

Message Notes: September 10, 2023

Title: "Forgiving Like Jesus In An Unforgiving World"

Text: Matthew 18:15-20

Intro: Floods. Termites. Rebuilding what was lost for a while. Forgiveness is like a disaster renovation. Mt 18 is about reconciling with one another and it is about strengthening our faith.

I. For reconciling to work one must humble oneself to be like a little child.

- A. The question that kicks it all off—"Who's the greatest in the kingdom?"
- B. Sinning against one another is like a Hurricane.
 - 1. Gains destructive energy if left undealt with.
 - 2. Jesus creatively shows them their fault--pride.
- C. Jesus pulls a little child over as an example to the disciples.
 - 1. "Unless you change...and become like this child you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven."
 - 2. "Whoever, humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 3. See the person--take the energy out of the storm.
 - 4. Welcome the child welcome Jesus. Jesus identifies with child not the disciples.
 - 5. Without power, or status, and often marginalized.
 - 6. None more humble than Jesus.

II. Jesus gives us a model to follow in Matt 18.

- A. "First, go and how Him his fault just between the two of you."
 - 1. Urgency of vs. 15. Go now. Don't wait!
 - 2. Take the initiative, be assertive.
 - 3. Don't let the devil get a foothold (Eph 4:27)
 - 4. Illustration—Urgent like finding a lost child.

- B. Keep it Christian in the Fight.
 - 1. Love, gentleness, and respect.
 - 2. Pick a time to talk that works for both.
 - 3. Be patient.
 - 4. Use words that encourage and build up.
 - 5. Ephesians 4:27, 29.
 - 6. Use words that dignify the person even if the things done by that person were not their best moment.
 - 7. Words matter. Use them carefully.
- C. Keep it just between the two of you.
 - 1. Example of Joseph with his brothers in Genesis 45.
 - 2. Vs 4 says, "Come close to me."
 - 3. Remove all interference and those not involved.

III. If they still won't listen...

- A. Take along one or two others.
 - 1. Remember the plan is to win them over.
 - 2. Pick one or two mutually trusted people.
 - 3. Glorify God and keep the logs out of our own eyes.
 - 4. Chance to get broader perspectives.
 - 5. May have witnessed the fight.
- B. If they still won't listen take it to the church.
 - 1. As an intervention not a trial.
 - 2. The church is a place of people who care about how it turns out for you and me.
 - 3. If they still won't listen—(hello you who are stuck in your pride) treat them as an outsider.
 - 4. Last effort to expose the seriousness of the situation.
 - 5. Pray for them but don't enable the behavior. "Now brother, its your move."
- C. Be prepared for unreasonable people...even Christians.
 - 1. Some just won't listen nor be reconciled.

2. Remember that God does not measure success in terms of results but in terms of faithful obedience.
3. Your faithfulness to the Word cannot be compromised.
4. Nor can we force others to act in any certain way.
5. Make up your mind not to give up on finding a Biblical solution.
6. The Bible has not failed nor is Jesus wrong in Matt 18.
7. Avoid the temptation for us is to give in, or give up faithfulness, or handle it in a worldly way.
8. Keep your focus on Jesus and trust Him and as
9. Keep doing what is right. Romans 12:14-2.
10. Keep praying.

Wrapping Up. Turning the little things that became big things back into little things so that the truly big things that matter most can be the biggest part of your life. Spiritual termites must be expelled. Replace the old stuff with new. Humility makes us approachable. Humility is embodied in Jesus who turned the horrors of the cross into the most approachable and attractive symbol in history. To change and become like a little child is to change and become more Christlike. That's greatness according to Matt 18. Greatness is in reconciling with your brother or sister because they matter more than being important. Greatness is measured in forgiving like Jesus in an unforgiving world. Easier said than done—yes it is. For many however, grace has proven it can be so in Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Taking it Home

1. Is there anyone that you need to be reconciled with today? How long has the 'storm' been causing division between you?
2. What areas of pride and logs in your own eye can you remove that may help? What ways can you glorify God in this situation?
3. Name some of the things that you love about the person you are upset with. Have you let your mind think of those things more than what you love about that person?

Consider reading Romans 12