

Matthew 18:21-35

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Date: 09 March 2025

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[0 : 00] We come to your word this morning in awe. Your word speaks so mightily to our hearts! And I pray this morning that that will be the case.

! That our hearts will be changed by hearing and studying your word. In Jesus' name. Amen. So, this morning the intention is that we finish Matthew chapter 18.

And I hear sniggers in the background as if that's not likely. But we hope to finish the chapter this morning. So far, Matthew's gospel in chapter 18 has dealt with interpersonal relationships from God's perspective.

Jesus started out by covering the subject of rank. And the disciples were vying for position. Who's the greatest? And Jesus said, whoever is the humblest and whoever is the least and whoever is the biggest servant is the greatest in the kingdom of God.

So, it's kind of counterintuitive from a worldly point of view. If you want to achieve rank in God's kingdom, you need to humble yourself and have a servant heart. We then looked at stumbling blocks.

[1 : 11] What causes people to stumble? And Jesus expressed this extreme view. Better that you are crippled. Better that you are maimed than you entertain sin.

And if any part of you causes you to sin, chop it off. Which is an extreme way of saying avoid sin like the plague. But furthermore, he also said we should avoid putting stumbling blocks in front of others, particularly children.

And in fact, if you remember, we interpreted children as not just people who are young in the flesh, but also people who are young in the faith. That we should not cause them to stumble. And I suspect, and it's not for me to put words in the mouth of the Lord, But I suspect there will be an awful lot of ministers who face extreme discipline from the Lord for the amount of rubbish they preach that actually leads people astray.

We also then had an example of how the good shepherd continually seeks out the lost. Obsessively so. The analogy he uses is when you've got a hundred perfectly good sheep grazing and you go and leave ninety-nine grazing and you go and look for the one.

And how he pursues the lost one until he finds the lost one. And there is this sense of urgency in the heart of the Lord that no one should be lost.

[2 : 39] And of course, not all the lost ones will be found because they refuse to be found. But to everyone that's willing, God is pursuing them, which is a good thing to know.

And then last time we reviewed verses 15 to 20 and we saw that church discipline, when we are sinned against or if we are the perpetrators of sin against another, that we should always seek to restore.

The whole motive behind it all should be restoration. So we should be ready to apologize and we should also be ready to tell our brothers and sisters of their sin.

But only with a motive to restoration, not with a motive to finger wagging and not with a motive to somehow putting ourselves superior to them, but restoring them to a right position with God.

And all of that teaching seems to have provoked Peter to ask the question that we're now going to read and also the answer that the Lord gives. So if we start reading from verse 21, it says this, Then Peter, see, this is immediately following all that's gone before.

[3 : 55] Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times. Jesus said to him, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to 70 times seven times.

For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him 10,000 talents was brought to him.

But since he did not have the means to repay, the Lord commanded him to be sold along with his wife and children and all that he had and repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, have patience with me and I will repay you everything.

And the Lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 denarii.

And he seized him and began to choke him, saying, pay back what you owe. So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, have patience with me, I will repay you.

[5 : 07] But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their Lord all that had happened.

Then summoning him, his Lord said to him, you wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave in the same way that I had mercy on you?

And his Lord moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed. My heavenly father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

A very, very challenging passage. In this room, there will be people who have minor niggles with other people and there'll be people who, you know, so and so got right up my nose last week because fill in the blanks.

There are also people who've suffered severe abuse or injury or lost loved ones or there'll be reasons why they feel aggrieved that are not easy to lay aside.

[6 : 16] But let's go through what Jesus instructed Peter and then try and give a life application if we can. As far as I can see, and I'm open to be corrected on this statement, but as far as I can see, almost every relationship breakdown occurs when someone refuses to forgive.

That might be slightly too broad, but that's the way it occurs to me, that usually when relationships break down, somebody is holding back on forgiveness. And I think we're never more like God than when we freely forgive and never more unlike God when we don't.

It's in God's nature. If it wasn't in God's nature, he wouldn't have gone to such huge extremes to forgive. Paying for our sins with his own life.

