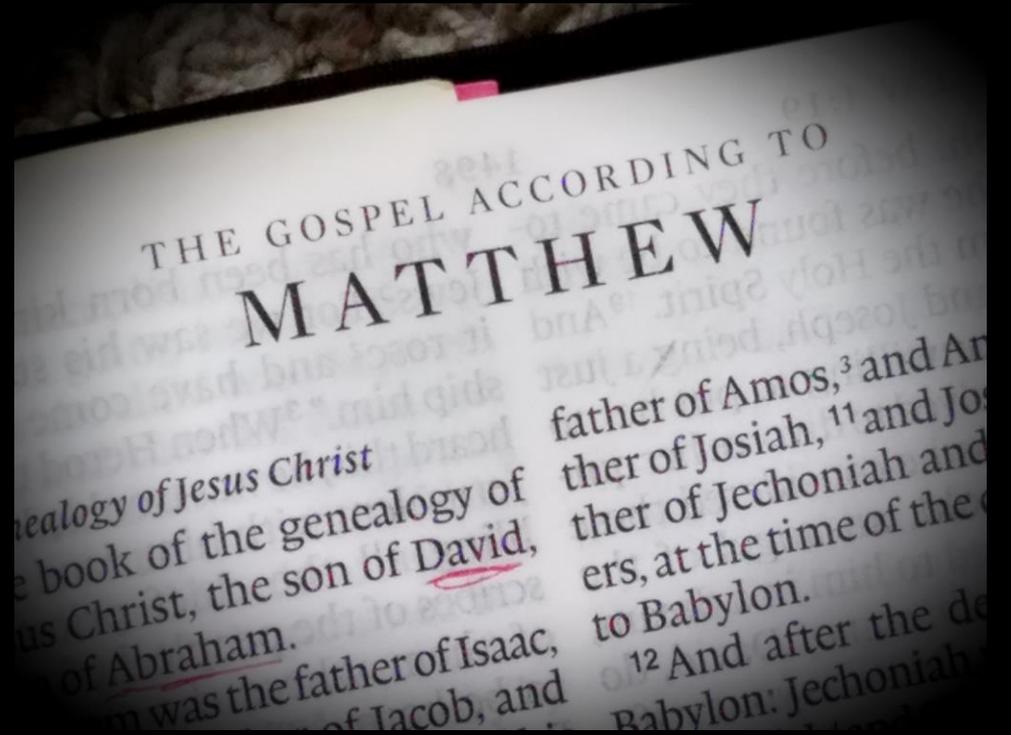


# Verse by Verse

## Matthew 18



# Christ's Teaching in Matthew

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## Christ's Teaching in Matthew:

- Sermon on the Mount                      Matthew 5 – 7
- Commissioning of the Twelve            Matthew 10
- Parables of the Kingdom                  Matthew 13
- Message on Community Life              Matthew 18
- Seven Woes                                  Matthew 23
- Olivet Discourse                             Matthew 24 – 25

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# Matthew 18 Introduction

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- Again, everything in this chapter deals with community life.
- A church functions at its best when each person is committed to living under Christ's authority.
- The church also has to be committed to working as a group toward common goals.
- This is especially true when dealing with sin, restoration and forgiveness.

# Matthew 18    Key Verses

# Matthew 18 Key Verses

- Matthew 18:2 (ESV)

Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

# Matthew 18 Key Verses

- Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

# Matthew 18 Outline

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1. Greatness 18:1-6
2. Temptation 18:7-9
3. The Lost Sheep 18:10-14
4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20
5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

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- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?

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- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?
- Innocence
- Romans 16:19 (ESV)

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?
- Not afraid to ask for what they need
- Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ...

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?
- Not afraid to ask for what they need
- Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?
- Dependence, trust
- Psalm 131 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things  
too great and too marvelous for me.

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

- 18:3 “turn and become like children,” in what way?
  - Dependence, trust
  - Psalm 131 (ESV)
- <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
- <sup>3</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD  
from this time forth and forevermore.

# 1. Greatness 18:1-6

- 18:5-6 “whoever causes one of these little ones to sin”
- Since children are so trusting, people can take advantage of them – and those with evil motives do.
- Jesus has some harsh words for such people.
- He continues the theme of temptation in the next section.

