

# BENEVOLENT LOVE

*“I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” —MATTHEW 25:40*

Many people believe themselves to be misfits in society. They’re looked upon as insecure, weak, hopeless, and get rejected all the time. The measure of our love for Christ is seen in how we treat them. Everyone is of extreme value to God, and when we welcome the poor, neglected, the weak and burdened, Jesus says we are welcoming Him.

One of the best therapies for many of our own needs is in serving others, and that requires a compassionate, loving approach to anyone in need. We live in a fallen world, immersed in temptation, and with a sinful nature that is constantly battling against the Spirit. The temptation is often to look the other way, but the Spirit of Christ is lived out with a disposition of caring for others. We need to be signposts to godliness, not stumbling blocks in which we’ve grown apathetic because we’ve seen the need all too often.

In Matthew 18, Jesus told the parable of the lost sheep. “If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off” (Matthew 18:12-13). God is not willing that anyone should perish, and as Christians, we play a role in bringing the love of Christ to those in need.

On the night of His arrest, Jesus wrapped a towel around Him, knelt down before His disciples and washed their feet. This illustrated that a

life with Him is going to be a life of service. Our problem is that ninety-nine sheep are more interested in being safe and comfortable than in finding the one lost sheep that has gone astray. That's a nuisance and requires effort, but to Jesus, finding and rescuing that one little sheep is worth more than the ninety-nine that are already saved. Our attitude must be like His. "Yes, there are ninety-nine sheep here, but there's one far away, and we are not willing that any be lost."

Greatness in the kingdom of heaven is found in serving others. It's walking humbly with God and with one another. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). And that needs to be a way of life. The neglected and rejected, the lost and lonely, the weak and burdened - Jesus befriended them all.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, be in me the heart that cares and cannot look the other way. Fill me with your love and compassion and help me lead others to You. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I bringing the love of Christ into the lives of those who are in need?***