

The Parable of Unforgiving Servant / The Storyteller
Matthew 18:21-25 / June 28, 2026
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- **This parable is simple, difficult, chilling, and liberating**
 - Simple: Jesus calls forgiven people to forgive others
 - Difficult: Forgiveness touches some of the deepest wounds in our lives
 - Chilling: Jesus warns us that unforgiveness can imprison our souls
 - Liberating: Jesus invites us into the freedom of the Kingdom of God here and now

- **The debt we could never repay**
 - Peter asks, “How many times should I forgive?” Jesus tells a story about an impossible debt (v.21-22)
 - The king sees the insurmountable debt, has mercy, and cancels it completely (v.23-27)
 - The cross shows us the depth of our debt and the depth of God’s mercy (Luke 23:34)
 - Forgiven people forgive people

- **The debt we refuse to release**
 - The servant is forgiven an impossible debt, then refuses to forgive a real, but much smaller debt (v.28-30)
 - Our culture teaches us to keep score, hold grudges, cancel, retaliate, and demand payment (Matthew 5:3-42)
 - But unforgiveness often imprisons the one who refuses to release it (v.32-34)

- **What forgiveness is and what forgiveness is not**
 - Forgiveness is releasing revenge, surrendering judgment to God, and taking the next step toward healing
 - Reconciliation requires repentance, appropriate boundaries, trust rebuilt over time, and changed behavior

- **How do we forgive?**
 - We remember how much we have been forgiven (Colossians 3:13)
 - We bring our pain honestly before God (1 John 1:9)
 - We take the next faithful step toward release (James 5:16)
 - We invite trusted community, prayer, counseling, and wisdom into the process (Matthew 18:15-20)
 - We depend on Jesus, because this kind of forgiveness is not possible apart from Him (Ephesians 1:7)

- **Forgiveness is the deepest form of hope and healing we have to offer**

- **Canceled debts and release debts**
 - What debt has Jesus canceled in your life?
 - What debt are you still holding against someone else?
 - Are you ready to release it to the Lord?