



Week 5

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

... The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant



Read Matthew 18:21-35

This is the sixth study in the series on The Kingdom of God. Time and time again Jesus told parables revealing something of what the Kingdom of God is like. We have had five parables giving us pictures about the kingdom. We now come to a different kind of parable, a short but full blown little story that teaches us something else. Each week we get another piece of the jigsaw so that little by little, bit by bit the picture is forming more and more about exactly what the Kingdom of God is like, what it means for us to be Kingdom people and what Kingdom living is all about. This week we start to look into human relationships in the Kingdom.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. This parable is all about forgiveness; a central tenet and motif of the Kingdom of God. Jesus died so that we could be forgiven and set free from our sins. Read Psalm 32:5, 51:1-7; Hebrews 9:22, 10:19-22; Matthew 26:27,28; John 1:29; Ephesians 1:7,8; Colossians 1:13,14; Acts 10:43.
2. Read 1 John 1:5-2:2 and James 5:13-16. Should we confess our sins to each other? To a priest? What difference does open confession make? Should confession play a bigger part in our times of worship? What link is James inferring between sin and ill health? Is this valid?
3. In Jesus' teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:9-15, he clearly links us being forgiven by God with us forgiving others. See also Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:32
4. This parable is also about the consequences of not forgiving others. See verses 28-35. See also James 2:13. Do you think the King's response to the Unforgiving (also called the Unmerciful) Servant is justified or a bit harsh?
5. How easy do you find it to forgive others? Do you find it easy or difficult to let go of grudges or hurts inflicted upon you by others? Do you like to defend yourself and stick up for your rights? Can you give up the right to get even?
6. Do we still have to forgive others even if they are not sorry for what they have done?
7. What are the consequences for us if we harbour unforgiveness?
8. *'To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you'* (Lewes Smedes). Discuss. See John 8:31-36; Galatians 5:1.
9. The other point of this parable is the huge discrepancy between the amount that the Unforgiving Servant owed to the king and that owed by his fellow servant (10,000 talents compared to 100 denarii). This is something equivalent to £5,000,000 compared to £5. What is Jesus saying here about the debt we owe to God the Father for our sin? As the song says, *'The price is paid, come let us enter in to all that Jesus died to make our own. For every sin more than enough he gave, and bought our freedom from each guilty stain.'* How can we then withhold forgiveness from others whose debt is so insignificant by comparison?

Is there anyone in your life who you are finding it hard to forgive? Do you need to forgive yourself?