

**Esther and Emmett – Apples and Elephants**  
***Story for All – September 13, 2020***

Emmett: (writing) Let's see...seven times zero is...zero. And seven times seven is...(thinks)...49!

Esther: Hi Emmett: Are you doing home schooling?

Emmett: Hi Esther. No, I'm doing Bible study....where was I?

Esther: Seven times seven equals 49.

Emmett: Right, then remember the zero...so, seven times 70 is...490!

Esther: That's right!

Emmett: No...it can't be! It doesn't make sense!

Esther: I am quite sure that 70 times seven is 490! We can count it out on our fingers if that would help.

Emmett: No, it's not the math that doesn't make sense. It's the story that Jesus told.

Esther: Right...it's the Bible part of it that doesn't seem to make sense.

Emmett: Right...Jesus told a story about a slave who owed the king 10,000 talents...whatever those are...!

Esther: A talent was a unit of currency. If we want to bring the story up to date, in today's currency, 10,000 talents would equal about three and a half billion dollars!

Emmett: Wow! That's a lot!!! Wait, how could anyone owe that much – that doesn't make sense!

Esther: Well, maybe Jesus exaggerated 'just a bit' in the story. What else in the story doesn't make sense to you?

Emmett: Well, the king says the slave owes him 10,000 talents – which is soooooo much money that no king in his right mind would ever have loaned it out because he would have known it could never be repaid...

Esther: I think we've covered that part of the story...

Emmett: Right...well, the slave begs for mercy and the king forgives him his debt!

Esther: Wow! That seems incredibly generous. I bet the slave was sooo grateful...

Emmett: You'd think...but then the slave goes outside and runs into another slave who owes the first slave one hundred denarii – whatever that is....

Esther: One denarii was a day's pay for a labourer. One hundred denarii was probably about \$50.

Emmett: Wait...three point five billion verses 50!!! This really doesn't make sense!!

Esther: Why?

Emmett: Because when the second slave, the one who owes 50 dollars, asks for extra time to pay off his debt, the first slave refuses and has him sent to prison.

Esther: That wasn't very nice!

Emmett: And then the king hears about it and gets angry at the first slave whose debt he had forgiven, and has that slave beaten and says that now he DOES have to pay back the \$3.5 billion!

Esther: Well, that doesn't sound very nice either!

Emmett: But...but...here's the really confusing part: Jesus tells this story after telling Peter that he should forgive someone 490 times – that's seven times 70, you know!

Esther: Hmmm...it doesn't sound like anyone in the story had heard about Jesus' seven times 70 practice...

Emmett: But Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven could be compared to the king in this story, but no one ends up being forgiven. How does that make any sense? I'm so confused!!

Esther: Then let's think about something else. Why don't we compare apples and elephants.

Emmett: What?

Esther: Compare apples and elephants.

Emmett: Apples and elephants! Apples and elephants! I can't compare them. They're not the same!

Esther: So, maybe when Jesus said that the kingdom of God could be compared to a king and his slaves, Jesus was really saying, "They're not the same."

Emmett: I'm so confused!

Esther: Well, maybe the point of the story is to get people thinking about how the story would be different if the king forgave, and then the forgiven slave had forgiven the other slave.

Emmett: So, God forgive us as we forgive others...like it says in the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples?

Esther: Well, the first slave seemed to think he deserved to be forgiven because he had begged to be forgiven, rather than feeling he had received an undeserved gift, a blessing, an act of love.

Emmett: So when he came to the slave who owed him just a bit of money, he didn't share his gift, his blessing, the forgiveness he had received.

Esther: Maybe Jesus was inviting us to compare how the world functions if everyone gets what they deserve, verse how the world functions when we forgive one another.

Emmett: Forgiveness should be the gift that keeps on giving...giving more forgiveness.

Esther: Giving and sharing God's love with everyone.

Emmett: Well, that's not so confusing. I can say AMEN to that.

Esther: And AMEN.