

VICTORIA BAPTIST CHURCH –YOUTH WORK

Sunday morning teaching plan



Date: 16th February 2025

TITLE:	The parable of the unmerciful servant Matthew 18:21-35
THEME:	God's mercy to us should be passed on to others by us
AIM:	Understand why we should be merciful and how we can show mercy to others

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This parable is a beautiful yet challenging one. It is a beautiful picture of God's mercy to us in forgiving the biggest of debts (our sin) because we ask Him. Yet it is also challenging because it reveals God's wrath and justice towards those who refuse to show mercy to others. The unmerciful servant had not fully understood the depths of the freedom he had received. He was destined to be sold, yet ended up free. He could not see that the same applied to others in similar situations. He was not able to pass on what he had received. God requires us to show mercy to others because He has shown mercy to us.

WARM UP

Play "How forgiving are you?" See PPT. Create a discussion around forgiveness and mercy.

MAIN TEACHING

Activity 1. Read the parable and watch cheesy video [Cheesy video](#)

1. What do you think of Peter's question in v21
2. Do you feel, like Peter, that forgiveness should be limited to just a few times?
3. Are some things easier to forgive than others?
4. What do you think of Jesus' response?
5. What do we learn about human nature and God's nature from v21?

Key teaching point: Humans like to limit forgiveness as they link it to justice. However, forgiveness is not limited by a specific number or quota. Jesus encourages us to extend forgiveness generously and without limits. The act of forgiveness reflects God's unconditional love and mercy towards us. It allows us to imitate His character and reflect His grace to others. Forgiveness is a choice and a process. It involves letting go of anger, resentment, and the desire for revenge.

Activity 2: Who are the characters and what can we learn?

1. Who is God in the story? What is He like? (merciful, just– deals with the unmerciful servant)
2. Who is the servant? What is he like? Is he like us?
3. Who does the other servant represent? The one who got choked!
4. How would you sum up the story? What is the key theme?

Key teaching point: The parable highlights the vast difference between the forgiveness shown by God towards us and the lack of forgiveness displayed by us towards others who sin against us. The massive debt owed by the servant represents our sins and offences towards God. Despite our unworthiness, God graciously forgives us when we repent and seek His mercy. The small debt owed to the other servant represents the offences committed against us. In light of God's forgiveness, we are called to extend forgiveness to others. If we do not, then we cannot expect to receive God's mercy and forgiveness.

Activity 3. Lord's prayer Forgive us our sins!

Ask who can recite the Lord's Prayer. Matt 6:5-15

Which part relates to the parable?

What does it mean "forgive those who sin against us"?

What does forgiveness look like? Is it more than just words?

Does forgiveness mean we forget about justice?

Why must we forgive others? See Matt 6:v14 15

Key teaching point: A core part of the Christian faith is receiving God's forgiveness and mercy. We have been forgiven every sin, big and small. At the same time God's justice was fulfilled. Jesus bore God's wrath on the cross. Justice was done but forgiveness happened too! If we desire to receive God's forgiveness for all our sin we MUST be ready to forgive others. It is not always easy to do, It does not mean that those who have sinned against us "get away with it" if we forgive them. God still will deal with them. Our job is to forgive.

Activity 4: Stories of forgiveness

1. Michael and Jill Saward (video of Jill speaking of forgiveness on PPT)
2. Nadim and Natasha Ednan-Laperouse (Pret a manger)

Discuss what they feel about the stories, how might they react? What would Jesus want us to do? Why would He want us to react in a forgiving way?

TAKEAWAY

Ephesians 4:32: on PPT

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES/ RESOURCES

NB "seven" When Peter asks about "seven times" perhaps he is remembering that for Jews, seven is the number of perfection. God's perfect number. It symbolises wholeness and completion.