It doesn't get more extreme than that. If you turn to Ephesians 5 with me, there is an exhortation in the beginning of the chapter which says, it says, therefore be imitators of God as beloved children.

So whether we're forgiven or not, the call is, whether we're forgiving or not, I meant to say, the call is to imitate God.

[7 : 31] So we need to imitate him in our ability to forgive. But look what it goes on to say, because it puts a little bit of meat on the bones of that initial statement. It says, and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

So the call is not just to imitate. Well, it's to imitate God, not just in actions, but in heart. Walk in love. And of course, if we're in forgiveness, if we're in unforgiveness, we are not walking in love.

We're withholding love. I won't read the whole passage just for the sake of time. But we will just quickly look at verse 3 and then verse 21.

It says, but immorality or impurity or greed must not even be named among you as is proper among the saints. And there must be no filthiness or silly talk or coarse jesting which are not fitting, but rather the giving of thanks.

For this, you know, with certainty that no immoral or impure person or covetous man who is an idolater has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. And I read that only to remind us that God sets the bar high.

[8 : 47] And therefore, there's a sense in which he sets a standard that we can aspire to, but probably can never quite achieve. But the aspiration of the heart is what God looks for.

In the Old Testament, it says, And so we, in a sense, we should be in an eternal state of frustration because we seek to achieve a level of righteousness that in this life we can't quite make it.

And so there is a personal frustration that goes on. But nevertheless, the bar is set where God wants us to be. So we don't lower the bar to accommodate our sin. We seek to strive to get to the bar.

God's standard. And verse 21 says, Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, which is an exhortation to submit to others or put ourselves below them or treat them as more important than ourselves.

And I, how does this apply to forgiveness? Well, I think what it says is, regardless of what you've done to me or how you've upset me, your place in Christ is above me.

[10 : 02] And therefore, I should remain humble and I should forgive because Christ has forgiven all of us. More on that in a moment. So Peter asked this question. And in asking the question, if you go back to Matthew, Matthew 18, Peter said, and he obviously thinks he's being quite magnanimous when he says this.

How often shall I forgive my brother? Up to seven times. Now, it's interesting to note that the rabbis used to say you should forgive someone at least three times. So he kind of doubled it and added a bit when he said, should I forgive seven times?

And Jesus said, no, no, no, not not seven times, but 70 times, seven times. And there are various versions, various translations.

Some will say 77 times. Some will say 70 times. But as far as I can check out, the Greek says 70 times, seven times, 490 times.

Does this mean that you have a clipboard with 490 boxes in it and you tick off as you go? And when you get to 490, you go, nope, that's it. You've had your lot.

[11 : 12] Well, no. This is a Jewish idiom. And I could take you through a really interesting separate Bible study on the figure 490 in scriptures. But 490 is the time of forgiveness.

490 years is the time of forgiveness. Now, I can't justify that this morning because I don't have the time. But it was a Jewish, a religious Jewish euphemism for you always forgive.

What he was saying really was not seven times, but why even keep a record? That's what was being said here. Don't count the times, you know.

No, I'm not going to go. I was going to use a marriage analogy, but I won't. About how many times I forgot to put the bin out when I was a younger married man. But this is not a subject for levity, so I shouldn't even think of turning it into a joke.

There is never a time that you don't forgive, he was saying to Peter. It goes on forever. And if Peter had a Jewish background and was used to this thinking of, well, three times is enough.

[12 : 22] And now he's told seven times isn't enough. And by the way the language is used, which is structured to hit a Jew right between the eyes, that you always forgive.

Jesus, therefore, seems to have decided that Peter needed some illustration of this. So not 70 times seven.

Sorry, not seven times, but 70 times seven. In 1 Corinthians 13, turn there, just before we explore further what Jesus was saying.

But in 1 Corinthians 13, we'll just read from verse four to verse seven. It says this, this is Paul's teaching to the Corinthian church, which was, by the way, a very messy church.

