



THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

Matthew 18:21-35

Dear Parents,

Jesus had been teaching His disciples when Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me?” Peter suggested seven times. Jews considered it standard to show forgiveness three times (see Job 33:29-30), so Peter probably thought he was going above and beyond. Jesus answered Peter’s question by telling a story about an unmerciful servant.

In the parable, a servant owed his master ten thousand talents. A talent was equal to about 20 years of wages. Ten thousand talents represented a debt that could never be repaid. Faced with debtors’ prison, the servant begged for more time to repay the master. Instead, the master released his servant and forgave the great debt.

The same servant went out and confronted a man who owed him a hundred denarii—about 100 days of wages. The man begged for more time, but the servant refused and put the man in prison. When the master heard what happened, he was angry that the servant who had been forgiven a great debt did not show mercy to the man who owed a small debt. So the master put the man in prison until he could pay his debt. Jesus concluded the parable by explaining that God would react in the same way to anyone who does not forgive his brother.

We are like the servant, and God is like the master.

Nothing we do is enough to pay the debt we owe God and take away God’s punishment for our sin. Jesus came and died on the cross to pay for our sin and take the punishment we deserve. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin completely. We can forgive others because God has greatly forgiven us.

As you talk with your kids, emphasize that God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others—not just three times or seven times, but many, many times—not keeping count. We have been forgiven a great debt, so we can forgive others when they sin against us.

Check this session’s Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

FAMILY STARTING POINTS

- Babies and Toddlers
 - Jesus told stories about God.
 - Jesus told a story about forgiveness.
 - God forgives us through His Son, Jesus.
 - We forgive others because Jesus forgives us.
- Preschool
 - Why did Jesus tell stories? Jesus told stories to teach people about God.
 - Jesus taught about God’s forgiveness.
- Kids
 - Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
 - God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE

- Mark 6:34

NEXT WEEK

- “The Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37)



Our Vision for Children

At Harlan Baptist Church we take seriously the Lord’s command to “bring [our children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

We envision a church culture or atmosphere that reflects that of Moses’ instruction to God’s people as they prepared to enter into the Promised Land as found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

In fact, Psalm 78 sets forth the very desire of our heart, that our children would hope in the Lord and not forget the God who gives them life.

Therefore, it is our desire to partner with parents in seeing our children come to faith in Christ and prepare them for life-long obedience to His Word.

At Harlan Baptist, we use a number of different methods and teaching styles to achieve these desired goals.

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