

The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 20 – Three Lessons

Lesson 54 - Matthew 18:1- 9

Lesson 55 - Matthew 18: 10-20

Lesson 56 - Matthew 18: 21-35



International ESL/Bible Lessons

Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Lesson 54 - Matthew 18: 1- 9 The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven | 3 |
| Vocabulary..... | 4 |
| Questions..... | 5 |
| Notes..... | 5 |
| Lesson 55 - Matthew 18: 10-20 The Parable of the Wandering Sheep | 8 |
| Vocabulary..... | 9 |
| To bind: Has many, many meanings..... | 9 |
| Questions..... | 12 |
| Notes..... | 12 |
| Lesson 56 - Matthew 18: 21-35 The Parable of the Unmerciful | |
| Servant..... | 16 |
| Vocabulary..... | 17 |
| Questions..... | 17 |
| Notes..... | 18 |

Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 54 - Matthew 18: 1- 9 The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

18 At that time / the disciples came to Jesus / and asked, / “Who, / then, is the greatest / in the kingdom of heaven?”

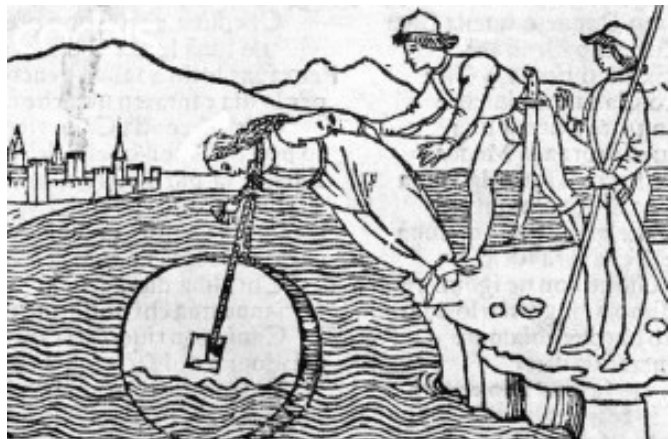
² He called a little child to him, / and placed the child among them. /

³ And he said: / “Truly I tell you, / unless you change / and become like little children, / you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. /

⁴ Therefore, / whoever takes the lowly position / of this child / is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. / ⁵ And whoever welcomes one such child / in my name / welcomes me.

Causing to Stumble

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.

Vocabulary

1. To stumble: To fall or almost fall. To make a mistake through speaking or playing music.

To stumble across something: To find something unexpectedly.

2. Millstone: Either of a pair of flat circular stone used to grind grain.

Idiom: A millstone around one's neck: A difficult problem or responsibility that seems impossible to solve or get rid of.

3. To drown: To die in water.

Idiom: To drown (something) out: Make something else louder to avoid hearing. *I can't stand that traffic noise, so I drown it out with classical music.*

4. Woe: Great sorrow or distress. Trouble or troubles.

5. Maimed: Disfigured. Mutilated. Injured.

6. Crippled: Unable to walk or move properly. *He was crippled by arthritis.*

7. To gouge: To remove something by using a sharp tool.

Questions

1. Jesus believed in an afterlife. He talked often of heaven. He called God his heavenly father. How do you picture heaven?
2. Why are children so important to Jesus?
3. What troubles can people have that cause them great woe?
4. How is Jesus explaining the sin of teaching children to do wrong?
5. What is a stumbling block in your job or personal life?
6. Why is it so hard to trust?

Notes

1. Chapter 18 is a great teaching on Christian ethics. It deals with the qualities to characterize the personal relationships of a Christian. It gives examples of humility, responsibility, self-renunciation, individual care, discipline, fellowship, and forgiveness.
2. Jesus had returned to Capernaum, his 'headquarters' from his teaching trip of from 6 months to 18 months in training his disciples. They had gone to the Gentile areas of Tyre, Sidon, Mt. Hermon and other places out of the reach of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod Antipas.
3. The question, *Who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?* shows that the disciples were still struggling with the concept of a Messiah. Was he a warrior who would cause revolution and throw

off the Roman conquerors, or a political new King? Jesus knew they didn't understand the depth of his spiritual kingdom. Not yet.

