FORGIVENESS and RESTORATION
Matthew 18:15-35
Introduction

The values of the kingdom of heaven are different than the values of this world.

- Humility
- Community
- Mercy

Today we are going to look at the power of forgiveness.
I. SIN IS TO BE FORGIVEN, BUT IT CANNOT BE IGNORED. MATTHEW 18:15-17
Jesus gives us a three step process for dealing with sin in the church.

The first step is private confrontation.

• The offended person is to take the initiative.

• Matthew 5:23-24 addresses the opposite situation when we know we have sinned against a brother or sister. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”
• Bitterness and gossip are not a correct response.
• Hebrews 12:14-15 says, “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”
• Sin has the potential to become a bitter root.
The second step is to bring along one or two witnesses.

- Their role is to help bring reconciliation.

The third step is to tell it to the church.

- In our church that would be the elders and pastors.
There are three overriding concerns in dealing with sin in the church.

- The restoration of the sinner.
- The holiness of the church.
- The glory of God.
II. GOD HAS GIVEN AUTHORITY TO THE LOCAL CHURCH TO HANDLE ITS AFFAIRS. MATTHEW 18:18-20
“Tell it to the church.”

Authority over membership is given to the church. If someone will not listen to the church and they remain unrepentant in their sin, the church has the authority to remove them from membership in the church.
According to verses 18-20, God is present in that decision – only here it is Jesus who takes the place of the Father. It is another statement about his deity.

Churches are reluctant to confront sin and practice church discipline, but it must be done for the good of the person and for the health of the church.
III. RESTORING A FALLEN BROTHER OR SISTER IS TO BE DONE WITH LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

MATTHEW 18:21-35
“How many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me?

• The Rabbi’s said three.
• Peter thought seven times?
• Jesus said 77 times – as often as he asks.
Jesus is reversing the curse of Lamech in Genesis 4:23-24.

Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.”
The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

• One talent = 6,000 drachmas or denarii.
• The debt he owed was astronomical – far more than he could ever pay.
• With lavish grace, the king cancelled his debt and let him go.
• The second servant owed the first servant 100 denarii – a few dollars.
• The unmerciful servant demanded the second servant pay what he owed and had him thrown in prison.

• The Master called his unmerciful servant a wicked servant and had him thrown into prison to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed.
“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

We have all been forgiven of far more than we will ever forgive. We are like the servant whose debt was far more than he could ever pay. God forgave all of it in Christ.
“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

That kind of forgiveness is so powerful that even the world takes notice.
Conclusion

Forgiveness isn’t easy. It takes a work of God to change our heart and enable us to forgive. Are you grateful for God’s mercy and forgiveness for your sins? Is there anyone you need to forgive?