

# Life Changing Stories

## “A Story about Holding Grudges” – Matthew 18:1-35

September 5, 2010

### Series on Jesus’ Parables

LIFE CHANGING STORIES		
A 6-Week Series on the Parables of Jesus from Matthew		
Date	Message Title	Text
Aug 22	A Story about Missing God	Matthew 13
Aug 29	A Story about Passionately Pursuing God	Matthew 13
Sept 5	A Story about Holding Grudges	Matthew 18
Sept 12	A Story about Grace and Fairness	Matthew 20
Sept 19	A Story about Two Sons	Matthew 21
Sept 26	A Story about a Wedding	Matthew 22

### Jesus Answers 2 Questions with 2 Stories and a Prop (Matthew 18)

#### Question #1: Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (v.1)

Answer #1: Whoever humbles himself like a \_\_\_\_\_  
(vv.2-20)

#### Jesus’ Prop: A little child (v.2)

- “little child” = *paidion* = an infant or small child
- Characteristics of an infant or small child
  1. An infant or small child is completely \_\_\_\_\_ on his parents for all of his needs to be met.
  2. A small child asks lots of questions and believes the answers you give her. She has an “innocence” about her that trusts everything that is told her. She is honest and does not hold back her thoughts or questions.

#### Jesus’ Points (vv.3-4)

- (1) ENTRANCE: You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ the Kingdom of heaven without a child-like trust in God for your salvation (v.3)(Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9)  
Application #1 – Daddy God, I turn to You for my salvation like a little child turning to his parent for help. Jesus Christ, I receive you into my life for the forgiveness of my sins. Make me into the person You want me to be.
- (2) GREATNESS: Greatness in the Kingdom of heaven comes by \_\_\_\_\_ yourself like a child in believing God for things that would seem impossible to an adult (v.4)

- **Hebrews 11:1-2** – Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.
- Hudson Taylor: “All God’s giants have been weak men, who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them.”
- Jim Cymbala: “I have since learned that the most mature believer is the one who is bent over, leaning most heavily on the Lord, and admitting his total inability to do anything without Christ. The greatest Christian is not the one who has achieved the most but rather the one who has received the most. God’s grace, love, and mercy flow through him abundantly because he walks in total dependence.”
- Cymbala in Houston, Oct 21. See [www.refreshpastors.com](http://www.refreshpastors.com)
- Application #2 – With simple child-like faith, I am going to trust God to do impossible and great things for His glory:

“Great” thing:

My child-like prayer of faith:

#### Jesus’ Excursions about sin and “little ones” (vv.5-20)

- (1) JESUS’ WARNING AGAINST CAUSING “LITTLE ONES” TO SIN (vv.5-11)
  - Michael Green: “Galileans drowned Herodians in Jesus’ day by fixing millstones to their necks. The vivid language about millstones round the neck and cutting off parts of the body is obviously intended to be figurative.... This chapter is all about the church, and the teaching about cutting off limbs was very early seen as referring to the amputation of an individual from the Christian body when it was plain that a ‘limb’ was gangrenous. If there is within a church someone who is guilty of unrepentant sin which is affecting the whole church, that person must be disciplined, however difficult it is to do. The member must not be allowed to ruin the body of Christ.”
  - Angelology 101: There are angels assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ (Daniel 10:13,20-21), to churches (Revelation 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14), and to \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 18:10). These angels are merely God’s messengers and servants and are not to be worshipped or prayed to (Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 22:8-9). However, it appears that our prayers to God positively affect angels battling on our behalf (Daniel 10:2-3,12-14).
  - The point of Matthew 18:10 is God cares about each person and so should we.

- (2) GOD’S HEART FOR THOSE WHO DO WANDER AND SIN (vv.12-14)
  - The Parable of the Lost Sheep and the importance of small groups
- (3) INSTRUCTIONS WHEN LOST SHEEP SIN AGAINST YOU (vv.15-20)
  - These instructions show the proper biblical order for dealing with sin and offence:
    - (1) Confront \_\_\_\_\_ (v.15) – “go” to him
    - (2) Confront with another person (v.16)
    - (3) Turn the matter over to “the church” (v.17)
  - Notice that the goal is to “win your brother over” (v.15)
  - These instructions are also describing the biblical way to remove a person from your local body of Christ (church discipline; 1 Corinth 5)
  - Application #3 – Let’s tap into the power of agreeing prayer (vv.18-20) to bring lost sheep back into God’s fold! A lost sheep that I am praying for is...
  - Application #4 – Let’s practice healthy conflict resolution. Is there anyone that I need to “go” to and have a private conversation about how that person hurt me?

**Question #2: How many times should I forgive someone who hurts me? (v.21)**

**Answer #2: An \_\_\_\_\_ number of times because God has forgiven you infinitely (vv.22-35)**

▪ **The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**

▪ **Steps to Forgiving Those Who Have Hurt Me**

1. CONVICTION – Realize that I am doing wrong in holding a grudge against someone who hurt me (vv.32-35; esp. v.33).
2. RECEIVE FORGIVENESS \_\_\_\_\_ – Receive Christ’s forgiveness of me and renew my mind to how much I have truly been forgiven by God (vv.23-27). Note that Servant #1 does not truly understand that he has been forgiven of all of his debt (v.28).
3. SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE – When appropriate and safe, tell the person that they have hurt me (v.15). [Note: sometimes it is not appropriate or safe]
4. FORGIVE – Do my part in forgiving this person and trust God to do His part:
  - (a) My part = My \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive. Saying “I forgive.”
  - (b) God’s part = The supernatural miracle of replacing my hateful and bitter feelings with \_\_\_\_\_ for that person.
5. CONTINUE TO FORGIVE

▪ **Application #5 – Develop a “hit list” and forgive each person on your list one at a time:**

- My “hit list” of people who have hurt me and who I have not yet completely forgiven:
  - (1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (6) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (7) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (8) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (9) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prayer of forgiveness

Lord Jesus, because You have forgiven me, therefore I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for doing \_\_\_\_\_ to me, and I ask You to now replace my feelings of bitterness with Your love for that person. I pray Your blessing on that person.

**Questions to Discuss with Your Family, Friends, and Small Group**

1. What is your earliest childhood memory?
2. Read Matthew 18 aloud and discuss its meaning and applications using these notes. Share your applications with one another and pray for each other.