And I don't mean messy church in the way that it's currently used in our society, where you get people in the church building, but you don't preach the gospel to them. And it was messy because you had all sorts of sin going on and all sorts of conflicts.

[13 : 27] And in that church, Paul says, love is patient. Love is kind and it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly.

It does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered. How can you be in unforgiveness if you do take into account a wrong suffered?

Do not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoice with the truth. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. In other words, love is not this gooey, nice feeling you feel when you're by someone you like, but it's a determination in the heart that you will not take into account a wrong suffered or any of the other things that are mentioned, which means by implication you will forgive.

Forgiveness is a given, which creates a few other dilemmas, which I may get a chance to talk about at the end, depending on how much I ramble. So what Jesus is advocating is a love response.

God is love. So by forgiving endlessly, we are God-like. And to the extent that we refuse to forgive, we are unlike God. So back to Matthew.

[14 : 45] We've then got what I think is a really useful analogy. And the thing is, as I was studying to deliver this this morning, I was convicted myself in that it at least refreshed my memory as to where sin sits in the heart of God and how much of an aversion to sin he has.

Praise God, he doesn't have an aversion to us as sinners, but he does have an aversion to our sin. So he says this, For this reason, the kingdom of heaven must be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

So for this reason, for what reason? Well, for the reason that we have to eternally forgive. He's about to fill out the detail about why we must forgive.

And this king that he then speaks of may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. And the word used is the word *doulos*, which in Greek is an owned slave.

It could be the lowest of the low and it could be badly treated. It could be well treated. But in any event, it's a fully owned person, someone who has been purchased. And he's therefore owned.

[16 : 05] And this own slave in that culture, one could sell oneself into slavery in order to pay off debts. Or you might have been bought from the slave market.

And therefore, you were in slavery through none of your own volition whatsoever. You were just a slave. But in any event, the king described was settling accounts with his slaves.

And that leaves you thinking, so what could the slave possibly owe? Why would the slave be considered someone who's in debt? The reason they're a slave is because they've got nothing.

So how does that unravel? Well, because it's an owned slave, he actually owes his life to the master.

Because the master has the power at any point to end his life. And the analogy for the sake of the comparison with salvation is that when you are saved, you become fully owned by the Lord.

[17 : 06] So let's read on a little. He wished to settle these accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him 10,000 talents was brought to him.

But he did not have the means to repay. His Lord commanded him to be sold along with his wife and children and all that he had and repayment to be made.

Now, I think this describes our unsaved state very, very adequately. Before we became in Christ, we were just out there.

We still belong to him because the whole of the human race belongs to him. But if we don't respond to the master, we can be just cast aside.

And this slave that owed him 10,000 talents fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him and said, have patience with me and I will repay you everything.

[18 : 05] Now, we can't repay the Lord what we owe him. But what we can do is say, Lord, I'm all yours. We can give ourselves to him. Now, just to understand the magnitude of this analogy, 10,000 talents, a talent is equivalent to 6,000 denarii, which is a denarii was a day's wage for one man.

So an ordinary laborer to pay off one talent, a single talent, would take him about 16 years. To pay back one talent.

So 10,000 talents is worth 60 million denarii. So you're talking about 160,000 years wages for a single man.

So the Lord was deliberately using extremes again to say, this king, this servant owed this king more than he could repay in several thousand lifetimes.

And the servant was saying, have patience with me, I will repay. No, you won't. You can't. There is no way that you can. It's completely unattainable for you to pay this debt back.

[19 : 25] And therefore, we then get to understand that the king is so merciful and so gracious that he says to the servant, who owes more than he could repay in several lifetimes, your debt's forgiven.

You can walk free. And that is a perfect analogy of what Jesus has done for us in our salvation. That we owed him more than we could repay in several lifetimes.

In fact, several thousand lifetimes. And he forgave us the moment we believed on Christ. We were set free. So the question is, what did that servant then do with that freedom?

So let's read on. Verse 27. The Lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denario.

So a hundred days wages, still a significant debt. But not unachievable. And he seized him and began to choke him, saying, pay back what you owe.

