



Going Deep
Matthew 18:21-35



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- This seems to be a very unsettling time in history, a time of great turmoil of passions with everyone demanding acceptance of their understanding of life



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Going Deep

- I'm not sure it is a whole lot different than the times Jesus walked this earth
 - Pressures on the Roman government to maintain order and that means keeping things the same and in control
 - Israeli Zealots demanding rebellion against Rome and fighting for freedom
 - Pressures from the ultra-religious right (*Pharisees*) to force Israel under their strict interpretation of the Law
 - Israeli Sadducees that held the authority in Israel and wanted things to remain the same

Going Deep

- Into this religious and political environment came an itinerate rabbi
 - His message was completely different from all the others
 - Instead of an inward focus He challenged them and us to look out through eyes not colored by differences or biases but similarities
 - He challenged them and us to look at others through the God's eyes before responding to them

Going Deep

- He challenged them and us to
 - Love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:21)
 - Love and pray for those who hate and persecute us (Matthew 5:44)
 - Be a servant to all first, regardless of your position (Mark 10:42-45)
- Who or what type of person would you exclude from this list?
 - How about Illegal Aliens?
 - Someone whose skin color or nationality is different from yours?
 - Or maybe those in the Gay Rights Movement?
 - What about those who want to limit your gun rights?

Going Deep

- The question on my mind all week is, “How?”
 - How did Jesus do this?
 - What was the power behind His actions?
- That same power must be supporting our actions and our voices as God’s people on earth today, if others are to see and hear Christ in our lives

Peter's question

- **Matthew 18:21 NIV**, 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
 - What is Peter asking?
 - How long must I put up with the idiots in this world?
 - Those who think differently, act differently, want to me to bend to their way of thinking, who offend me
 - When can I just throw up my hands and respond like I want to, after all I'm right anyway?

Peter's question

- **Matthew 18:21 NIV**, 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
 - Peter thought he was being generous, giving more than is demanded
 - He might have been trying to impress Jesus
 - Peter never asked the question, “How deep must forgiveness go?”

Peter's question

- **Matthew 18:21 NIV**, 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
 - **Matthew 18:22 NIV**, Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times (*or seventy times seven*).”
 - Can you hear Peter thinking, “What?”, “How am I going to keep up with that high of a number?”, “I’m going to need a notebook.”, “Did I hear Jesus correctly?”

Peter's question

- **Matthew 18:21 NIV**, 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
 - **Matthew 18:22 NIV**, Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times (*or seventy times seven*).”
 - Now that is deep
 - You can almost hear Peter say, “How Jesus?”
 - With all the craziness in our world today, how can I as a born-again child of God, go that deep so others can see and hear Christ in my life?

Scripture

- **Matthew 18:23-27 NIV**, 23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold (*approx. \$10,000,000*) was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.
 - 26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

Scripture

- You do understand there was no way this servant would ever pay this much money back, nor could most of us today
- So, what was the servant pleading for?
 - Mercy...
- What was the power or force or thought that allowed mercy to be given by this king?
- Why would the king even think about doing this?
 - Love–no, Hope-no, Wanted to look good-no

Scripture

- Why would the king even think about doing this?
 - Compassion - to empathize with someone who is suffering and to feel compelled to reduce the suffering. It's a fuller, truer definition than feelings alone, and it's a very biblical understanding.
 - The Bible doesn't explain compassion like a dictionary does, simply telling us what the word means
 - Instead, the Bible defines compassion by showing us what compassion looks like and what is involved with being compassionate

Scripture

- Author Fredrick Buechner describes what it means to have compassion in this way: "Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too."
 - Jesus, led by compassion, slid inside our humanity (*skin*) to bring us joy and peace and forgiveness
 - **John 1:14 NIV**, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - Mercy, Love, Forgiveness are all fruit of compassion

Compassion is the power, the drive that burns in the heart of Jesus for humanity

- **Luke 7:13 NLT**, “When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion.”
- **Matthew 15:32 NIV**, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”
- **Matthew 9:36 NLT**, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Compassion is the power, the drive that burns in the heart of Jesus for humanity

- **Matthew 20:34 NIV**, “Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.”
 - Jesus’ love, mercy, grace flowed from His compassion
- **Hebrews 4:14-16 NLT**, “14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Compassion is the river that flows from the heart of Jesus through the lives of His people to touch the broken lives of others

- What is our normal first response to those who we see as challenging us in some area?
 - Is it not Judgement
 - Judgement normally resting upon our biases, how we see right/wrong, what is comfortable, what we want for our lives
 - If we don't catch ourselves, we will be like the ungrateful servant

Compassion is the river that flows from the heart of Jesus through the lives of His people to touch the broken lives of others

- **Matthew 18:28-29 NIV**, 28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. (*approx. \$200*) He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. 29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ 30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.”
 - How much did the servant owe the king?
 - How much was the servant owed by the second servant?
 - Does the response of the first servant trouble you?

Compassion is the river that flows from the heart of Jesus through the lives of His people to touch the broken lives of others

- **Matthew 18:31 NIV**, “When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.”
- Why were the other servants outraged?
 - Treatment of the second servant – “*He grabbed him and began to choke him.*”
 - Condemned the second servant as unworthy of his mercy, pity
 - Cast him aside as being judged and found lacking
 - The other servants knew the truth

Compassion is the river that flows from the heart of Jesus through the lives of His people to touch the broken lives of others

- Who do you treat like this in your heart?
- **John 8:31-32 NIV**, “31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - Those who have been set free see with different eyes
 - We see the heart of God for the lost, confused, hurting
 - Those just looking for somewhere to belong
 - Those looking for love and acceptance, and yes, sometimes it is in all the wrong places

Compassion is the river that flows from the heart of Jesus through the lives of His people to touch the broken lives of others

- Who do you treat like this in your heart?
 - **Isaiah 61:1 NIV**, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”
- Just like Jesus however we think or respond must pass through compassion
 - **Ephesians 4:15 NLT**, “We will (*learn to*) speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ.”

How can we do this Randy?

- We don't get too far from the cross
- We hear the words of Jesus in **Luke 23:34 NIV**, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- We remember Jesus described them as being lost without a Shepherd
- We remember the priority of our lives is citizens of God's Kingdom first before citizen of the country we live in
 - **2nd Corinthians 5:20 NIV**, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."
- We lead with compassion and leave the judgement to Christ

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