

Sunday School Lesson for March 15, 2026
Matthew 18

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this third Sunday of March, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Trey's message from Matthew, chapter seventeen where we read about the Lord Jesus' transformed appearance with Moses and Elijah, the disciples' failure to heal a demon-possessed boy, and the Lord's response; yet another reminder of His coming death and resurrection; and a question about paying taxes and the Lord's miraculous provision, our lesson today comes from chapter eighteen where the Lord answers a question about who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven--speaking of the great value of children in His answer--and a question about forgiveness that Jesus answers with a parable.

We learned from verse 22 of the previous chapter that Jesus and His disciples are back in Galilee. For the last several chapters in Matthew's gospel, you may have noticed that the disciples have been asking a lot of questions. Now, in the opening verse of chapter eighteen, they have another question to ask: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'"

It's the kind of question a guy would ask, especially if one member of your group has just been celebrated as the one upon whom the Lord would build His church and had been chosen to be part of the inner circle that was with Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead and appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. This spirit of privilege and competition will even follow into chapter twenty where we'll hear how the mother of James and John asked Jesus if her sons could sit at His right hand and His left hand when He came into His kingdom.

As they left the Mount of Transfiguration and the place where Jesus cast a demon out of a little boy when the disciples couldn't do it, they were arguing--Mark, chapter nine, verse 34--about which of **them** was the greatest?? Really? For the last couple of weeks, Jesus has told them about His "being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." But all they wanted to talk about was deciding among themselves which of them Jesus was going to choose when He set up what they thought would be the kingdom of a restored, physical Israel on earth. They still don't get it.

So, what does Jesus do? Verse two: "And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" Instead of soundly rebuking them for their ignorant, senseless pettiness, He responds patiently and tenderly. Mark even says that He took the child into His arms as if to show them who was nearest to the heart of the Lord of the kingdom of heaven.

Their very question had shown that they had no idea of what true greatness is. In order for them to reverse the current trajectory of their lives marked by the sin of pride, they had to "turn and become like children." In their present state of mind, the direction they were going in was one of great stature and significance in a temporal kingdom, but those things have no place in the kingdom of heaven. In this "turning" or "conversion"--depending on your translation of the Bible--Jesus presupposes that their initial conversion has already happened--that they **have** been born again, that they **have** been made like children, and that they **have** entered the kingdom of heaven. What He speaks of here is the continuing need for self-examination and turning away from temptations and sins like the ones the disciples were experiencing, not an entirely new conversion.

They needed to “become like children.” Children are, to a great extent, free of ambition, pride, and arrogance--three attitudes that had characterized the disciples as they argued about which if them was the greatest. If they wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven, they had to jettison and get rid of all the petty arguments about who would be the greatest and most pre-eminent and demonstrate the effectiveness of their conversion by being like children in this respect--that they rid themselves of ambition, pride, and arrogance and embrace and live out humility. If they didn't, they would be barred from entering the kingdom of heaven. In chapter nine, verse 35 of his gospel, Mark adds that Jesus said, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

Twice now, the Lord Jesus has told them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” They had been following **after** Him, but they had not been following Him, and they certainly had not been denying themselves; instead, they had been boosting their self-image by verbally competing to see which of them was the greatest.

So, there are three lessons in what Jesus said in these first four verses. First, only the lowly are permitted into the kingdom of heaven. If you're not converted from the selfish pride in your heart and become lowly, humble, and teachable like a little child, you're not getting into the kingdom of heaven.

Second, the lowliest is the greatest: “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” As they looked at the child in Jesus' arms--so innocent, unworldly, and self-unconscious, they must have wondered at the truth of what they were being told. They certainly didn't get over their pride and selfishness at once, but the image was emblazoned on their memories and the seed planted that would bear fruit in the days ahead.

