

Week 6 – Grace and Responsibility (Preview)

Day 1: Reflection

Read Matthew 5:1-20 (pay special attention to vv. 17-20)

1. What have you learned from the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees? Through the parables, what decision was Jesus asking them to make? How did they respond?

2. While they were a major focus of the parables we have studied so far, the Temple authorities were by no means the only audience. Who else were the parables directed to and how is Jesus seeking to change their attitudes and behaviors?

3. Think about what we have studied the past few weeks. What has stood out to you? Has the studying of these parables brought you to a decision point? How is God sanctifying you through this?

Day 2: The Unforgiving Servant

Read Matthew 18:23-35

1. Summarize this parable.

2. Read the context around this parable. Where is Jesus? Who is His audience? What significance does this bring to the parable?

3. What does this parable teach about forgiveness?

Day 3: Indicative and Imperative

Read Matthew 18:23-35, 1 John 4:7-21

1. As seen throughout the Bible, the indicative (a declaration) precedes the imperative (a command) in this parable. How is the king's forgiveness the indicative, and what is the implied imperative to his servant?

2. How does the servant not fulfill the imperative? What is the judgement on him? Why does the king forgive the servant's original debt, but then does not forgive the servant's mercilessness?

Read Matthew 5:48, Romans 2:1-10, Romans 14:10-12

“The kingdom comes with limitless grace in the midst of an evil world, but with it comes limitless demand.”

Stories With Intent – Snodgrass

3. Reflect on the scripture passages and this quote. Remind yourself of what God has done for you (imperative). Now, how does God expect you to respond (indicative)?

Day 4: The Two Debtors

Read Luke 7:36-50

1. Summarize this parable (vv.41-43).

2. Where is Jesus? To whom is this parable directed? How does the context influence our understanding of the parable?
3. What does this parable tell us about the interrelationship between love and forgiveness?

Day 5: Sin and Forgiveness

Read Luke 7:36-50, Romans 5:6-11

1. The Pharisee claims that Jesus is not a prophet. In this passage, how does Jesus show that He is, in fact, a prophet?
2. The Pharisee believes that he is righteous and is without (much) sin, yet he sees the woman as a sinner. How is the Pharisee's concept of sin, forgiveness, and love challenged by the parable?
3. If you strive to understand your sinful condition in a deeper and more meaningful way, how will this affect the way you understand what Jesus did for you in His death and resurrection? Will your love for him increase? Will your attitudes and behaviors follow?