

VV STUDY NOTES: 18th January 2025

Jeroen Tuinstra

Matthew 18:21- 35 (The unforgiving servant)

Peter is querying about forgiveness and gets perhaps the answer he didn't expect. 70 x 7 (or 77) times should he forgive his brother. Jesus has just told them in the verses before this story, that after a somewhat lengthy period of trying you can decide to treat a brother that sinned against you as a gentile or a tax collector.

What is the difference between the two stories.

Who are forgiven in both stories and who are not, and on what grounds?

What does treating someone as a gentile or tax collector mean (Mat. 18:17)?

Matthew 21:12-13 (Cleansing the temple)

Jesus enters the temple and throws out all money changers. On several occasions there seems to be a limit to the forgiveness (perhaps tolerance) of Jesus. He sure didn't have much "forgiveness" for these money changers and pharisees.

What is the limit of Jesus' forgiveness?

Where and why does Jesus' tolerance end? Is he tolerant at all?

Romans 8:1 and Galatians 3:26-28

Paul has a clear understanding that forgiveness is closely linked to the relationship we have with Christ. We are all children of God through faith in Jesus and those in Christ will not be condemned.

What does it mean to be in Christ?

In the Old Testament the children of God were those in the covenant with God, how does this compare to being in Christ?

How much is forgiveness an absolute moral standard? Or could we see forgiveness as a social contract or covenant? Is there a difference in the approach?

God decides in the Old Testament to create a covenant with its people and then expect his people to abide by certain standards if they want to remain in the covenant. People agreeing to the covenant but not upholding their part were not expected to experience the same protection and reconciliation as those that did uphold their part.

In the New Testament you find a similar covenant, based on faith. Faith in Christ, being in Christ, results in full acceptance by God, however placing yourself outside of this covenant could result in non-acceptance(?)

The paradox of Tolerance / Forgiveness

The paradox of tolerance is the idea that when you are tolerant and see this as an absolute moral standard, you have to be tolerant of intolerance too. When you see it as an absolute moral standard then being intolerant of intolerance would not be possible. Exchanging tolerance with forgiveness, might cause the same paradox and problems, or not?