For example, as you read the gospel of Matthew, where do you read about what **Matthew** said or did? Or John's gospel where he doesn't mention his own name but only refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” One

commentator adds, “So was it with them all. We must not forget that, so far as this lesson of self-denial is concerned, they were only beginners now; but after they had completed their course and received the Pentecostal seal, they did not disgrace their Teacher any more: they did then really and nobly deny self; and thus did they at last attain true greatness in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus has unambiguously answered their question about who’s the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, but He can’t leave the subject without reminding them of the treatment due to the least in the kingdom of heaven. He has shown them how to be great; He now teaches them how to treat the small. This is the third lesson in what the Lord says here. The one who makes a big deal about himself is likely to do so at the expense of those who are small in his eyes. Verse five: “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

The “little ones who believe in me” are those who are young in the faith and spiritual immature--humble, teachable, and vulnerable, and what He says about them comes from the very depths of His heart. He’s not satisfied with making sure these “little ones” receive as good a welcome as the greatest, they should have a special welcome and receive special care because they are “small:” “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” Just as Jesus received the meek and lowly, this little child, and all those who were heavy-ladened, we should receive them as well in meekness and lowliness, modesty and humility. This is a powerful message that needs to be heard and heeded by parents, teachers, and all those of influence in the church and in society in their relations with the weak and poor.

So precious are these new believers and little children to the Lord Jesus that He follows this message with a blunt, stark warning for those who would harm or hinder these “little ones”--verse six: “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great

millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” This “causing to sin” is the exact opposite of “receiving” a child in the Name of Jesus.

When the “little ones” that Jesus is speaking of here--both little in age and little in spiritual standing and experience--when these little ones are not received with the love of Jesus but neglected, ignored, rejected, abused, or in any other way deprived of or denied the love of Jesus, causing them to turn from Christ or stumble in their faith, no punishment is too great. In this case, the punishment is having a millstone tied around the offender’s neck and being drowned in the depth of the sea.

A millstone was a large, circular stone used for grinding grain that could have weighed well over a thousand pounds. The clear image from this picture is that, once the rope is tied around the offender’s neck and the millstone dropped into the water, there’s no possibility of coming out alive or recovering the body to bury it, and the fear of drowning only multiplied the horror of the penalty for causing “one of these little ones who believe in me to sin.” The Lord Jesus says that it would be better for the person who would cause such spiritual harm to experience this gruesome death in order to avoid committing such a grievous sin against one of the His precious children.

So zealous is He about this that Jesus continues in verse seven: “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

Temptations to sin will be with us as long as we live in this physical world, for such is the depravity of our humanity, but woe to you if you're the source of that temptation that leads others to sin. As one commentator puts it, "Man's heart is evil, his tendencies are evil, temptation is strong. Satan is active; all these forces combine to bring about a [devastating] result."

Back in chapter twelve, Jesus denounced the Jewish religious leaders who said that the power behind Jesus' miracles was the prince of demons. As He demolished their reasoning, He reminded them that--verse thirty--: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." Those who cause one of these little ones who believe in Jesus to sin are the worst scatterers, for no sin can be more deeply seated in the heart than that which attempts to mar the peace, defile the purity, and destroy the souls of others, and yet in every generation there have been multitudes who have made it their life's work to scatter evil wherever they go.

I'm told that the great comedian Jerry Clower was once asked why he didn't drink alcohol. As he understood it, he said that one out of every seventeen people to takes the first drink of alcohol becomes and alcoholic. He said, "If someone were to see me drinking alcohol, and he was that one in seventeen, and he thought, 'Well, if Jerry Clower can drink, so can I,' and he became an alcoholic, I'd bear at least part of the fault for him becoming an alcoholic. If I had a dog that bit one out of every seventeen people who walked into my yard, don't you think I'd get rid of the dog?" Who's willing to take that chance and cause one of these little ones to sin?

So fervent is the Lord concerning the things that cause us to sin and cause us to be a stumbling block to others that He says in verse eight: "And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire." This is serious. He's already made similar

statements in His Sermon on the Mount, but now He expands on it and applies it to new believers and impressionable children.

Worldly pursuits, desires, attachments, and friendships of any kind that cannot be pursued without leading us into sin--no matter how desirous or pleasing they might be--must be abandoned, forsaken, thoroughly purged from who we are and what we do, or we're in danger of holding onto those things and losing our soul. It's far better to go to heaven without enjoying the things that caused us to sin than to enjoy them here and then be excluded from heaven.

So, Jesus isn't calling for us to mutilate our bodies, because cutting off a hand or a foot or cutting out your eye doesn't change the condition of the heart, and--as we saw back in chapter fifteen, verse nineteen--, "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These," Jesus said, "are what defile a person," so the absence of a particular body part doesn't change the evil thoughts and motivations.

