

Overview

1-V1 The fallen human nature we are born with wants to establish such things as: Who gets the money? Who gets the limelight? Who gets to be in charge? Who deserves and who does not deserve? These are not proper motives in the Kingdom of God where the greatest is the servant of all. The disciples asked Jesus, "Which of us is _____ in the Kingdom?"

2-V2-4 Jesus illustrates his answer by placing a small _____ before them. First of all he calls their attitude a _____ that they need to _____ away from. Then teaches them that those who have the _____ attitude of a small _____ are greatest to Him.

3-V5-6 Jesus tells them that if they treat a child with the same honor and deference as they treat a powerful, wealthy and important man or woman, they are welcoming _____. He warns them that it would be better for them to be thrown into the _____ with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones (which includes baby Christians and people looking Jesus over) to lose _____ faith because they were as selfishly ambitious as non-Christians. (16:24)

4-V7-9 People are going to think in their secret heart that they are great (like God) to do whatever they please. Jesus comments that _____ to do wrong is inevitable-- but it better not be one of them who does the tempting by their attitudes and actions, example and persuasion. It would be better to cut off parts of their life permeated by sin and to enter heaven with one _____, one _____, and half _____ than to be thrown into the unquenchable _____ of hell.

5-V10 The old nature is inclined to be "full of itself" and to _____ what it considers lesser than them – "the _____ ones." In the Kingdom of God there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female," nor greater or lesser. (Galatians 3:28) Jesus tell us that the _____ watching over these little ones are always in the presence of our _____ Father, speaking for them.

6-V12-14 What matters when this world is no more is who has joined heaven. Every soul is of equal importance to the Father. No one is despised. Each one is worth a maximum of effort and risk and sacrifice made to save it. He does not want even _____ of these little ones considered unimportant by sinful men to _____. Jesus illustrates this by speaking of the shepherd leaving _____ sheep to go search in the hills for _____ lost one who wandered off.

7-V15-18 A church community that does not deal well with offenses is too crippled by fighting among themselves to go out in the hills for the lost sheep. Jesus exhorts us to deal with someone who _____ against them by going to them, telling them how much we care about our relationship with them and then pointing out their _____. Getting these things cleared up is so important for the health of the whole community (it only takes a little yeast to corrupt the whole loaf), that Jesus tells us to go back with one or two _____ to put more pressure on them to say they're sorry and change their ways. If they still won't repent, to take it to the _____ (its leaders) and then as a church to treat that person as a _____ or _____ tax collector.

8-V19-20 "I tell you this: If two of you _____ here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will _____ it for you. For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there _____ them." Getting rid of offenses and coming to agreement among ourselves precedes answered prayer.

9-V21 The rabbis said Jews were required to forgive 4 times and then they could wash their hands of a persistent offender in their lives. Peter wants to be better than that so he suggests we forgive _____ times. However, Jesus tells us we have to forgive _____ times _____ which means we must be like our Father in heaven who forgives us as long as we live.

Word Study

• GREATEST • AGREE • LOST SHEEP • ANGELS • HAND-FOOT-EYE • CHILD

1.V 1 _____ The world is always establishing who is great and non-great. Who deserves and who does not deserve. Who is good and who is not so good. Who is important and who is expendable. Who we judge is worth making an effort for. The Christian may not be able to do much about the situation—but he would say, as God says, "No, not one should be treated as a non-person, as a statistic, as not mattering. I must speak up and I will find some way to help." There is the story of the man throwing starfish stranded on the beach back into the ocean. Another man said, "You are wasting your time. What you are doing doesn't matter." The merciful man threw one more starfish back into the sea and said, "It matters to him." The Jewish spiritual leaders thought many people unworthy of salvation.

2.V2 _____ A child is weak. It lacks the knowledge, strength and resources to survive on its own. A child is humble because he cannot be otherwise. Jesus teaches us that those who will be saved come to know that they are like a little child. Father God is great and in control and they are weak, poor and needy. "You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." (Revelation 3:17) **LITTLE ONES** (v6) The Greek word is *Micron*, which means small. The word used for child, *Paidion*, refers to a biological child. When Jesus says not to damage the micron's faith, he is speaking of new believers, or the weaker brethren who are immature in faith but are now the children of God.

3.V8-10 _____ Jesus is not talking about literally cutting off members of our body. He is talking about the untransformed parts of our mind, will and habits of life that direct our hands, feet, and eyes. He is talking about how we see people. How we touch their lives. Who we choose to walk with. Better some re-thinking and radical pruning of our lives to be sure we don't hinder people's access to God, than risk the unquenchable fires of hell.

4.V10 _____ It appears that every one of us has what is sometimes called a "guardian angel." "But angels are only servants. They are spirits sent from God to care for those who will receive salvation." Hebrews 1:14 The angels fight the devil and demons on our behalf. "And they will see the Son of Man arrive in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with the sound of a mighty trumpet blast, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven." Matthew 24:30-31

5.V12-14 _____ The good shepherd counts his sheep as they come into the fenced pasture for the night. He also uses his rod to examine each one for limps, cuts, parasites, and sickness. If there is one missing, he goes looking for it. Jesus often uses this image to teach us that every soul is great and indispensable in God's eyes. This is good news – this is grace. My God is always trying to get me found and safe at home. The greater picture is that the Church is commissioned to go into all the world (to every living person) and tell the good news about Jesus: forgiveness; resurrection from the dead; friendship with the Father. Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus says we welcome him when we welcome the non-great.

6.V19 _____ Jesus tells us not to come into the presence of the Father without first being reconciled to our brother who has something against us. (Matthew 5:23-24) "Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too." (Mark 11:24-25) "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity...for there the Lord commands the blessing—Life forever more." (Psalm 133)

What does this Scripture say to you? _____