

4/15/18

**Matthew 18**

Chapter 18 brings us to the Lord's fourth major discourse. The topic of the discourse is prompted by the disciple's desire to know who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

1. They had received different privileges and had been with the Lord now about three years.
2. It was only natural as far as the sinful nature to initiate a pecking order.

The entire chapter focuses on the relationship of Christians to each other through humility, thinking of others more highly than self and a willingness to impart loving forgiveness, thereby being the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.

\* All the events from the question on paying taxes to the Parable of the wicked servant take place in one day. Matt. 17:24-18:35

**18:1-6      The question of greatness.**

\* The parallel passages. Mk. 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46-48

**18:1**      The disciples asked the question.

- 1) "At that time", when Peter sought the tax money from the fish's mouth. vs. 1a
- 2) "The disciples came to Jesus." vs. 1a  
\* Jesus had already mentioned His death two times. Matt. 16:21; 17:22
- 3) They asked, "saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" vs. 1b-c

- a) Mark tells us that Jesus asked them their conversation when they were in the house at Capernaum and they remained silent. Mk. 9:33-34
- b) Luke says "Jesus perceived the thoughts of their hearts." Lk. 9:47
- c) This conversation seemed to preoccupy them very much.

**18:2-3**      The Lord Jesus answered the question.

- 1) Jesus chooses the perfect object to illustrate disciple greatness, "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in their midst." vs. 2
  - a) Some think Peter's son in the house, this is speculation.
  - b) "Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms." Mk. 9:36
- 2) Jesus is speaking to His disciples, think about the words, "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." vs. 3
  - a) The word converted "strephe", means to turn one's self around, to change one's mind regarding ambition for greatness. Jn. 3:3
  - b) The lesson "as a little children" refers to being humble, teachable and trusting.
  - c) Jesus said to His disciples, "You will by no means", a double negative, "enter the kingdom of heaven."

**18:4-6** The one who is the greatest.

- 1) Jesus makes the concluding statement, “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” vs. 4
  - a) The one who humbles himself like a little child is the greatest.
  - b) The disciples would have to turn from pride and envy to humility and servanthood. 1Pet. 5:5-6
  - c) Pride goes before destruction. Prov. 16:18
  - d) Let him who thinks...1Cor. 10:12
- 3) The truth of receiving another believer in true humility, “Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.” vs. 5

\* In “My name” speaks of His nature, love and compassion.
- 4) The severe judgement over one who would lead a believer who believes in Jesus to sin, “But 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.” vs. 6
  - a) To sin means to cause a believer who believes in Jesus to sin, losing their innocence and practices sin, how much more a child.
  - b) One put it this way, “This verse and the next contemplate the possibility of a “littleone” caused to stumbel and lost

from the life of discipship.” (The Gospel of Matthew, R.T France: 684)

- c) The punishment by a stonemill around the neck to drown in the depth of the sea was an extreme way of execution, yet it is nothing to what awaits him or her at the White Throne.
- c) The milestone “mulos” was a huge stone that a donkey or ox turn to grind wheat.
 

\* You were sure not to come up and no one of the family would be able to bury you!

**18:7-14** The warning against offenses to one of God’s children.

\* The parallel passages. Mk 9:42-48; Lk 17:12

**18:7** The warning to those in the world.

- 1) The proclamation, “Woe to the world because of offenses!” vs. 7a
  - a) The word “Woe” stands for severe warning and judgment.
  - b) The world speaks of the unregenerate population, those not born again disciples of Jesus. Eph. 2:1-2
  - c) The word offenses “skandalon”, means a the movable stick or trigger of a trap, in other words any impediment place to cause a believer to stumble or stray from Christ.
- 2) The individual judgment, “For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” vs. 7b-c

- a) The “offenses must come”, the godless world is bent toward opposing God,
- b) “But woe to the man”, the individual who destroys or leads one astray from Christ.
  - 1)) Eternity is the emphasis in the text.
  - 2)) School educators, teachers, who destroy the faith of so many or those who would corrupt the innocence and pure, teaching them evil.

**18:8-9** The severity of sin in a persons life.

- 1) Jesus said that sin is eternally destructive, “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, “. vs. 8
  - a) Jesus is not speaking literally, but figuratively to emphasize the importance of eternity.
  - b) Jesus mentioned this already. Matt. 5:29-30
  - c) This is the first time everlasting fire is mentioned in Matthew.
- 2) Jesus repeats Himself for emphasis teaching that sin manifests itself in our members because of evil hearts, “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.” vs. 9

