



APPNOTES

Date: November 11-15, 2019

Series: Grace Is Greater

Matthew 18 Kindergarteners can't look at two cups of different dimensions with the same amount of juice and see that they are, in fact, equal. It doesn't matter that one cup is wide and short and the other is tall and skinny. All they see is that the line of liquid on one is higher than it is on the other; that cup must have more. We have an innate sense of fairness and justice. But look at the parable in today's reading. Jesus isn't talking about kids with cups of juice. This is a serious situation, a possible life sentence because a debt hasn't been paid. Justice says, "You owe a debt. You must pay it." Grace says, "I forgive the debt." Each of us sins, and justice demands spiritual death, but God in His mercy gives us grace, through the sacrifice of Jesus. Let's embrace that grace and offer it to others.

Colossians 3:1-3 Have you ever been the recipient of the pay it forward phenomenon at a drive thru window? Some kind soul pays for the coffee of the person in the next car. That person gets to the window and is pleasantly surprised. The instinct is to pay back the person who paid for the coffee, but that car is long gone. So the next best thing is to pay it forward – pay for the next person, who may then pay for the next. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have received the spiritual equivalent of the free coffee. You can't pay Him back, and He doesn't want you to. He wants you to pay it forward, to live a life pleasing to God and to offer the same mercy and grace you have received from God to others. Coffee grows cold. The love of God never does.

Matthew 6:12 What must we do to earn God's forgiveness? Nothing. It's a free gift we can't earn. But there is an aspect of God's forgiveness that is tied to our forgiveness of others. Look at the Lord's Prayer, the model Jesus gave His disciples, and us, that teaches us how to pray. We are to ask for God's provision and forgiveness – "just as we forgive those who have sinned against us." God is offering us free forgiveness, but He wants us to give it to others as well, for the small insults and the big, life-breaking abuses, and everything in between. This is not an easy thing to do. That's why we have to ask God for it, for His forgiveness of us and for the ability to forgive others. No matter what kind of hurts you bear, ask God to help you share this beautiful gift of forgiveness with others.

1 Peter 2:21-23 Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus is God and what that means in terms of His silent endurance at the cross? God spoke the universe into existence; that's power right there! Jesus has that same power. What could He have done to those who beat Him, stuck a crown of thorns on His head, and nailed Him to a cross? One word. Just one, and they would have been destroyed. He could have, but it would have been completely out of character. Jesus did not come to destroy; He came to seek and save the lost. He forgave those who hurt Him. He forgives us. That is our example. That is our glorious calling: to forgive others and in that way help them find the way back to God. In His silence, Jesus had the last word.

Romans 12:18-21 Elizabeth Elliot was a godly woman who toured the country as a prolific author and speaker. Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was a missionary in Ecuador in the 1950s. He tried to share the gospel with the Waodani tribe, and they killed him. When he died, he left behind his wife and daughter. What would you have done if you were the one left behind? It might be tempting to hate. Maybe you wouldn't hate but simply walk away from South America and never look back. Elizabeth Elliot remained in Ecuador for two more years, continuing the work Jim had started. Far from wanting to get even, she embodied this passage of Scripture. Far from revenge and justice, she wanted only the best for those people, and the best she could give them was Jesus. It is the best any of us can give someone else. Who in your life needs that forgiveness?

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