

**Week of September 17, 2023**

**Matthew 18:21-35 (NRSV)**

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup> "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

<sup>24</sup> When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him;

<sup>25</sup> and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

<sup>26</sup> So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'

<sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.'

<sup>29</sup> Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

<sup>30</sup> But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

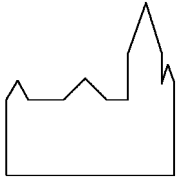
<sup>31</sup> When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

<sup>32</sup> Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

<sup>33</sup> Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'

<sup>34</sup> And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

<sup>35</sup> So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."



### Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

### Gathering questions:

- A. When someone cuts in front of you in line, how do you react/respond?
- B. Are you prone to road rage? Do you have any good road rage stories to tell – either as a witness, victim ... or perpetrator?

### Bible Study Questions:

1. When Peter speaks of another member of the church "sinning" against him, what kind of offense comes to mind?
2. 10,000 talents is a fantastic sum, perhaps 170,000 years' wages for an average working person. Why do you think the story would cast the person's debt in such astronomical terms rather than something within the realm of possibility?
3. How are verses 34-35 consistent (or not) with your image of God?
4. How many times do you ordinarily forgive someone? What do you think a "reasonable" number would be?
5. The word "forgive", in Greek, means to "let go". When someone wrongs you, what does it mean to "let it go"?
6. What do you ask of people you have forgiven? Do you demand an apology? Restitution? Why do you think these aren't mentioned in the teaching?
7. To what extent do you evaluate your life by comparing it to others? What are some of the ways we can avoid comparing our lives to others?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about ways in which we can increase the amount of kindness and mercy in the world.