- a) Jesus is teaching that nothing is worth being cast into hell fire, literally Gehenna for eternity separated from God.
- b) Gehenna is the Lake of Fire created for Satan and his angels. Matt. 25:41
- b) The word Sheol in Hebrew and Hades in Greek are the same place and temporary for all who died before Christ.
- c) Prior to the resurrection of Jesus Sheol or Hades was a two-fold compartment, the place of comfort, the place of torment.
- d) The place of comfort is also called the Bosom of Abraham and paradise.
- e) After the death of Jesus, He went down to Hades and preached to the prisoners and took them to heaven, transferring Paradise to the third heaven. Eph. 4:8-10: Col. 2:15; 1Pet. 3:19-21
- f) Now Sheol or Hades is one compartment for all who die without Jesus, to await the White Thron Judgment and be cast in the Lake of Fire.
- g) The pit, shaft or bottomless pit is the place of incarcerated spirits, the origin of the Anti-christ and where Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Rev. 8:1, 2, 11; 11:7, 8; 20:1
- h) Tartarus is the place of evil angels chained in darkness reserved for judgment. 2Pet. 2:4
- i) Sheol, Hades, death, the Beast and false prophet and every one judged at the

White Throne will all be cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev. 19:20; 20:15

**18:10-11** The warning against demeaning a believer.

1) The stern warning, “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.” vs. 10

a) To take heed “horao” means to beware.

b) To not despise “kataphoneo”, to disdain with contempt a believer, looking down or to think down on a believer, as having no value or importance.

c) Their angels watch them, this has been used to teach the doctrine of guardian angels by some, but the “little ones” in context is not children, but a believer. vs. 10

\* Angels are ministering spirit to the heirs of salvation. Ps. 103:20; Heb. 1:14; 13:2

2) The reason for the stern warning is due to the purpose behind the mission of Jesus to save the lost, “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.” vs. 11

\* Some omit it in view of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but I accept it and not as an interpolation. Lk. 19:10

**18:12-14** The Parable of the lost sheep.

\* The parallel passage. Lk 15:3-7

1) The parable is in the form of a rhetorical question, having only one correct answer, yes, ““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?” vs. 12

\* The picture of Jesus the Good Shepherd seeking out lost sinners. Jn. 10

2) Jesus rejoices over the repentance of one lost sheep, “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.” vs. 13

\* Jesus spoke three parables, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost Son, the angels rejoice over one sinner. Lk. 15

3) The lost condition of sinner is their own doing, “Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” vs. 14

a) God is not willing that any perish. 2Pet. 3:9

b) God does not force sinners to repent, their refusal to repent results in their eternal perdition.

**18:15-20** The disciplinary actions for a sinning brother.

\* The parallel passage. Lk. 17:3

**18:15** The first step for reconciliation.

- 1) The responsibility is on the innocent or injured person to seek out the guilty, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” vs. 15a-b
- 2) The purpose is for reconciliation and forgiveness not revenge “If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” vs. 15c
  - a) The word gain is a commercial and wealth term.
  - b) If there is an acknowledgment, confession, forgiveness, then valuable reconciliation is accomplished with a brother, Ja. 5:19-20; 1Pet. 4:8

**18:16** The second step for reconciliation.

- 1) Having refused to acknowledge his fault, the same person is to go back, “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more.” vs. 16a-b  
\* Deut. 19:15; 1Tim. 5:19
- 2) To establish a biblical witness, “that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’” vs. 16c  
\* To reconcile him in the spirit of meekness. Gal. 6:1-2

**18:17** The third and fourth step for reconciliation.

- 1) Third, a person is to tell it to the church, “And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church.” vs. 17a-b

- a) The church representatives such as Pastor and elders. Acts 15
  - b) This is to minimize the embarrassment and stumbling in continued fellowship.
  - c) If he refuses to heed the Pastor and elders then they may be brought before the church congregation.
- 3) The finally, if they do still refuse, they are to be excommunicated, “But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” vs. 17c-d  
\* Examples of church discipline. 1Cor. 5:1-5; 2Cor. 2:3-11; 2Thess. 3:14-15
- a) The church body from pulpit is the last resort, if there is no repentance and refusal to leave after having been excommunicated.
  - b) “Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also **may fear**.” 1Tim. 5:20

**18:18** The vested authority for church discipline.

- 1) Jesus vests this authority to every believer, “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.” vs. 18
  - a) Binding and loosening means allowing and disallowing refers to the decisions made according to Scripture affirming the disciplinary action.
  - b) The First church council. Acts 15

- 2) This is often taught as authority to restrict the activity of Satan.
  - a) The context is the discipline of a sinful believer.
  - b) Again it is completely out of context.

**18:19-20** The vested authority for church discipline reaffirmed.

- 1) The standard is the word of God, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask.” vs. 19a
  - a) The word anything means the business at hand, church discipline, a judicial term.
  - b) This is not personal request, but prayer for the discipline person and situation.
- 2) It is confirmed and permitted by the Father, “It will be done for them by My Father in heaven.” vs. 19b
  - \* To agree is to be in harmony as musical instrument.
- 3) Jesus is the head of the church directing and guiding it, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” vs. 20
  - \* The context is church discipline and the actions determined for correction, taken according to the Scriptures.

