

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
WHEN IS IT ENOUGH?
MATTHEW 18:21-35

Good Morning

Prayer Needs

Common Book of Prayer of the week (Proper 18).

In our text this week Peter comes to ask Jesus – what for him is a very important question – how often...should I forgive? **When Jesus is it enough?**

Video Nate Saint – Photos.

Deep in the Amazon Jungle of Ecuador lived a violent tribal people that were at risk of being literally hunted down. By the mid 1950's Shell oil had reached out to the government of Ecuador to help deal with their problem of having Shell employees killed by the native tribes particularly the Waodanian Auca. 5 missionary families set out to be the solution - to make peaceful contact with this tribe - after months of flying over the tribe and leaving gifts on January 8, 1956 Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian and Pete Fleming landed their small airplane on the small river island believing it was time to make physical contact. Each of the men had a hand gun to protect themselves against wild animals but had decided they would not use their weapons against the Waodani Auca because they did not know Jesus. All five men were killed in what has become one of the most known stories of modern christian martyrdom - leaving 5 women widowed one in particular was Marj Saint the wife of Nate the pilot with her two children Kathy and Steve.

But the story did not end their it was only the beginning - it was two years later that Jim Elliots wife Elizabeth and Nates sister Rachel that choose to go and live with the Waodani and to begin the work of bible translation into their language. Steve Saint the son of Nate shared that everyday he would hear his mother pray for the Waodani. He shared that he concluded this must be a special people if my father was willing to die, my Aunt went to live with them and my mother prayed for them. It was 9 years later June of 1965 that two of the men who killed these 5 missionaries baptized Kathy and Nate Saint very near the spot where they had killed their father!

It was on this trip that Nate began a friendship with the third man involved in killing his father Mincaye - a man who took him in as his family and later that Nate would refer to as a father in his life. You may recall the movie The End of the Spear - that tells the story of Nate Saint. It was following that movie that Nate and Mincaye were speaking in the US that a reporter from USA Today called and said I would like to interview you - but before I do I have to ask - how? I suppose I could see you finally coming to the place that you could forgive the man who killed your father but you say you love him - how? But it was later that Steve said well yes he is the same man - but later he said no - he was a new man in Christ. It was Mincaye who actually began to teach Steve about what it meant to be a Christ follower.

How...could this be – it does not make sense to our natural way of thinking...hence the reporters question. How....by the power of God's love and forgiveness...that tells another story.

Beloved the good news of Gods love and forgiveness is deep and full enough to redeem and restore both the injured and the injurer. This Kingdom is based in the limitless supply of Gods love and mercy! When we are not enough or when we have had enough He is more than enough!

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
WHEN IS IT ENOUGH?
MATTHEW 18:21-35

In our text as recorded by Matthew Jesus responds to Peters question....but its really a question we will all face – how often – how much do I forgive – Jesus where is the limit?

- The actions of others towards us – that has left our life and heart traumatized.
- Here is the deal like it or not...even our body knows how to keep score!
- Then add to it the places where we have hurt others....and its an endless debt system.

The scales of justice are supposed to be 'blind' but we aren't – that is not an accusation just the truth its hard to forget the places where we are hurt....its hard not to keep score - until we realize there is no balancing the scale....**or worse** we find our selves unable – to give what it takes to balance the scale.

So here is Jesus nearing His last days trying to help His friends get a different kind of vision of their life and the future.

- Nope we are not overthrowing Rome but I am Messiah and I am building my Church!
- Yes I am going to die and be raised and you will find true life as you embrace the cross!

I want us to notice this; First Jesus is inviting them to see the world around them differently.

- Meaning that His Kingdom is not about **Power over** but life **with God**.

Now He seems to be inviting them to see **how they have related to other people** based in an account of their own brokenness and the brokenness of others.

- Remember when Jesus said I am going to suffer and die....and Peter spoke up?
- The next time Matthew records Peter speaking is after Jesus is talking about how to deal with one another is sin....well Jesus now that you mention debts....**when is it enough!**

I submit that Matthew 18:21-35 is Jesus clarifying that it is not about a measure of 'enough' but rather pointing to cross shaped living....to the point that when He is on a cross the One who is love embraced a cross - forgives the ones killing Him!

Cross shaped living beloved is about living in and from the Love and Forgiveness of God.

- Love and Forgiveness are the currency of the Kingdom **that is based in the Supply of Heaven not the lack of man - its all together different – creates space for eternity to meet the present.**

Look at verse 23 *'For this reason...'*

- Its always a really good idea to pay extra attention to the words in red....Jesus is revealing the supply of Heaven on the topic of Forgiveness.
- That in the Kingdom God has chosen to relate not on the basis of debt and lack but on His limitless Mercy and Grace!!

The Kingdom of Heaven is like this...

- And He tells the story of a Master who is settling accounts and finds a servant who has managed to rack up a debt of what we would say is over a million dollars....and no way to declare bankruptcy - only solution was to be sold....literally.
 - His debt was as large as his life.
 - He begs for mercy - 'have patience' give me time....
 - Then He refuses to give to his fellow servant what he had just received.

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
WHEN IS IT ENOUGH?
MATTHEW 18:21-35

This story is really a story of 2 ways of living from Mercy and Debt

The story of the Master - reveals a couple of things

The value system of his heart

- Mercy over money
- Compassion over correction
- Notice the Master GIVES NOT what is asked for....**Patience and time**
- Gives generously and beyond what was asked...total freedom and life!

He lives from the place his heart is settled...in the limitless supply of Mercy.