[20 : 29] So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, have patience with me and I will repay you. But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

So think where we started. We started with Peter asking Jesus, how many times should I forgive? And this analogy has been given to us where the Lord has forgiven us thousands of lifetimes worth of sin.

And yet this particular slave with whom he is drawing the analogy. And I suspect Peter was supposed to apply this to himself when he offered seven times worth of forgiveness. The message is, because you have been forgiven many lifetimes worth of sin, you must forgive your brother.

In the same way that you have been forgiven, you must forgive your brother. And the king in the parable, verse 31, So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their Lord all that had happened.

Now, hopefully we will do this for one another. We will say to people who we know are in unforgiveness, you need to forgive. And we'll be praying for them to the king that they will find it in their heart to forgive.

[21 : 47] And there may even be church discipline applied if they will not and refuse to forgive under some circumstances. But the point is that when you've been forgiven several lifetimes worth of sin, you have no right to not forgive.

Now, that's all very well to say. It's not as easy to do. All right. For the small things, maybe. But there are people, even in this room, who have some pretty big things that have happened to them in the past.

And I suspect there are one or two who are still struggling to forgive those things. But he, God clearly expects us to have the same attitude of forgiveness towards those who sin against us as he had when he forgave.

And he forgave this massive debt and paid the debt with his own life. Greater love has no man than he should lay down his life for his brother or friend.

And this is so elevated in the consciousness of Jesus that he actually finishes off this chapter by saying, My heavenly father will also do the same to you.

[22 : 58] Same as what? Well, read the preceding couple of verses. Verse 33. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave in the same way that I had mercy on you?

And his Lord moved with anger and handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed. My heavenly father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

The Lord is prepared to withhold his own forgiveness if you don't forgive. So that's a real challenge. If you've got a big issue that you have to find a way to forgive. And we'll talk about that in a moment.

One thing I will cover, and I was going to cover it near the end, but I think as it's right in the discussion, we'll cover it now. There are many who believe that this means that your security in salvation depends on your forgiveness.

I do not believe this scripture says that. This is a scripture that will tell you that you can very easily, by hanging on to unforgiveness, you can spoil your walk with the Lord in this life.

[24 : 00] So you can be judged in the sense that the father will bring discipline to you for being in unforgiveness. But it does not say he will remove your salvation.

If we turn to Matthew 6, now Matthew 6 tells us how to pray and gives us a sort of model for our prayers, doesn't it?

In what we euphemistically call the Lord's Prayer. And he says, pray then in this way, our father who is in heaven. I'm not going to study the rest, but our father who is in heaven.

He is our father. Therefore, we are his sons, both male and female. You're all sons. So I know that I have a son and a daughter and whatever they have done in life.

They can never be anything other than my son and daughter. There's an eternal security in that. My son could be, I praise God that he isn't, but he could be the biggest rogue walking the planet.

[25 : 03] He would still be my son. I could disown him. Don't want anything to do with you. It wouldn't change the fact that he's my son. Once we become born again, we become children of God.

We read in the book of 1 John. When we become born again, we become children of God. So this is not an eternal warning. This is a warning for your walk with God on this earth now.

And therefore, it's not that you should in any way be unforgiving because it will damage your walk with the Lord. One of the things, if you turn to 1 Peter, a very important one for married folk, this.

Very challenging. It's one scripture that I like to think it causes me to keep short accounts with my wife. 1 Peter 3, verse 7.

We didn't come this morning to study marriage, but to understand why this scripture is there.

[26 : 21] We need to understand this. Our wives are not there to be our skivvies. And our job is not to continually correct our wives. We can offer correction just as we would with any brother or sister in Christ.

But our job is to be a good husband to her. And that applies even if she's a complete harridan. If she's not walking with the Lord and if she's not doing her thing, we men are supposed to be good husbands.

And wives, even if you're married to an absolute idiot who is disrespectful to you and everything else, you're supposed to walk as a good wife. And a good husband and a good wife will have a great life.