The point Jesus seems to be making is that we must often take what some would consider to be drastic measures to deny ourselves and live our lives "holy unto the Lord." The hand reminds us of the things we do. The feet remind us of the places we go. The eye reminds us of the things we see and allow into our memories and that shape our view of others and the world. Whatever is an enticement to sin must be removed if it stands in the way of God's holiness shining through your life and mine.

But what if we don't remove these things? What happens if we disregard the Lord's impassioned warning here? "It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ... It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire." The allurements of this world that lead us away from Christ / are all expendable--they will perish in the Last Day. They may provide a feeling of power or pleasure or security or contentment for today, but today is

only a day. Eternity is forever, and eternal fire awaits those who cannot and will not renounce the things of this world. The missionary martyr, Jim Elliot, left us with this reminder: “He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

In verse ten, Jesus comes full circle back to his concerns for “the little ones”: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.” The word we have translated as “despise” is also translated as “look down on” or “think less of.” It refers to belittling, scorning, or treating someone like he or she was of little value, denying the intrinsic value that God has placed on that life. Doing so provokes angelic interest and divine notice, showing us that greatness is measured by how the least among us are valued.

By the way, it doesn’t appear that Jesus is saying that every child has a guardian angel, as the Jews themselves thought, but that angels “serve as ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation,” as we read in the fourteenth verse of the opening chapter of the letter to the Hebrews. Not only are there angels serving these little one as ministering spirits, these angels always behold the face of God. To be admitted into the presence of a king or to be allowed to see his face continually / was considered by people of that day to be a mark of special favor as we find in First Kings, chapter ten, verse eight and the book of Esther, chapter one, verse fourteen. So, the Lord Jesus is saying that we should not despise the youngest or least mature believers or children because they’re being served by the highest and noblest of beings by beings who are always enjoying the favor and friendship of God. God values and cares for the ones who are most likely to be despised, ignored, and rejected by the world because the world only values the great and powerful for how they can benefit them.

Although verse eleven doesn't appear in some of the oldest manuscripts and is therefore left out of many Bible translations, it provides a transition to the Lord’s second line of reasoning for the dignity of the little ones, seen in

God's action on their behalf: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

How could anyone despise one of these little ones whom the Father loved so dearly and deemed so precious that He sent His only Son to empty Himself of everything that was rightfully His in heaven and took on human flesh in order to save us? There's no exception to the scope of God's mercy. Everyone has sinned. Everyone needs salvation. For each of us--even the ones the world considers "the least" are those for whom Christ died.

So, Jesus asked them: "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

They knew the answer to the question. Even the little lamb that's only one in a hundred is cherished by the shepherd so much that he leaves the rest of the flock to go find it; and, when he does, he rejoices more for the recovery of the one who was lost than for the ninety-nine that didn't go astray. No responsible shepherd would ever leave even a single sheep lost in the mountains to be eaten by wolves or die.

In verse fourteen, the Lord concludes this part of His message with a final application: "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." God's will--His intention, His design, His purpose--is that **no** stumbling block should be put in their way to cause them to stumble and fall, to grieve their souls, to wound their consciences, or cause them to despair of their peace and comfort. So, don't find yourself on the wrong side of God's will for those He so cherishes.

Dropping back to what He had said previously in verse seven about the reality of temptations and the warning about not being the one who brings that

temptation, Jesus offers the following scenario in verse fifteen: “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

Although it might be easier just to ignore a brother who sins against you, the Lord shows us a better way. It’s not the way of selfish resentment or petty vengeance, but the way of genuine, thoughtful, loving concern for the spiritual welfare of the person who has caused the injury / with the goal of gaining a brother. This process of dealing with someone who has sinned against another believer is frank, open, and sincere--and biblical. In Leviticus, chapter nineteen, verse seventeen, the Lord says, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.”

As the offended individual reasons frankly with the alleged offender--just the two of them--, the concerns are explained in the light of scripture, offences are acknowledged, reparation is made, and forgiveness is offered, or the misunderstanding is resolved. Either way, the two remain in fellowship as God intended; in fact, they’re both strengthened by their respect for one another and the Lord. How many scandals, troubles, and divisions within the church could be avoided if this simple process were faithfully and lovingly carried out?

But perhaps this first step doesn’t work out, and the other person doesn’t listen. In this case, the second step is to “take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” The issue is still not a matter of public concern. The other witnesses are there to encourage and persuade the erring individual to be reconciled. In accordance with Deuteronomy, chapter nineteen, verse fifteen,

“on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established,” in this case, either to witness the offending individual’s repentance or his continued refusal to admit sin.

