary above humanity and offer to her the praise belonging only to God? If so, Jesus could not have responded more effectively.

As blessed as Mary was to have been chosen by God, her blessing pales in comparison to the blessings assigned to those who remain faithful to the teachings of God. Our Lord’s point is this: being an obedient child of God is more important than being the mother of Jesus Christ. It is sad indeed that many in today’s “Christian” world would deny the above statement, though the words came directly from the Lord’s mouth.

We work hard to achieve a great many things in this life. We pursue education to obtain degrees and better careers. We pursue advancement to gain greater financial security and a sense of accomplishment. We pursue a spouse to begin and enjoy families. We pursue friends to enjoy camaraderie. We pursue hobbies to enjoy entertainment. This is good and even necessary. Yet the day will come when the trumpet sounds and the archangel shouts and we will stand face to face with Jesus Christ. Only one thing matters then. “*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!*”

AL

Sermons: (AM) The disciple as an apologist (PM) Lesson from a children’s song
Reading: (AM) Proverbs 3:1-12 (PM) Proverbs 3:13-35