

# Escaping the Trap

(Matthew 18:21-35)

Yearly Theme: *“Peace is...”*

Series Title: *“The Cost of Peace”*

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

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## Something to think about:

Continuing our series on, *The Cost of Peace*, we come to the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament on the same narrative of forgiveness that we looked at in Luke’s Gospel several weeks ago. So, though there may be a little redundancy in the reading of this passage, we will be looking at a different perspective of forgiveness in today’s message.

Leading up to our Scripture for today, we must take into account what came before it in our reading. At the beginning of Matthew chapter 18, there is a discussion that ensues with Jesus’ among his disciples about who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. In response to their question Jesus called a little child who was close by to Him and placed the little one in the midst of the disciples. Jesus tells them that they must turn from their sins and become like this child in order to be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus then begins directing the disciples toward the topic of humility and forgiveness. Once again, He warns those who would be offenders that they are in danger of the fires of hell, but He also warns those to whom offenses come, that they are to forgive their offenders lest they too be exempted from the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the middle of this chapter Jesus gives instructions on how to deal with conflict resulting from the sin of others that encroach upon each of us, and explains the power and authority of the person who works toward righteousness in submitting to GOD the Father from whom all authority comes.

Finally, Jesus concludes this section with a clear directive for forgiving others along with a parable to illustrate what He means. This is where we pick up today...

**Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT),**

*<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”*

*<sup>22</sup> “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!*

*<sup>23</sup> “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. <sup>24</sup> In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. <sup>25</sup> He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.*

*<sup>26</sup> “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ <sup>27</sup> Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.*

*<sup>28</sup> “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.*

*<sup>29</sup> “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. <sup>30</sup> But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.*

*<sup>31</sup> “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn’t you have mercy*

*on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup> Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.*

*<sup>35</sup> “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.” <sup>1</sup>*

Though there are several points we will be exploring from this passage today, it’s important to remember one very important key point:

**Key Point:** *“Sin is sin, and it all requires forgiveness.”*

The truth is, we all stand in need of forgiveness in as much as we need to forgive others. But what does this look like? Let’s consider the following:

- **Forgiveness is limitless.**

*Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT), <sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”*

*<sup>22</sup> “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!*

- **Forgiveness requires mercy.**

*Matthew 18:26-27 (NLT), <sup>26</sup> “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ <sup>27</sup> Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.*

- **Unforgiveness has eternal consequences.**

*Matthew 18:32-35 (NLT), <sup>32</sup> Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup> Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.*

*<sup>35</sup> “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”*

## Something to take home:

The Gospel is centered on love and forgiveness, and these things cannot change the world unless they are applied. Jesus opened the door for every conceivable possibility of redemption in this broken and fallen world, but only those who learn to receive that love and forgiveness and apply it, not only to their relationship with GOD but with others, are free indeed.

How are you applying these messages of forgiveness to your life? Are you learning to forgive as you have been forgiven? Do you understand that forgiveness is limitless, that it requires mercy, and that the unwillingness to forgive has eternal consequences?

Make a call today. Ask for forgiveness and work toward reconciliation with those you’ve been at odds with. Don’t allow the weight of unforgiveness keep you from the Kingdom of GOD.

And remember...

**Key Point:** *“Sin is sin, and it all requires forgiveness.”*