

**Matthew 18:10-14:** 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. <sup>11</sup> For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. <sup>12</sup> 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? <sup>13</sup> And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. <sup>14</sup> So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

**Intro:** Last week, we saw that Jesus is the God-Man Who warns us not to tempt others because He hates sin, & He commands us to fight for holiness with extreme measures lest we end up in hell, & He does this b/c He loves us. We want to protect each other by helping each other pursue holiness & by pursuing our own holiness in Christ.

This is part of what it means to love one another in the church! We don't want to lead one another into temptation, and we ourselves what to turn from sin for the glory of God and to be godly examples to one another. Jesus continues with this theme of loving one another in the church in the verses we are studying today. We see:

Jesus is the God-Man & Good Shepherd Who came to save that which was lost so that we will love one another, & we are motivated to love one another because our Father in heaven deeply loves us & will never let us perish.

### **1. Jesus Commands His Disciples Not To Despise Other Believers**

**Matthew 18:10:** See that you do not despise one of these little ones.

Jesus commands His disciples not to look down on other believers, hate them, or treat them with contempt.

**a. Who are “these little ones”?** They are the little ones of V. 6: 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.

They include children who believe in Jesus, the lowly, humble who believe in Jesus, and all those who humble themselves like the child Jesus uses as an object lesson in Vs. 2-4 – so all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**b. Why would Jesus have to make such a command?** Because we are all sinners! We naturally divide, criticize, look down on others, and sin against each other, even against those we are closest to!

**1) Husbands & wives: Colossians 3:19:** Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

**Titus 2:4:** Older women . . . train the young women to love their husbands and children

**Voddie Baucham:** What's the sanctification by love argument? “Well, he keeps doing A-B-C & X-Y-Z or she keeps doing A-B-C & X-Y-Z and if they really loved me, they wouldn't do that.” That's the sanctification by love argument, right? “If you really loved me, then you wouldn't sin against me.” That's the stupidest thing that a Christian ever said. “If you really loved me, then you wouldn't do this.” Cause here's the deal – I love God, and I sin against God. Who does my wife think she is? . . . that loving her ought to mean that I don't sin against her. Come on now! . . . that's also quite idolatrous, right? Like, “You're a sinner, you're a sinner. But if you really loved me like you're supposed to love me, that would do what the cross can't do.” You better watch your mouth, right? Here's the other thing – I am a sinner saved by grace; I'm being sanctified; the LORD is chiseling away at me, but I'm not fixed yet, Amen? So if I am a sinner and there's going to be sin committed in my life, against whom am I going to sin more than anybody else? The person closest to me! So really, if we had proper theology we would say, “If you really loved me, you would sin against me a lot more! If you're sinning against somebody else more than you're sinning against me, that means you're closer to them than you are to me, and we got a problem!”

**2) Church members: John 17:11:** Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

**Ephesians 4:1-3:** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**c. We are called, not to despise one another, but rather to love one another: Romans 12:9-10:** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

- **1 Cor. 13:1-8:** If I speak in the tongues of men & of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. & if I have prophetic powers, & understand all mysteries & all knowledge, & if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, & if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient & kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

- **1 John 4:19:** We love because he first loved us. **GOSPEL!**

## **2. Jesus Gives His Disciples Reasons Not To Despise Other Believers**

**Matthew 18:10-14:** 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. <sup>11</sup> For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

<sup>12</sup> 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? <sup>13</sup> And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. <sup>14</sup> So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

**a. Jesus' Father shows an intimate, personal knowledge, love & care for every believer, and therefore, so should you: V. 10:** For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

**Leon Morris:** He is using picturesque language to bring out the truth that God in heaven is aware of their situation here on earth of even the lowliest of his people.

1) God the Father intimately, personally knows, loves, & cares for all His children so much that they will one day enjoy His very presence, and therefore you should not despise them, but love them too:

**D. A. Carson (Citing B. B. Warfield):** The "angels" of the "little ones" are their spirits after death, and they always see the heavenly Father's face. Do not despise these little ones, Jesus says, for their destiny is the unshielded glory of the Father's presence. The present tense (they "always see") raises no difficulty because Jesus is dealing with a class, not individuals. The same interpretation admirably suits **Acts 12:15:** [They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!"] What the assembled group thinks is standing outside is Peter's "spirit" (angel), which accounts for Rhoda's recognition of his voice . . . Jesus teaches that God's people in the resurrection "will be like the angels in heaven" . . . The evidence, though not overwhelming, is substantial enough to suppose that "their angels" simply refers to their continued existence in the heavenly Father's presence.

