

## The Gift of Forgiveness

Why is forgiveness so important?

- 1) Un-forgiveness is more subtle than most sins.  
It's sneaky, you don't know it's there until it really has you.
- 2) It's more common than most sins. [We all battle it from time to time.]
- 3) It's more dangerous than most sins. [Un-forgiveness drives Hatred.]

**Hatred is the acid that corrodes the Soul!**

Jesus saw forgiveness on the two levels:

Forgiveness from God and Forgiveness for others.

He compares un-forgiveness to being in prison.

### Matthew 18:21-27

It's clear that the huge debt is like our own.

God created the world, He created us, He loved us, took care of us, fed us, and clothed us.

Yet at some point each of us rebelled.

Yet, God says to us Repent - Receive my Son and the debt gets erased.

He offers it to each of us. But whether we accept it or not is up to us.

But wait, there is more to this parable. The story doesn't end there.

### Matthew 18:28-34

1. The man had someone that owed him money. (Comparatively a few bucks)
2. He would not forgive that man's debt as his had been forgiven.  
He had him thrown into Jail.
3. When the King heard about it, he brought the first man back into his courts.  
He scolded him severely, then threw him into prison.  
And in this prison, the man would face torture.

### Matthew 18:35

Un-forgiveness is a self-inflicted prison. - It is self-induced torture.

Forgiveness or un-forgiveness is your own choice. **Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32 Luke 11:4**

And some of Jesus' own words are even more severe: **Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25**

These tie in with the final verse of our scripture today: **Matthew 18:35**

Scripture clearly states the imperativeness of Forgiveness. **Luke 6:37**

Forgiveness of others is tied to forgiveness from God.

Why are we to forgive? - Why is it so important?                      Several reasons:

#### I. FORGIVENESS BRINGS FREEDOM

Forgiveness sets us free. Free to love, to be thankful.

#### II. FORGIVENESS BRINGS CLOSURE.

Forgiveness is not Forgetfulness. It closes the door to the betrayals and hurts.

When I remember forgiveness says: I will choose to forgive again.

#### III. FORGIVENESS BRINGS LIFE! **Colossians 2:13**

Paul puts "giving life" and "forgiveness" in the same breath.

**WE FIND LIFE** when we are forgiven. Joy, hope, peace, strength.

**WE GIVE LIFE** when we forgive, to ourselves and to **our victims of un-forgiveness.**

Are you in prison?

Are you keeping someone else prisoner? Turn the key and let both of you go free.

This Christmas:

1. Accept the gift of forgiveness
2. Give the gift of forgiveness