**18:21-35** **The question on forgiving others.**

\* The parallel passage. Lk. 17:4

**18:21** The question is asked by Peter.

- 1) The heart of confronting for reconciliation being forgiveness, as we have been forgiven Peter once again takes the lead, “Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” vs. 21
  - a) The section appears only in Matthew. vs. 21-35
  - b) Humility is the foundation for forgiveness which is the evidence of greatness.
  - c) Peter’s declaration went beyond the Rabbinical teaching of the times. Amos 1:3, Job 33:29,30
  - d) Perhaps thinking to prove himself spiritual.

**18:22** The reproof of Peter by Jesus.

- 1) Jesus gave the higher authority to follow and obey, “Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you.” vs. 22a-b
- 2) Jesus shows Peter that he is not as spiritual as he thought or wanted people to thought, “up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” vs. 22c-d
  - a) Jesus shows forgiveness is not a matter of arithmetic, but a heart problem.
  - b) Some point out the same measure declared by Lamech regarding his vengeance, 7 x 70. Gen. 4:24
  - c) **Some commentators say this is to read 7x7?**

**18:23-35** The Parable of the unforgiving servant.

**18:23-27** The Parable is an illustration of the salvation message of God forgiving our sins.

- 1) The Parable is found only in Matthew, “Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.” vs. 23
  - a) The Kingdom of heaven indicates the period from the First Coming to the Second Coming to establish the Kingdom Age.
  - b) The King is Jesus.
  - c) The servants are the believers of Jesus.
    - \* Here we have a court official not a common slave.
- 2) This represents every whose sins are forgiven, a great debt, “And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.” vs. 24
  - \* The horrendous debt owed was 10-20 million dollars.
- 3) This represents every sinner unable to repay for their sins, “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.” vs. 25
  - 1) The debt was to be paid by selling his family and possessions, not able to pay debt.
  - 2) According to the law. Ex. 22:3; Lev. 25:39, 47

**18:26-27** The pleading of the servant to have an opportunity to pay the debt.

- 1) The pleading of the servant, “The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’” vs. 26
  - a) The servant is brought to his master and gave outward evidence of humility. vs. 26
  - b) The servant gave his word to repay the debt.
- 2) The pity of the King, “Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.” vs. 27
  - a) The master is moved with compassion and forgive all.
  - b) He made the debt disappear completely.

**18:28** The ingenuitous repentance of the servant.

- 1) The phrase “but the servant” marks the sharp contrast to the mercy he had received. vs. 28a
- 2) He searched out one who owed him money, “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.” vs. 28a
  - \* A denarii was a day's wages, three months wages. Matt. 20:2
- 3) He was ruthless, “And he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’” vs. 28b-d

- a) He was unwilling to have compassion and forgive as had been done to him, refusing to forgive.
- b) Pennies in comparison to the millions forgiven him.
- c) To take a person by the throat was a practice permitted by Roman law and dragged to the magistrate.

**18:29-30** The fellowservant pleaded to be patient.

- 1) The debtor pleaded with the same word he had to his master, “So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’” vs. 29  
\* In hope of receiving pity from the servant.
- 2) The servant was unmoved, brutle, “And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.” vs. 30  
\* He manifested his pride instead of humility, uncompassion and impressed only with his thought of greatness.

**18:31-35** A fellowservant witnessed the injustice.

- 1) A servant was observing all and knowing all that had been forgiven him and rightly accused him before his master, “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.” vs. 31
- 2) The master recalled the servant, “Then his master, after he had called him, said to him,

‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.’” vs. 32

- a) He accused him of being wicked, his heart was evil.
  - b) He reminded the evil servant of merciful privilege he had received, being forgiven all because he begged the master.
- 3) The master pointed out his personal responsibility, to forgive as he was forgiven, ‘Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’” vs. 33
- a) He had not excuse in what he did to his follow man.
  - b) He could make no defense before his master.
- 4) The master declared the consequences of his evil heart, “And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.” vs. 34
- a) When we have a guilty conscience, there will be a lack of peace and joy, failing health, even mental instability. Matt. 4:24; 8:6; 14:24
  - b) Fear of looking for God’s fiery indignation to be cast into Gehenna.
- 5) The application is to the disciples, one who has received forgiveness, not the unbeliever, “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.” vs. 35

- a) This is nothing new, but taught in the Old and New Testament. Ezk. 18:24-26;  
Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-14,  
19; Ja. 2:13; 1Pet. 3:7
- b) The woman at Simon's house is a perfect example, as well as the Pharisee and the tax collector praying. Lk. 7:45-48; Lk. 18:10-14