

Lesson D12: Little Children & Lost Sheep

Matthew 18:1-14

I. THE QUESTION OF VALUE (18:1)

A. Am I Important? —to God, to others

B. How Do I Rank?—compared to others

C. What Does Heaven Value?—Different cultures value different things.

1. Humility is Beautiful to God (Isa 66:2)

2. Humility is Necessary for Salvation (Rom 3:10; Eph 2:8; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5)

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN (18:2-3)

A. The Definition of Little Ones ()—literal children, those who are weak, all Christians

B. The Concern of God—Protector of the weak, Defender of widows, Father of orphans

1. Don't Despise Children. (10; Lev 19:13-14, 29, 32-34; 1 Cor 1:26-29)

Don't show contempt, look down on, dislike or undervalue the weak.

2. Don't Mislead Children. (6) Don't use your power to deceive, use or abuse.

3. Do Receive Children. (5)—welcome, associate with, care for

III. **THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUALS** (18:12-14)—the Shepherd seeks one lost sheep

God is *personal* and *relational*.

- A. **He Notices that one sheep is missing.** He is watchful.
- B. **He Knows each sheep by name.** (Jn 10:3)—He relates to you individually, not merely as part of the herd.
- C. **He Pursues each stray.** He *takes action*. He *goes after* the stray. Each soul is precious to God.
- D. **He Rejoices over each restoration.** He doesn't shame or punish; He *celebrates!*

IV. **THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLINESS** (7-9)

- A. **Temptations Are Inevitable.**
- B. **Individuals Are Responsible.**
 - 1. **For Ourselves** (Mat 7:5; Ps 4:4 and 139:23-24)—Take drastic measures to cut sin out of your own life.
 - 2. **For Others** (Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 8:13)—Don't cause others to stumble.
 - a. our **example/witness**
 - b. our **influence**
 - c. our **authority** (Ezek 34)
- C. **Sin Is Deadly Serious.** (Jn 14:15; Eph 5:6; Gal 5:19:2; Heb 12:14; 1 Jn 3:9)—It caused the death of Jesus on the cross.
 - 1. **Hell** is real.
 - 2. **Judgment** is coming.
 - 3. Jesus **paid** the ultimate price to redeem us.