But what it says here is if you don't do it, men, your prayers will be hindered. David, David, in Psalm 51, he's crying out to the Lord for forgiveness after he'd effectively murdered through somebody else's sword, Uriah, and then committed adultery and slept with his wife.

And he's crying out to the Lord for forgiveness. But there are places. I mean, Psalm 66, verse 18. He says this. If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. We hold on to sin.

[27 : 37] We hold on to wickedness. One scripture, I can't remember which one it is, says the heavens are like brass. You know, we seem to be calling out to God for change and change and change.

And we don't get changed because the heavens are like brass. Why? Because we have fallen out of fellowship with the Lord. There are things that have got in between us.

And it doesn't mean we've become unsaved. It means we're under discipline. And when we stop behaving like a sinner, like an unrighteous person, the heavens will cease to be like brass.

No wonder I found it challenging. So there are lots of things that are quite easy to forgive. The picture on the wall is a picture of some things nailed to a cross.

Because this kind of scripture is no point in having a meeting like this where we all challenge ourselves and go away without a clue as to what to do about it.

[28 : 34] Because there will be those, even in this room, who say, I just can't. I just can't get it off my mind. I can't get it off my heart. I can't forgive it much as I want to.

And part of that is a certain amount of confusion about what forgiveness actually means. And when you get the notes, you'll find that I've reversed it all.

But when you're trying to forgive someone, sometimes you take on, one takes on a burden that goes beyond forgiveness. So, for example, let's suppose you are someone who's been abused by someone.

One, forgiveness does not mean that you go and put yourself back in a situation where they can abuse you again. And there are some who teach that that's what you've got to achieve, that you've got to achieve this completeness of forgiveness, that it's as if they've never done it and you give them all the same chances to commit the same sin again.

That's a different matter. That's trust. Forgiveness says, I do not hold this against you. And I pray for your good. And if we do meet, there isn't a wall up, but I'm never again going to put you into a position where you can usurp the trust that I put in you.

[29 : 46] So there's a common sense thing to this. Going back a few years, I had almost a violent exchange with a brother in Christ and I had to stop fellowshiping with him.

And I wasn't the party who was in the wrong. I was the one that was wronged. And I can say that with a clear conscience. But he is forgiven. But I'm not going to go around knocking on his door and having fellowship with him.

I don't want my lights punched out. His anger was such that until I see real evidence of change, I wouldn't be able to trust him.

But that's not that I don't forgive him. So make sure you stop with forgiveness and don't add on to that lots of other burdens which you just carry around for the rest of your lives.

But if you turn to Hebrews 12, verse 14, says this. If you are in unforgiveness, you are bitter.

[31 : 02] And that root of bitterness, if you don't root it out, it will grow and it will become more and it will be a besetting sin for you. You won't be able to shake it off. Needs a very deliberate effort to set these things aside.

But it says here the root of bitterness defiles us. When the temple was defiled, God couldn't live there. The anointing of God left the temple and all the stuff that God did in the temple.

Well, who's the temple now? The church. And individually, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. So we want God to be able to live in this temple.

But this root of bitterness can cause God to stay aside and to not act through us, not respond to us, not answer our prayers, seem as if he can't be reached.

So it becomes even more important to forgive. So Colossians 2 and verse 13 to 15.

[32 : 05] Now, this is this describes Jesus forgiveness of us. And it says, when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us.

And he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. So if I apply this to me, as an unsaved man facing one day the judgment of God, there was this decree that existed with a list of my sins on it.

And that decree was probably a mile or two long. Sins too many to count. If you like, several lifetimes worth of debt.

And that decree existed until I came to Christ. And what it says here, it says he is taking it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

There's the decree against Ray nailed to the cross. Now, I'm not clever enough with computing to do a sort of three mile decree. So that's the that's the short version.

[33 : 21] But the decree against Ray, he has nailed to the cross. Therefore, it's dead. Whatever's nailed to a cross is dead. It's gone. There is no longer a decree against Ray.

When those books are opened and Ray has to face the judgment seat, there's no writing on the decree. If we read on, it says or read again.