## 2. Temptation 18:7-9

## 2. Temptation 18:7-9

- 18:7 it is necessary that temptations come
- There is no way to avoid them completely in the fallen world in which we live.
- That is no excuse to cave in to temptation or to tempt anyone else.
- Again Jesus has harsh words – like “eternal fire” (v.8) and “Gehenna of fire” (v.9).

## 2. Temptation 18:7-9

- 18:8-9 your hand or your foot ... cut it off ... your eye ... tear it out
- Sin is serious. No solution is too radical for Jesus.
- Contrary to what some believe, Jesus was never soft on sin.
- His grace and severity are compatible.

## 2. Temptation 18:7-9

- Alas, sin goes deeper than the hand, foot or eye – it goes all the way to the heart.
- David got it right in **Psalm 51:10** (ESV) when he prayed,  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.

## 2. Temptation 18:7-9

- Alas, sin goes deeper than the hand, foot or eye – it goes all the way to the heart.
- And a new heart is what God promises in **Ezekiel 36:26-27**,  
<sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

### 3. The Lost Sheep 18:10-14

### 3. The Lost Sheep 18:10-14

- 18:10 The “little ones” Jesus mentions here can be literal children, or weak, insignificant or immature Christians.
- Jesus promises to seek out the straying brother or sister.
- In practice, he often uses other members of the church.

### 3. The Lost Sheep 18:10-14

- It is a joyful thing when people who have turned away turn back to Jesus.
- It is similar to the joy of someone's conversion.
- Luke 15:7 (ESV)

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20

- Sometimes Christians sin against one another.
- A person may not fully realize what they have done.
- This is the way Jesus tells us to deal with it.

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20

- Further, when we cannot exactly pinpoint a “sin,” but we are aware something really bothers us, this works too.
- The person has a chance to explain him or herself, or receive some kind of healthy correction.
- We should all want to grow, so everyone wins if we do this.

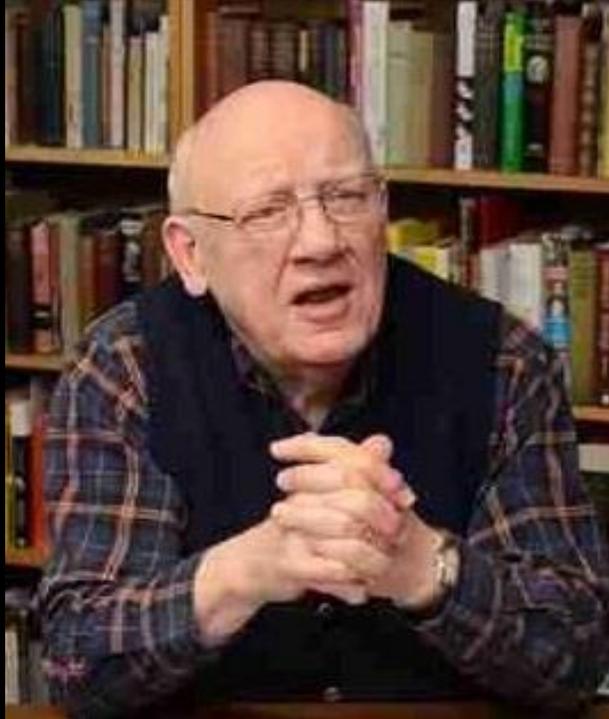
## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20

- I have personally seen this method work well in a wide range of situations – from very minor to quite serious.
- But it is not foolproof.

