1. **Intro:**

1.1. **Mouse Trap** – (invented by Sir Hiram Stephen Maxim) - A very simple device made up of a flat wooden **platform**; A wire acting as a **hammer**; a **spring** that gives the hammer the quickness it needs; a **metal bar** that holds the hammer back; & a sensitive little **catch**; that when you touch it with the slightest pressure it releases the metal bar, and the hammer comes slamming down on its victim.

1.1.1. There are many things in this world that trap not mice but men!
1.1.2. There are traps of **unforgiveness**…which “sever” relationships.

1.1.2.1. And thus imprison countless Christians in its jaws!

1.2. Well, this is the last teaching of a long Sabbath day that started in 14:1.

1.3. So Luke names **4 qualities** of a **true disciple**: Offences; Forgiveness; Faith; & Service.
1.3.1. Note discipleship’s link between **true faith**, & **necessary obedience**.

2. **4 SERMONETTES!** (1-10)

2.1. **[1] OFFENSIVE OFFENCES!** (1,2)

2.2. The word **offenses** means “occasions to stumble.” (stumbling blocks)
2.2.1. The Gk. word gives us our English word “**scandalize** (skandolon)” and it originally referred to the stick that tripped a snare or a trap. (mouse trap)

2.3. The warning - Yes, offenses **will** come…but woe to him through whom they do come! (responsibility)
2.3.1. 1**st** it is **inevitable** they will come.
2.3.2. 2**nd** there is a **responsibility** from whom they do come though.
2.3.2.1. **Inevitability** does not remove **responsibility**!

2.4. Beware of leading others astray. [not limited to children, but new believers also]
2.5. Beware of doing anything that would cause others to fall into sin.
2.5.1. “**But I have this liberty!**”…but they might not!

2.6. The woe isn’t defined…it’s not the millstone, that’s the way to escape the woe!
2.6.1. (i.e. the easier way out!)
2.6.2. Jesus leaves the woe undescribed, he leaves it nameless. 😊

2.7. **Millstone** - Like being fit for a pair of concrete shoes!

2.8. We are to be **stepping stones** not **stumbling blocks** to others.
2.9. [2] FOREVER FORGIVING! (3,4)
2.10. No break in Jesus speaking, he is stating the case from the other side.
  2.10.1. We talked about the offender, now the offended!
2.11. Rebuke him - It’s much easier to keep still when someone sins against us, and to try to hide the pain.
  2.11.1. We sometimes even think we’re being *spiritual* by trying to ignore the wrong. But failure to be honest, when there *is* something wrong, *isn’t* God’s way.
2.12. Forgive! - Our old self dwells on *slights and hurts* and takes a *perverse pleasure* in self-pity and in righteous indignation.
  2.12.1. No limits are to be placed on forgiveness!
  2.12.2. “*What if I’m taken advantage of?*” – What if Jesus asked that same question right before the cross?
  2.12.3. God absorbed the hurt of our sin on the cross, & offers us forgiveness & reconciliation.
  2.12.4. He’s not going to “get away with murder”…maybe get away w/it from you, but NOT from God…the woe still hangs around his neck!
2.13. Forgiveness is a command; one is to forgive from one’s *heart*, overruling one’s *feelings* if necessary - since this too goes against the grain.
2.14. It is not likely that a believer would put a stumbling block 7 x’s in one day before you, but we **must be ready** to forgive that often.
  2.14.1. Forgiveness should be a **habit**, not a **battle**.
2.15. When people sin repeatedly, giving up on them is easy; but we must forgive them & trust God to work in their lives.
  2.15.1. Remember if someone puts a stumbling block before you, your 1st duty is to **rebuke** them. If they **repent**, **forgive**.
  2.15.2. If I do that, I am seeing to it that I’m no stumbling block in the way of the one who put the stumbling block before me!\(^1\)
2.16. Do note “if they repent”! Forgiveness is based on his repentance.
  2.16.1. We are not to forgive a man if there is no sign of repentance. (like God)
  2.16.2. But note, if he “*says*” he repents (vs.4 – “*saying*” i.e. not nec “*showing*”).
2.17. (Morgan) “Better to secure the sanctity & the beauty of our own character by being ready to forgive 7 x’s, even though the man is *not* sincere, *than* by refusing forgiveness to a truly repentant soul.”
2.18. We must be **stepping stones** & not **stumbling blocks**.

\(^1\) G. Campbell Morgan; pg.195.
2.19. [3] MOUNTAIN MOVING FAITH! (5,6)

2.20. The demands of discipleship are great. The disciples recognized they needed **divine help** to fulfill such demands.

- 2.20.1. No wonder the disciples cried out to Jesus, “if we have to live like that with people, then, Lord, increase our faith!”
- 2.20.2. You would expect the disciples to say, “Increase our **love**!” But forgiveness comes from **faith** in God’s Word.
- 2.20.3. A grenade doesn’t ask for “more power” it just says, “pull the pin”!
- 2.20.4. To make an Atomic Bomb you don’t need bigger atoms, just to split them!

2.21. (6) Jesus’ answer clarified the nature of true faith.

- 2.21.1. The issue isn’t **greater** faith. {not **quantity** of faith, but **quality**!}
- 2.21.2. What is there in a grain of mustard seed that is distinctive? Life!

2.22. **Faith** is like a **seed**: it seems **small** & **weak**, but it has **life** in it.

- 2.22.1. If it is **cultivated**, it will **grow** & **release power**.
- 2.22.2. **Story** – A man who was buried in a tomb that requested a great mass of **granite** over the top of his grave when he died. He had said if there ever was a resurrection it might be certain he should never rise! The granite stone weighing tons is there…but split in two! - Before they could place that large granite stone on the grave a bird happened to drop an acorn right there. An oak tree sprang up & the living power of the acorn split the granite in two. [small & weak, but has life!]
- 2.22.3. If you have **living** faith (no matter how small) you will be able to forgive your brother 7 x’s.

- 2.22.3.1. You’ll see to it U place no stumbling block in the way of others.

2.23. We need faith for **many areas** of our life.


2.24. It’s not up to us to conjure up an increase of faith, but instead…

- 2.24.1. Faith opens the way for God to act out of HIS **limitless resources**.

2.25. If our faith is like the seed, alive and growing,…nothing will be impossible!

2.26. **Q**: What do you need ripped out of your life trunk, limbs, & roots?

- 2.26.1. Be pulled up by the roots.

2.27. [4] THE DUTY OF SERVANTS! (7-10)

2.28. “And” shows connection.

- 2.28.1. If you have that kind of faith, don’t let it turn into **pride**!
- 2.28.2. You can’t lift your chin in the air, strut with pride, & be braggadocios!
- 2.28.3. To **rebuke** & **forgive** is our simply our duty!
2.29. Jesus knew how to balance one truth with another, so that His disciples would not go to extremes.
2.29.1. The miraculous faith of vs.6 must be balanced with faithful day-by-day “ordinary service” that may not be exciting.
2.29.2. This servant plows, takes care of cattle, even cooks!
2.29.3. “Unprofitable” means “without need,” i.e. nobody owes him anything.
2.29.4. God does not “owe” us rewards; we have only done our duty.

2.30. Jesus had given His disciples a command. When a person sins, he is to be rebuked and forgiven.
2.30.1. This is no optional activity, just for persons with exceptional faith!
2.30.2. When it comes to living by Jesus’ commands, the issue is not one of faith but of obedience!
2.30.3. We can never draw back from doing God’s revealed will because we feel we have inadequate faith.

2.31. Note the demand for personal application (3,10)
2.32. God wants the absence of pride expected of those who know that obeying him is a matter of duty.
2.33. It takes faith to do your duty, whether tending to a field or a flock, or preparing a meal.