



The Gospel of Matthew

"Little Ones & the Kingdom"

Matthew 18:1-14 (pt 2)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,

and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;

"but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.

"Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!

"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or feet, to be cast into the eternal fire.

"And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell.

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.

"What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?"

"And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

"Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish."

Matthew 18:1-14
(NASB)



"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

- *"little ones"* – not children but disciples; in particular those lowly in outward status and significance
- we must receive all such "little ones" and avoid at all costs causing any of these to stumble




"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

1. Watch yourself ruthlessly

- take drastic measures to avoid stumbling

it is easier to avoid temptation than to resist it




"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

1. Watch yourself ruthlessly

- take drastic measures to avoid stumbling
- realize what is at stake – heaven & hell

An evidence of salvation is the ongoing mortification of sin



"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

2. Watch one another lovingly

- do not despise "little ones" but accept them regardless of their status

these little ones matter passionately to God




"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

2. Watch one another lovingly

- do not neglect little ones but imitate God's pastoral heart for all His sheep

we are to lovingly pursue any disciple who strays from following Christ



"Little Ones" & the Kingdom

Implications

1. The danger of isolation
2. The necessity of mutual care

Hebrews 3:12-13

"Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you and evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.

But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called today, lest any on of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."