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20

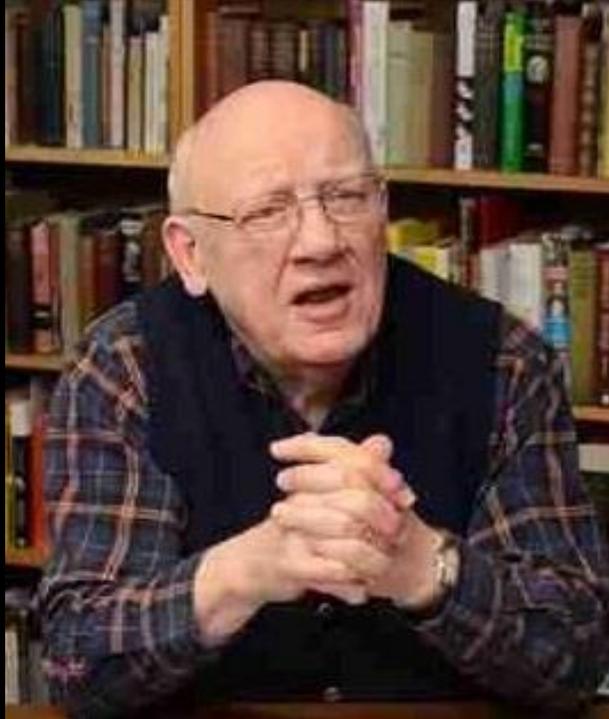
- A person may just leave the church, removing themselves from that church's authority structure.
- In practice, this removes any further accountability.
- There is not much we can do except go back to the previous section about [The Lost Sheep](#).

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20



- Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019) summed up this process nicely:
  1. Keep the matter private.
  2. Ask for help from others.
  3. Ask the church for help.
  4. Keep the local church spiritual.

## 4. When Someone Sins 18:15-20



*The motive for church discipline is love: we are seeking to help a sinning brother. Since Christ is in the midst of the church, it is also important that the church be obedient and pure. Our attitude should not be that of a policeman out to arrest a criminal, but rather that of a physician seeking to heal a wound in the body of Christ, a wound that will spread sickness and death if left alone.*

– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019)

## 4. When Someone Sins      18:15-20

- 18:18-20      Jesus assures us that God hears our prayers and works through the local church.
- He puts his authority behind our actions and his power behind our prayers.

## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

- 18:21-22 There were rabbis, in the Talmud for example, that recommended forgiving three times.
- By that standard, Peter was offering a lot – seven times!
- Jesus' response of seventy-seven times is closer to one translation of 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV), which says,
- [Love] does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

- 18:27 “out of pity” is from a word we have already seen Matthew use about Jesus.
- 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
- 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- 15:32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people ...”

## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

- 18:28 *denarius* = a standard day's wage
- 100 denarii = 1 *mina* = about 4 months wages
- 300 denarii = 3 *minas* = wages for a full year.
- 60 *minas* = 1 *talent* = wages for about 20 years (Also see ESV footnote.)
- The full forgiven debt (v.24) is 10,000 talents.
- At 300 denarii per year, it would take an average worker 200,000 years to pay off.

## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

- Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary sees three main themes coming out of this parable.
  1. God's boundless grace
  2. The absurdity of spurning that grace
  3. The frightful fate awaiting the unforgiving



## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

*Jesus sees no incongruity in the actions of a heavenly Father who forgives so bountifully and punishes so ruthlessly, and neither should we. Indeed, it is precisely because he is a God of such compassion and mercy that he cannot possibly accept as his those devoid of compassion and mercy.*

*– Don Carson, Trinity  
Evangelical Divinity School*



## 5. Forgiveness 18:21-35

- Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.<sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

# Matthew 18    What We Just Read

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# Matthew 18    A Prayer

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- Heavenly Father,
- Teach us to exercise the faith of a child toward you. Help us to be innocent, trusting and not afraid to ask you for what we need.
- Help us to take sin very seriously, so that we will carefully avoid temptation. Further please prevent us from tempting others through our words and actions.
- On the contrary, let us join with you in going out to seek the one lost sheep of your flock who is going astray.

# Matthew 18    A Prayer

- When we feel that someone has sinned against us, or has need of some form of correction, give us the power to not respond out of anger or frustration.
- Help us rather to correct that person with the goal of restoration in mind. And remind us to follow your instructions as to the best way to make that restoration a reality.

# Matthew 18    A Prayer

- And then, most of all, help us to be forgiving people, always aware of how much we have been forgiven by you.
- You truly have released us from a debt we could never pay, by having Jesus Christ pay for our sins on the cross.
- May our lives reflect your grace, your goodness and your compassion.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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- Carson, D. A. (1994). "Matthew" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition, New Testament*. Barker and Kohlengerger III, eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.