

Matthew 18

Introduction.

- I. This evening I would like for us to discuss one of the great chapters in the gospel of Matthew and the New Testament - Matthew the 18th chapter. Time will not permit us to study every verse, but I would like for us to study some of the great lessons in chapter.
- II. Please listen as I read the first six verses of this chapter.

18:1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: 6 But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and [that] he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

I. Disciples Were Quarreling

- A. Misconception of kingdom and what determined greatness.
- B. Greatness is determined by childlike humility
 1. Not best sermons, not best song leader, not most eloquent prayers, not ability to give largest gifts.
 2. Not being an officer in the church, not wealth, education, power
- C. We must be humble and teachable as a child - completely submissive to parents - look to them for direction.
 1. Pride keeps some from coming to Christ at all. Accepting one who was born in a manger and was poor and died on cross.
 2. It keeps some from serving Christ - not willing to do humble, menial tasks with no glory.
 3. It keeps some from learning - being receptive to the truth. They do what seems right to them.
- D. Matt. 23:12; James 4:6.

II. Causing Others To Stumble

- A. Little ones who believe on me - not talking about just children. (1 Jn. 2:1, 18).
- B. Most serious matter to cause even one to fall - "Great millstone"
- C. 1 Cor. 10:31, 32. Oh, how we need to be careful about our influence. Little and big eyes are always on

III. What To Do If A Brother Sins Against Us

18:15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he hear [thee] not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

A. We must not ignore sin.

1. For our sake - create bitterness and anger within.
2. And the sake of our brother - they are not led to repentance.

B. If a brother sins against us, Jesus did not tell him (1) to stew with anger or retaliate (2) be indifferent (3) Gossip and run the person down. (4) Run to the elders

C. We must go to our brother. **Review Steps**

IV. Forgiveness

18:21 Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

Most people have a hard time forgiving one time. Some thought 3 times was very generous. Note Peter believed 7 times. Keeping score shows we have not totally forgiven.

A. **Relate Parable** - Matt. 18:23-35.

1. Stress the king forgave the sermon a huge debt that never could be paid - no strings attached. Servant was hopelessly in debt - no such thing as filing bankruptcy or reconstructing debt.
2. This servant could not even find it in his heart to forgive a trivial sum.

B. Lessons

1. We have been forgiven a debt we could never paid.
 - a. He has wiped our slate clean - given us a new start.
 - b. We did not earn this forgiveness. It was given freely.
2. We must be forgiving of others.
 - a. "I could never forgive that person." - We better pray then that we do not sin.

b. See Matt. 6:9, 14, 15; Eph. 4:32.

Conclusion

- I. Some of us will miss heaven, not because we have done some great sin in the eyes of men, but because we refused to forgive. (Jas. 2:13).
- II. It is essential that we accept God's forgiveness and forgive others from the heart.
 - A. I would urge you to accept God's forgiveness without doubt or reservation.
 - B. I would urge you to make right the wrongs you and committed against others and also go to those who sinned against you.
- III. It is time for the invitation. Some ask, "How can I be forgiven?"
 - A. Those outside of Christ receive forgiveness by turning from sin and being baptized.
 - B. Those in Christ receive forgiveness by turning from sin and beseeching the Father for mercy. God extends mercy if we are penitent and merciful to others.
 - C. Come as we stand and sing.