
Renew: Returning the Heartbeat of Hope

“Renew: Christ’s Kingdom”

Matthew 18:21-35

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

*“A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring.
The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior’s obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.” - Augustus Toplady*

*“Honestly, I want to be like Christ. But honestly, I want to be like the Christ who turned the water into wine, not the Christ who thirsted on the cross. I want to be the clothed Christ, not the one whose garment was stripped and gambled away. I want to be the Christ who fed the five thousand, not the one who hungered for forty days in the wilderness. I want to be the free Christ, walking through the wheatfields with His disciples, not the imprisoned Christ who was deserted by them . . . This is the dark side of Christianity, the side we don’t see when we sign up. That if we want to be like Christ, we have to embrace both sides of His life. What else could it mean when the Bible talks about the “fellowship of His sufferings”? - Ken Gire, *The Reflective Life**

“He who is forgiven little, loves little.” - Luke 7:47

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- The passage from Matthew 18 marks a crucial hinge between how one enters the Kingdom of God and how one expresses the Kingdom of God in real life.
 - What’s the difference between “how you are saved” and “what you are saved for”?
 - Why make such a distinction?
 - What are the consequences of either being unanswered or undervalued?
- Peter seems to be trying on Jesus’ Kingdom value of limitless forgiveness for repentant sinners.
 - Describe Peter’s wrestling with this new Kingdom principle.
 - Why does Peter and why do we look for limits to mercy for offenders?
 - What seems too costly about Jesus’ directive here? Why are we unwilling to pony up?
 - What does that say about us: how we think of our debts and the debts of others?
 - How do Jesus’ words in Luke 7:47 help us here.
- The second scene of the parable focuses upon the forgiven servant calling in some debts of his fellow servant.
 - How do you account for the unconscionable disconnect between his being forgiven and his withholding forgiveness?
 - Why did it not translate? Why did his receiving mercy not become giving mercy away?
 - Who are you tempted to demand justice from when perhaps you are being called to offer mercy instead?
- What did it cost the master to forgive the debt? What does it cost Jesus to forgive our debt? What does it cost us to forgive our debtors?
 - Interact with Ken Gire’s words above on the “fellowship of sufferings” and becoming like Christ.
 - What actually enables us to count the cost?