He's cancelled out verse 14, the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us. He is taking it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Cancelling out the decree means he's removed the handwriting from the decree. It's blank. So that describes my thousands of lifetimes worth of debt paid.

I'm now in the same position as that servant who was forgiven the 10,000 lifetimes worth of sin, 10,000 talents. So then when I come against brothers and sisters in Christ, or for that matter, anyone, and they upset me, sin against me.

[34 : 28] It could be an abusive parent from the past. It could be anything. It could be school bullies. It could be you name it. I'm not here to list the sins.

But you know the kind of things I'm talking about where you have been wronged. Wronged. Wronged in a big way. And you struggle to forgive. You have to find a way.

We have to find a way to take the decree that we have against them and nail it to the cross. This is the decree against those Ray needs to forgive.

And the decree against them needs to be nailed to the cross. And so my only option, and I'm open to challenge on this thinking, but it's my only option with anything that needs to be forgiven is to go and nail it to the cross.

Now you will find, and I wanted to have some post-it notes to do this with, but it was just too complicated. But if you imagine that I've got a post-it note, this is my decree against someone, Fred.

[35 : 31] Sometimes you go to put it to the cross, and you pull your hand away, and it's stuck to your hand still. And these things seem to be onelastic. You walk away in the back of the head because they keep following you.

And the only thing one can do is to keep going back to the cross until the point where you can leave it there. Because you don't want to carry it. Because you don't want the root of bitterness to spoil your life with the Lord because you're still carrying this rubbish.

So the bigger the thing is, and if you have suffered mental ill health because of what happened to you, or physical ill health because of what's happened to you, if you walk in fear, if you're permanently depressed, all those things, the only thing I can say, which might seem useless on the one hand, is you've got to find a way to nail it to the cross.

And Jesus didn't set a limit on the number of times you can do that. You can keep going back. He is our Father. And he doesn't mind how many times we go back to him.

And say to him, Lord, I'm really struggling, but I really want to nail this to your cross, and I want to walk away. And if you have to do it a thousand times, it doesn't matter to him.

[36 : 44] What matters to him is that you seek to forgive. You seek to nail it to the cross. Because he looks at the heart. His eyes rove to and fro over the earth, seeking those whose hearts are perfect towards him.

So when you're expressing your heart towards God, even if you struggle to succeed, you've expressed what your desire is. I want this gone. I want to forgive. I want freedom.

I want this person who doesn't even deserve my forgiveness to have your forgiveness, Lord. Because I want them to get saved. What I really want is restoration. What I really want is reconciliation, which is what the whole chapter has been about.

And I say this with some hesitancy, but I think there are some people here who need to forgive their spouses.

And it might be past spouses who they've been divorced from by now, or it could be your current spouse. But you need to forgive one another because you don't want a root of bitterness in a marriage.

[37 : 44] And the stock answer to that is, but what about them? Well, what about them? You can't do anything about them. The only thing you can be is the best husband or wife that you know how to be.

Because then God's only got one of you to sort out. And he should only have one of you to sort out. And you quite often find that when particularly, I say this particularly to men, because nowhere does Jesus say to women that you've got to live with your husbands with tolerance because they're the weaker vessel.

Right? He says it to men. Men are the priest of the household. So particularly for men, you've not got to worry about what your wife's like. Oh, she won't submit to me.

Well, neither would I. You're a jerk. She won't submit to me. Well, that's her problem with the Lord. Your problem is to be a husband worth submitting to.

When she submits to you, it's as if she's submitting to the Lord. Father, thank you so much for this word. Lord, we do find it a challenge. But we love you for the fact that you don't let us off the challenges.

[38 : 57] But you expect us to achieve righteousness in the long term. And you have promised us that when we see him, we will know him because we will be just like him. Father, help us today to embrace forgiveness in our hearts, regardless of the depth of the hurt.

And teach us, Lord, to continually return to you. To nail these things to your cross where they can be once and for all forgiven. Your word tells us that you have removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

And that you are a God who buries our sins in the deepest part of the sea. So thank you, Lord, that you do that. And please help us to do the same. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.