



# First Steps to Forgiveness

Matthew 5:23-24

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup>“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup>Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. <sup>26</sup>“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ <sup>27</sup>The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. <sup>28</sup>“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. <sup>29</sup>“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ <sup>30</sup>“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup>“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup>Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ <sup>34</sup>In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. <sup>35</sup>“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

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**Sermon Notes: First Steps to Forgiveness**

Matthew 18:21-35, Matthew 5:23-24, Ephesians 4:32

**Introduction:**

Both repentance and forgiveness are unnatural acts. Our sinful tendency is to become self righteous, refusing to forgive or too proud to repent. Yet the scriptures teach us that we should always take the first step to forgiveness either by repenting or forgiving. Although the first step of forgiveness is often difficult to take, especially when the other person refuses to repent, this pattern is modeled by Christ.

**The first step is easier when we have a clear understanding of forgiveness.**

Forgiveness is the heart attitude of grace which gives up the quest for vengeance and embraces the desire to bless.

Forgiveness is not the same as Reconciliation.

Forgiveness is a choice to not to bring up the past.

Forgiveness means giving up the quest for vengeance.

Forgiveness is compatible with confrontation and justice.

**What motivates the first step to forgiveness?**

Forgiveness heals bitterness and brings inner peace.

Forgiveness of others is much easier when we are forgiven.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately our forgiveness for one another is based on God's forgiveness of us. Because we have been forgiven a great debt, we must show grace to others.

Memory Verse - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other,  
just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

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