

THE WAY OF THE Kingdom

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

“Caesarea Philippi was like a red-light district in their world, and devout Jews would have avoided any contact with the despicable acts committed there. It was a city of people eagerly knocking on the doors of hell.”

- **Ray Vander Laan**, *That the World May Know*

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Matthew 16:18

Matthew 18:6-9 | Also found in Lk. 17:1-2, Mk. 9:42

⁶ “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷ Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! ⁸ If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Backdrop of Hebrew Bible Imagery: Isaiah 8, Proverbs 6

NT Hyperlink: Matthew 5:27-30

Matthew 18:10-14 | Also found in Lk. 15:4-7

¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. ^(11*) *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.* (Lk 19:10)

¹² “*What do you think?* 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?

¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

“This quiet command of *littleness*, which can be heard under and behind every story in this chapter, is the secret to the Christian ethic of community. The special Christian contribution to community is ‘passion for the individual.’ Not self-centered individualism, which is tearing modern communities apart – but *Jesus’* individual: care for the *other person*, especially the insignificant other person, the little person, (the hard-to-like person!), the poor one, the child. Jesus’ expression is literally ‘one of the *least – mikron*.’

Mikro - care is Jesus’ contribution to community building.”

- **F. Dale Bruner**, *Matthew – The Churchbook*, Vol. II (1990)

Let us consider the invitation:

- To **take sin seriously**
- To **maturity** (not stagnation)
- To **know others** (individually)
- To **know ourselves** (honestly)
 - Lifestyle of reflection, repentance