2) God the Father intimately, personally knows, loves, & cares for all His children so much that He protects them with His angels, and therefore you should not despise them, but love them too:

- **Psalm 34:7:** The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

- **Psalm 91:9-12:** Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place - the Most High, who is my refuge - no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

- **Heb. 1:14:** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

- **Daniel 6:22:** My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me . . .

- **Luke 22:43:** And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

- **Acts 12:11:** When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

**David Platt:** Consider: if the Father has angelic attendants that He sends out to serve and protect His children, then how much more should we love His children? That is, if God cares enough about His children to command angels to attend to their needs, how can we remain indifferent to our fellow believers?

**b. Don't despise one another but love one another because Jesus came to seek & to save that which was lost:**

**V. 11-14:** For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep & one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains & go in search of the one that went astray? & 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.

1) Jesus came to save: (V. 11/variant) **Luke 19:10:** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

2) Jesus & His Father are the Good Shepherd: Shepherd's protect, provide for, lead, & guide their sheep. Jesus does all of this! His Father does all of this!

- God is the good Shepherd of His people: **Psalm 23:1:** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

- Jesus is the good Shepherd of His people: **John 10:11:** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **(Jesus is God!)**

3) Jesus illustrates the value of one lost or straying soul: **Vs. 12-13:** What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep & one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains & go in search of the one that went astray? & if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

The Father cares about the one! Jesus cares about the one! He cares about you!

**Matthew 16:26:** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?

- **Leon Morris:** Jesus is not saying that the shepherd does not rejoice over those who are safe, nor does he say that the heavenly Father is less than delighted over disciples who are safe in the fold. But he points out that there is a peculiar joy over bringing one that is lost safely into the fold. The flock then has not lost one of its members.

- **Ligon Duncan:** Jesus is using an illustration that we can all identify with in order to emphasize to us not, that God loves some of His children more than others, but to show that God loves all of His children; and each of them, individually. He shows special concern and care for – even those who are lost, even those who are weak, even those who are marginalized, even those who look like they are straying away. He is concerned to regain them. He has a specific and special concern for each one of us. That is the point of this passage.

4) God's love is very personal: God loves you! He chose you! He predestined you! He's always loved you & always will! **Vos:** The reason God will never stop loving you is that he never began.

a. God the Father personally loves you and chose you: **Ephesians 1:3-6:** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

b. God the Father personally loves you and sent His Son to die for you: **John 3:16**

c. God the Son personally loves you and came, died, and rose for you: **Galatians 2:20**: I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

d. God the Holy Spirit personally loves you and causes you to be born again: **Titus 3:5**: he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit . . . .

5) God will pursue you if you go astray: He leaves the ninety-nine to find the one who's gone astray! Some have called God the Hound of Heaven! He's pursuing you with goodness & mercy all the days of your life! (Ps. 23:6)

**Philippians 1:6**: I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

6) God rejoices over you when you return to Him: "He rejoices over it!" Remember the prodigal son's return?!

**Zephaniah 3:17**: The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

7) (Doriani) The Lord exercises His care for His people through His people: God uses us to care for each other

- **Daniel Doriani**: The Father cares for his children by the work of Jesus, by the movement of the Spirit, by his providential control of history, and by appointing angels to watch over us. But he also instructs believers, especially the mature, to seek our brothers, especially little ones in the faith, when they stray. Paul says, "If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently" (Gal. 6:1). And James says, "My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20). Jesus says the same thing. Throughout Matthew 18, Jesus has implied that leaders ought to watch over little ones when they stray; in 18:15 he makes it explicit. There he explains how to work, beside the Lord, to restore believers when they stray.