Third, if the offending individual denies the facts, dismisses the biblical instructions regarding the offense, and shows no sign of repentance, the matter is brought before the church. Even here the goal is to restore and gain a brother.

Finally, if the individual still refuses to be guided by scripture and the counsel of believers seeking his reformation and deliverance, there’s no choice but to regard him as being unconverted and in need of salvation. Even here the process is intended to bring him into God’s forever family as a brother.

It’s inevitable that temptations will come, and, unfortunately, many well-meaning brothers and sisters will fall victim to it. It’s the responsibility of a caring, committed community to restore those who stray, for James tells us in chapter five, verse nineteen of his letter: “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

In verse eighteen, the Lord repeats what He had spoken to Peter in our study last week from chapter sixteen: “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Applied to the matter of church discipline, Jesus is saying that, whatever decision you come to under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with scripture in regard to an erring brother or sister would be approved by God. Did this principle apply only to the disciples there in Galilee, or does it now also apply to the church today? Sorry, but we’ll have to leave that question for another time.

If two or three in the church can agree on a matter of disciplining another member of the church who falls into sin, and the Lord approves of that

decision, there are other matters of agreement that the Lord will approve of as well, even if it's only made between two people. So, He says in verse nineteen, "Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven." This is not, of course, an unconditional, blanket approval of anything the two might agree upon. This agreement must certainly be the result of their joint discernment of the will of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit, just as the prayerful decision about the status of the unrepentant, offending brother in the verses just before this. Here again, we could ask the question: Did this principle apply only to the disciples there in Galilee, or does it now also apply to the church today? Once again, we'll have to leave that discussion for another time.

This promise is affirmed in verse twenty: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." Nothing could more clearly prove that Jesus must be omnipresent, and, of course, be God, than this statement of His presence among His people, for, throughout the world, millions of people are meeting in the Name of Jesus at the same time to pray and praise Him. So, if we gather "in His Name," we don't need to ask Him to "be with us," because He's already there.

Gathering "in His Name" includes several, necessary qualifiers. Because the Name of Jesus is not simply the name Mary gave Him at His birth but the totality of His Nature and His Person, "gathering in His Name" would apply to such things as meeting with an awareness of Who He is / in an attitude of worship and submission / and assembling together under His authority. This would, of course, limit its meaning, but this promise seems to be intended for more than just the disciples there in Galilee; but, here again, a fuller discussion will have to wait for another time.

As Peter is listening ever-so-carefully to the Lord's words here, thinking about the reconciliation that's to be sought from a brother who has sinned against him, a question arises in his mind--verse 21: "Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive

him? As many as seven times?” The Jewish rabbis had a rule that no one should ask forgiveness of his neighbor more than three times. Peter may have thought he was going the second mile and being extremely generous in asking if he should forgive more than twice the standard, and--really--there ought to be a limit on how many times you forgive a person. Seven, after all, was the number of completeness. But, once again, Peter’s missed the entire point of Jesus’ words.

In answer to the question, Jesus gave him a principle of forgiveness and told him a story that applied that principle. The principle of forgiveness is this: if someone sins against you, there should be no limit to the number of times that you would forgive that person. So Jesus tells Peter to forgive the person, not seven times, but seventy times seven--not that he was to forgive only 490 times, but an infinite number of times according to Jewish numerology. There should be no limit to his forgiveness or our forgiveness.

And why not? Before Peter can ask, Jesus tells a story. Our Lord did this many times, and He did it because He knew how difficult it was for His disciples and for us to understand. What did Jesus want us to learn from this parable? Simply put, if we’ve experienced God’s forgiveness, we must forgive as God forgives.

The story goes like this--verse 23: “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.” I don’t know why, but most translations read “a king” rather than “a man--a king” as Matthew wrote it. It’s important that Jesus noted that it was a human king--a king who couldn’t see into the hearts of man, a king who could easily be deceived by someone who was insincere and dishonest.

Well, it seems that as this king went through the books, he found that a certain man who owed him a lot of money. How much did he owe? Jesus said he owed ten thousand talents. How much was ten thousand talents? The New International Version says it was several million dollars. One

commentator said it was about the Gross National Product of all of Palestine at this time. But just as the number of times that Jesus told Peter to forgive is not the literal number of times we must forgive, the precise dollar amount that this man owed isn't so important. What was important was that this man owed his king far more than he could ever pay back.