- This is clearly a picture of our Heavenly Father!

The story of the Servant - reveals a different system - **debt system**

- Stuck in a system of keeping accounts - this system is not based in love but law.
- He sees his forgiveness not as a moment to be freed to live in the supply of Mercy
 - But to make a demand on the basis of law....**its a chance to get ahead!**
 - His fellow servant asks for the same thing - **patience – time...**
- This newly freed servant is unable and unwilling to give what was freely given to him...
- Because his heart is not captured by Mercy – but debt and demand – that is remarkable you can be forgiven and still not surrender to Mercy's leadership over your life.
- He wants to trust what he can do for himself not what has been done for him!
- **So he lives from duty, debt and demand.**

The bottom line that I want us to see in this story this morning is this....

How much Jesus...well Peter My Kingdom is based in the limitless supply of Gods love and mercy!

When we are not enough or when we have had enough He is more than enough

- **Jesus invitation? To live from the Supply of the Fathers Mercy not the demand of our debt systems...where we are always justifying ourselves against others.**
- In Jesus parable the Master hears how this newly forgiven servant treated his fellow servant he confronts him.....
- You missed the point!
- Now I wonder how many of you have read verse 35 and heard a threat...**unless you forgive you are toast!**
- I want us to hear Jesus words as He describes the actual goodness of the Master (our Heavenly Father) who by the way is not giving a verdict on account like a court drama....
- **He is pointing to Mercy!**

Here is the point of verse 35 – it is warning of impending harm!

- Anything other than living in and from His Supply of Mercy....
- Hear me....**IS TORTURE....**
- For the injured and injurer!
- **This is not a threat its a revelation of reality!**

When is it ‘enough’?

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
WHEN IS IT ENOUGH?
MATTHEW 18:21-35

- **When you live in the supply of Mercy**
- **Anything less is absolute Torture**

In Mercy is an endless supply of life and freedom.

**'How much', 'keeping score', is bondage and torture and debt system that can never get settled....
Jesus words - the Kingdom of Heaven is about choosing Mercy!**

How many times Jesus?

Forgiveness – for Jesus in His Kingdom is not a quantifiable event....

- It is a way of being, a way of living, a way of loving, thinking, viewing others.
- The rapist, the drunk driver, the racist, the greed mongers....the terrorist....
- YES.

Lets take a look at What Forgiveness is NOT -

It is NOT automatic Restoration -

- Forgiveness is NOT saying 'Its Okay' – that simply minimizes the damage! And yet what do I so often hear in response to an apology – 'Its Okay'.
- Forgiveness does not mean 'I'm Okay' – that minimizes the hurt in my life – interesting if that is our response...there are times when our we attempt to force the outcome...its ok its my fault says the abuse victim – no its not! But you see that becomes lever of control
- So forgiveness is not about controlling any outcome!

Forgiveness is NOT Reconciliation

- It is not saying 'we are Okay' - minimize the importance of Love in the relationship -
- When the heart has been violated it may need a minute to be restored to Trust.

Forgiveness is NOT Rehabilitation

- It is not an automatic 'You're Okay' - minimize the behavior and the importance of Love.
- The offending party needs to realize the consequence of choosing to Violate Love will require time for restoration.

How Often...? Lets talk about Forgiveness IS: Forgiveness

- **Where do I start.... by counting? We always begin with God...**
 - We forgive BECAUSE ... we have been forgiven
 - Here is why this is so important – I do not have to wait until I 'feel' settled – my feelings as important as they are – are not the beginning place of Forgiveness – God is – we share what we have been freely given.
 - My choice to to surrender in faith that His mercy is greater – than my fear, frustration, hurt and longing for 'justice'.
 - Psalm 103...He has not treated us as our sins deserve....
 - **Stewarding Love** – Psalm 35:14-15
 - How do I hold that person in my heart?
 - Have I 'killed' them in my heart?

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
WHEN IS IT ENOUGH?
MATTHEW 18:21-35

- **Releasing the Debt – that is hardly EVER a 'finished' event!**
 - Choosing to relate to the person on the basis of Mercy not debt!
 - **How?**
 - **The only destination = The Cross**
 - Bring the person to the Cross.
 - Bring the burden to the Cross
 - Bring the debt of the others sin to into the hands of Jesus
 - **Leave the RESPONSIBILITY for healing in the hands of Jesus!**
 - **There is a reason the early Church embraced the Jesus Prayer as regular practice.**
 - In counseling terms we walk through degrees of trauma...
 - And as we find the hurt we released today still hurts tomorrow we come back to Mercy again...and again...and again.
- **It really does Create Space for New Life.**
 - **He Mercy is new every morning – forgiveness is at its best me stepping out of the way to allow His mercy to be revealed.**
 - **Romans 12:12 - Rejoice IN expectation - not in the tally sheet but the ECONOMY of Gods Redemption!**

Beloved the good news of Gods love and forgiveness is deep and full enough to redeem and restore both the injured and the injurer. This Kingdom is based in the limitless supply of Gods love and mercy! When we are not enough or when we have had enough He is more than enough!

Closing Prayer

O God of Joseph and all his brothers,
your forgiveness transcends
whatever wrong exists between us.
Grant us the courage to forgive others,
and to practice reconciliation
by the kindness of our speaking,
the sharing of our resources,
and the honoring of your desire for good. Amen.

Communion

You who prayed from the cross for your Father to forgive those who were killing you, grant us the courage to forgive those who harm us in our families, in our communities, and in our world. Help us recognize our own need to seek the forgiveness of others. Amen

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips