

Matthew 18

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • June 13, In the year of our Lord, 2018

I. Matthew 18.1–14 | What Jesus Thinks of Children

A. 18.1–5 | Children Are Humble

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.”

1. What prompted their question?
 - a) Ignore the chapter division.
 - b) What had been the topic of discussion?
2. How do we determine greatness in the kingdom of heaven?
 - a) It is not by the standards of the world.
 - b) It is by spiritual qualities that we determine greatness in the kingdom.
3. What about little children must we possess to be great?
4. Then He added a blessing in reference to children. What was it?

B. 18.6–7 | Do Not Cause a Little One to Sin

6 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”

1. Notice how Jesus let the introduction of one subject lead Him to another.
2. What do you think of having a heavy object tied around your neck and then being thrown into the sea?

- a) Something far worse awaits the one who causes children to sin.
- b) What could be worse than having a heavy object tied around your neck and then being thrown into the sea?
3. Are offenses going to come?
 - a) Are people going to lead children astray?
 - b) Be sure that you are not the one to lead children astray.

C. 18.8–9 | Avoid Sinning Against Children

8 “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”

1. How far should we go to avoid causing children to sin?
2. Do we value our things enough to lose our souls over them?

D. 18.10–14 | Do Not Despise Children

10 “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

1. What did Jesus teach that we should avoid?
2. What did Jesus mean by the reference to angels?
 - a) Does every child have an angel?
 - b) Whatever the meaning, what did He imply with this reference?
3. Why did Jesus come?

- a) How important is one soul to Him?
- b) How important is the soul of a child to Him?
- 4. Does the Father notice even one little one that goes astray?
- 5. Based on verses 1–14, what does Jesus think of children?
 - a) Do you think the same way?
 - b) If not, why not?
 - (1) What do you need to do to change?
 - (2) If you do not love children, can you be saved?

II. Matthew 18.15–20 | Seek Reconciliation

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. 18 Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

- A. Notice that this continues the previous subject.
 - 1. First, Jesus warned us against causing children to sin.
 - 2. Here He taught the importance of our brother’s soul.
- B. Why is this so important?
 - 1. He does not want even one child to perish.
 - 2. Likewise, He does not want one adult to perish.
- C. What should you do when a brother sins against you?
- D. How does heaven react to the brother who did not accept reconciliation?
 - 1. How do we know that heaven will do what we do?

2. What did Jesus say is His part in this effort?

III. Matthew 18.21–35 | Seek Forgiveness

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

- A. We often fault Peter for thinking that he sounded generous but could we forgive someone seven times?
- B. Did Jesus mean that we should count off 490 times and then withhold forgiveness?
- C. With His story, what did Jesus teach?
 - 1. Can we be forgiven, if we do not forgive?
 - 2. Which is greater?
 - a) Our brother’s sin against us?
 - b) Our sin against God?