So what did kings in those days do when someone couldn't pay what was owed? The king commanded that the servant, his wife, and children be auctioned as a slaves and all his possessions sold. Everything that he owned was to be liquidated to pay back this enormous debt.

He knew he couldn't pay. He knew that he owed the king all this money, and he knew that even if he sold everything, including himself, that there wouldn't be enough to pay the king back. So what does he do? Verse 26: "So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'" The king knew there was no way for this man ever to repay what he owed. The debt was far too great! But the king was moved by the man's apparent sincerity; so instead of dealing with him according to the servant's debt, he dealt with him according to his own mercy. He forgave him his debt. He wiped the books clean. No more debt, no more danger of his family being sold as slaves, no more threat of liquidation. He was forever free of an incredible debt. There never was a more merciful king!

But what happened next? You would have thought that, after being so richly blessed, he would have gone out and blessed others. But this same servant who was so generously--so gloriously--forgiven of his debt now happens to run into someone who owes him some money.

Who was this second servant? Jesus calls him "one of his fellow servants." And how much did his fellow man owe him? Ten thousand talents? Not hardly. Not a thousand talents, not even a single talent. How much did he owe him? A hundred denarii. How much was that? About three month's wages in those days. Again, the amount is not so important. Jesus

wants us to see that there was no way in the world that the first servant could ever pay up, while the second servant could easily have come up with the money.

So the first servant grabs his fellow man by the throat and says, “Pay me what you owe.” But the second servant couldn’t pay him right then and tells him, “Have patience with me and I will pay you all”--the very same words the first servant used when the king confronted him with his debt: This time, the repayment was entirely possible. He could have made good on his promise and he probably meant to but the first servant took the man down to the jailhouse and had him locked up until he could pay every last penny that he owed.

Well, it wasn’t long before all the rest of the servants heard about what had happened. They went to the king and told him, and the king called the servant that he had forgiven so generously and said to him, ““You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.”

There are few things worse than an angry king, particularly a king whose generosity has been so disrespected that he delivered the servant--not to prison-, but to the torturers, until he could pay what was owed him. But delivery to the torturers meant that there was no way that he could ever work to pay back what he owed. This unforgiving servant would spend the rest of his earthly life in the hands of those who were employed do nothing but inflict pain and suffering, and to make an example of the likes of him to others who would dare to do what that wicked servant had done.

As the **earthly** king of this parable settled his accounts, so also the **heavenly** King takes an account of men and women today. God calls you to find forgiveness of your sin debt through some crisis or His still, small voice

speaking to your heart, and you trusted Christ, and God forgives you of a debt you could never pay.

You go along for a while, but then something happens and you're back to your old self. Somebody says something that you don't like, somebody does something that hurts your feelings, and you grab that person by the throat and say, "You owe me." Then that person says, "I was wrong; I'm sorry." When that happens, our Lord says we have a responsibility before God to forgive. When your brother or your sister asks you for forgiveness, then you must forgive as God forgave you--not narrowly or grudgingly, but greatly, lovingly, and freely.

For those who refuse to forgive because they never truly trusted Christ, when the time of final reckoning comes, the King of kings will say to you, "Take him to the tormenters until he pays all that he owes me." But you can't pay God back. You'll spend eternity in the hands of the tormenters, forever separated from the loving God who once offered you true forgiveness, but you chose to try to work your way into heaven and rejected Christ's death for you.

True forgiveness never sets limits. It matters not how many times a person sins against you; you must always be ready to forgive. Whoever has truly experienced God's forgiveness will forgive as God forgives--fully, unconditionally, unreservedly, and from the heart. On the other hand, if you refuse to forgive, you don't know God's forgiveness, and you'll spend eternity regretting your decision.

Receive the little ones of this world as Jesus receives them. Don't be a stumbling block to children, new believers, or those who are struggling with their faith, but treat them as Jesus would treat them. First Peter, chapter two, verse sixteen: "Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God."

Thank you for being a part of our ever-so-brief glimpse into the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as seen through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this.

Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter nineteen, we'll turn to chapter twenty of Matthew's gospel to hear the Lord share the parable of the laborers, speak yet again about His coming death and how the greatest should be the servant of all, and learn about the healing of two blind men as our Lord made His way to Jerusalem for the last time.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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