- **Ligon Duncan**: I've shared with you before the story of Dr. Dupree Rain, a very great and godly man who was the chairman of the fine arts division at Furman University. After his daughter had been married to her husband of some thirty years, he left her right before the children were to leave the home. He left her in terrible financial condition, and remarried a woman with whom he had had an affair. Dr. Rain had to come out of retirement in order to support his daughter and her children. It was a humiliating experience for him. About twelve months later, his son-in-law was diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer. The first person at his side was Dr. Dupree Rain, to minister to him and to call him to Christ. Because Dr. Rain had, throughout that whole grievous ordeal – despite the injury that had been done to him and to his daughter, he had kept in mind two things: that what his son-in-law had done was absolutely not right and it deserved God's condemnation; but, at the same time, he desired to see him recovered for the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he prayed earnestly that God would convict him of his sin. And He did. And he repented and he died restored not only to his Father-in-law, but restored to his God. Dr. Rain manifested there that godly attitude that we ought to have. Not simply passing over sin but at the same time desiring to see the sinner recovered for Christ. Is that our attitude towards those who sin and offend against us? Is that our attitude toward the weak?

**c. Don't despise one another, but love one another because the will of Jesus' Father is that no believer shall ever perish: V. 14**: So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

- **John 6:37**: All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

- **Romans 8:31-39**: What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

<sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **John 10:14, 27-30:** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me . . . <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.

Beloved, like your heavenly Father, is it your desire to love & encourage & help your fellow church members to ensure that they never perish?

**2 Timothy 2:10:** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

**We do so, looking unto Jesus: Psalm 23:1:** The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

This amazing truth is ultimately fulfilled in the Good Shepherd - the Lord Jesus Christ. Only in Him is this supernatural satisfaction fully realized, and for this realization to happen, Jesus had to lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). Jesus had to lack everything for His sheep.

Instead of rest in green pastures, He had no place to lay His head (Matthew 8:20)

Instead of still waters, He was baptized with the wrath of God (Luke 12:50)

Instead of a restored soul, His soul was poured out unto death (Isaiah 53:12)

Instead of being led in right paths, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter and offered Himself as a propitiation so that God might be proved righteous (Acts 8:32, Romans 3:25-26)

Instead of fearing no evil in the dark death valley, He was made evil Who knew no evil and sorrowed unto death as He contemplated the darkness of death that would utterly consume Him (2 Corinthians 5:21, Mark 14:34-36)

Instead of having God with Him as His comfort, God forsook Him, pouring out His just wrath upon Him (Matthew 27:46)

Instead of having a rod and a staff to comfort Him, the rod of the Father was pleased to crush Him (Isaiah 53:10)

Instead of having a table spread before Him, He hungered in the wilderness and thirsted unto death (Luke 4:1-2, John 19:28)

Instead of having His head anointed with oil, He wore a blood-soaked crown of thorns (Matthew 27:29)

Instead of having a cup that overflows, He drank the cup of the wrath of God to the dregs (Isaiah 51:17, Matthew 26:39)

Instead of goodness and mercy pursuing Him all His days, wrath and torment pursued Him unto death (Isaiah 53)

Instead of dwelling in the house of the LORD, He was banished from the dwelling of the LORD as the unclean and cursed one (Galatians 3:13)

Jesus had to lack everything as He Himself became the Lamb Who was slain (Revelation 5:6, 12) And He did all of this on behalf of stubborn, sinful, hell deserving sheep who rebelled against Him. This is the best news in the world! All who know this Good Shepherd by grace through faith will lack no good thing, for He will provide for them, protect them, comfort them and satisfy them fully - He will be all and all to them now and forever and ever:

**Revelation 7:15-17:** Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Jesus is the God-Man & Good Shepherd Who came to save that which was lost so that we will love one another, & we are motivated to love one another because our Father in heaven deeply loves us & will never let us perish.

Christ Jesus Loves And Won't Despise  
His Little Ones Whose Angels' Eyes  
Look To His Father, Their Allies  
Ministering Spirits Wise  
For Jesus Came, He Lived, He Dies  
Under God's Curse He'd Agonize  
The God-Man Died A Death King-Size  
Then Rose Death's End To Finalize  
And Save His Sheep Who Strayed With Lies  
The One Who's Lost And To Him Cries  
He'll Find And Save And We'll Baptize  
Rejoicing Shall Take Place With Highs  
For Our Father Wills To Rise  
All His Children Immortalize  
None Shall Perish, Evangelize  
For Christ's Our Everlasting Prize!