



I. Introduction

What is a Parable?

Parables are brief stories that are true to life, given for the purpose of teaching some spiritual truth.

The word parable is from 2 Greek words:

- "Para" – along side
- "bello" – to put, to place, to throw

To place or to put along side spiritual truth for the purpose of application.
In the Bible parables are only one type of figurative language that is used.
There are three steps in studying a parable:

1. Study the three parts
 - the setting
 - the story
 - the spiritual message
2. Finding the central message
 - Each parable has one and one only central message.
 - Each parable has a number of details that have spiritual significance of their own. But all these details relate to the one central message.
 - Each parable has details that have no special spiritual significance.
3. The application to our own lives

II. The Scripture - Matthew 18:23-34

III. The SETTING - Matthew 18:15-22 (NIV)

'If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.' Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'

IV. The STORY - Matthew 18:23-34 (NIV)

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 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.

The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

An important part of this story is the debt of **TEN THOUSAND TALENTS** as contrasted with the debt of **ONE HUNDRED DENARI**.

The denarius was a **DAYS WAGE**.

The talent was worth about **THIRTY-THREE HUNDRED** denarii.

We are looking at one amount of **SEVERAL HUNDRED** dollars compared to an amount of **HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS** of dollars.

V. **Spiritual MESSAGE** - Matthew 18:35 (NIV)

This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

The chief need in understanding the story itself is to appreciate its **CENTRAL THEME**.

The many **VIVID DETAILS** of this story-the enormous debt, the decision to sell the debtor and his family, the plea for mercy, the unexpected compassion and free forgiveness of the debt-all of these interesting facts are preparatory to something else.

What is the great **CENTRAL MESSAGE** we are to gather from this parable?

As God has forgiven me a debt of sin against Him that is beyond my ability to pay, I must forgive my brother who has sinned against me.

VI. **Personal Application**

1. Do the sins of others against us really appear as **LITTLE** in contrast with the much that we owe?
2. Are we apt to **MINIMIZE** our own sins against God and **MAGNIFY** the seriousness of the sins of others against us?
3. The real issue of forgiveness is not between me and you – but **ME AND GOD**.
4. Forgiveness is something I choose so that I can be in **FAVOR** and **OBEDIENCE** with God. **Matthew 6:12, Mark 11:22-26**
5. Obedience and forgiveness – **MY CHOICE**.
6. The wrongs I deal with are nothing compared with what I have been forgiven. I do not **FORGIVE** men in order to be forgiven but **BECAUSE** I have been forgiven.