

Thursday, December 5, 2024

God's Heart for the Lost (Matthew 18:10-14)

99 Sermon Series 2025

Introduction

Have you ever lost something precious? Perhaps a wallet, a phone, or even a child in a crowded place? Remember the panic and the single-minded determination to find it? That's the kind of urgency and love Jesus describes in today's passage. He shifts the focus from humility and sin to God's relentless pursuit of the lost.

This sermon teaches us about the value of every soul and the lengths to which God goes to restore those who stray.

Point 1: Valuing Every Believer (Matthew 18:10)

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones..." (v. 10)

- **Angelic Advocacy:** Jesus reveals that angels are assigned to care for God's people, emphasizing their worth. If heaven values each believer so highly, how much more should we?
- **Despising the Vulnerable:** To despise means to think little of or disregard someone. Are there people we dismiss because they seem insignificant or unworthy of our time?
- **Practical Application:** Who in your life needs encouragement, affirmation, or protection? How can you reflect God's care for them?

Illustration: Imagine a jeweler handling a diamond with great care. Even the smallest gem is treated as priceless. That's how God views each of His children.

Point 2: The Shepherd's Pursuit of the Lost (Matthew 18:12-13)

"If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray..." (v. 12)

- **God's Relentless Love:** The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to pursue the one. This doesn't mean the ninety-nine are unimportant; it means the one in danger requires immediate attention.
- **The Joy of Restoration:** When the lost sheep is found, there is rejoicing. God delights in bringing the wayward back into His fold.
- **Practical Application:** Who is the "one" in your life? Someone you've given up on? Pray for them, reach out to them, and trust God to work through you.

Illustration: Picture a firefighter running into a burning building to save one life. The effort is worth it because every soul matters.

Point 3: Aligning with God's Will (Matthew 18:14)

"It is not the will of my Father... that one of these little ones should perish." (v. 14)

- **God's Desire for Salvation:** This verse encapsulates God's heart: He doesn't want anyone to perish. His mission is restoration and redemption.
- **Our Role in God's Mission:** As followers of Christ, we are called to reflect His heart by seeking and restoring the lost.
- **Practical Application:** How can you participate in God's mission? Through prayer, evangelism, or acts of kindness, you can help bring others back to Him.

Illustration: Imagine a family reuniting with a lost loved one. The joy, relief, and love in that moment are a glimpse of how God rejoices over every soul that returns to Him.

Conclusion

God's heart is tender toward those who have strayed, and He calls us to share in His mission of restoration. Let us reflect His compassion by valuing every believer and seeking those who are lost. Together, we can rejoice in the work of the Good Shepherd, who leaves the ninety-nine to bring back the one.