4. Jesus wanted the disciples to forget *self* and power and be able to help others. So Jesus took a child, and showed the disciples some of the good characteristics of a child: the power to wonder, the power to forgive and forget, the power to learn new things. (Barclay, p. 175)
5. Mostly, Jesus wanted the disciples to learn humility, dependence and trust. The child trusts the parent, and Jesus wanted his disciples to trust God.
6. Remember that Matthew gathers the teachings of Jesus under large headings and arranges them systematically. Here are some about children. Jesus also used the word *child* in both a literal and figurative sense. A child was literal; it was used for the followers or disciples of a great teacher; and it was used to a beginner on the Christian way.
7. The phrase *in my name* can mean one of two things: It can mean *for my sake*. The care of children is something that is carried out for the sake of none other than Jesus Christ. To teach a child in the way he should go is part of that. Also, it can mean *with a blessing*.
8. Jesus could be telling us that the important people are not those who pushed their way to the top and walked on others, but the quiet, humble, simple people who get the job done while having the heart of a child.

9. The strong and terrible responsibility of the Christian is found here.
Do not teach another person to sin or do wrong. A person teaches another to sin, and that sin is passed on to others. It is a chain.
10. It also teaches the punishment for one who teaches others to sin. The millstone Jesus speaks of is one of the two stones used in grinding grain. The upper stone was turned upon the lower and the seeds ground into flour.
11. Drowning at sea was a great fear of the Jews. Drowning was sometimes a Roman punishment, but never a Jewish one. To the Jew it was the symbol of utter destruction.
12. Verses 8 and 9 are not to be taken literally, but are to be taken personally. It can also be taken to mean the group or the church has a responsibility to protect the children. If one is there who is evil, it is better he be removed from the church. The church is the body of Christ, and it should be healthy.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 55 - Matthew 18: 10-20 The Parable of the Wandering Sheep

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.

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.

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, / just between the two of you. / If they listen to you, / you have won them over. / ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, / take one or two others along, / so that ‘every matter may be established / by the testimony of two

or three witnesses.’ / ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, / tell it to the church; / and if they refuse to listen even to the church, / treat them as you would a pagan / or a tax collector.

¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, / whatever you bind on earth / will be bound in heaven, / and whatever you loose on earth / will be loosed in heaven. /

¹⁹ “Again, / truly I tell you / that if two of you on earth / agree about anything they ask for, / it will be done for them / by my Father in heaven. / ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, / there am I with them.”

Vocabulary

1. To despise: To dislike very much. To hate.
2. To perish: To die. A perishable (n.) does not stay fresh long.
3. Testimony: Evidence. Proof.

To bind: Has many, many meanings.

Verb: Present, past and past participle: bind, bound, bound

1. Tie or fasten (something) tightly: *floating bundles of logs bound together with ropes the magician bound her wrists with a silk scarf*
 - 1.1. Restrain (someone) by the tying up of hands and feet: *the raider then bound and gagged Mr. Glenn*

- 1.2. Wrap (something) tightly: *her hair was bound up in a towel.*
- 1.3. Bandage (a wound): *he cleaned the wound and bound it up with a clean dressing she had bound his wounds with a poultice of herbs.*
- 1.4. (be bound with) (Of an object) be encircled by something, typically metal bands, in order to strengthen it: *an ancient oak chest, bound with brass braces.*
2. Cohere or cause to cohere in a single mass: [with object]: *mix the flour with the coconut and enough egg white to bind them [no object]: clay is made up chiefly of tiny soil particles that bind together tightly.*
 - 2.1 Cause (painting pigments) to form a smooth medium by mixing them with oil: *use a white that is bound in linseed oil.*
 - 2.2 Hold by chemical bonding: *a protein in a form that can bind DNA*
 - 2.3 [No object] (bind to) Combine with (a substance) through chemical bonding: *these proteins have been reported to bind to calmodulin.*
3. Cause (people) to feel united: *the comradeship that had bound such a disparate bunch of young men together.*
 - 3.1. (bind someone to) Cause someone to feel strongly attached to (a person or place): *loosened the ties that had bound him to the university.*

4. *Formal*: Impose a legal or contractual obligation on: *a party who signs a document will normally be bound by its terms.*
 - 4.1. Indenture (someone) as an apprentice: He was bound apprentice at the age of sixteen.
 - 4.2. (bind oneself) • *formal* Make a contractual or enforceable undertaking: *the government cannot bind itself as to the form of subsequent legislation.*
 - 4.3. Secure (a contract), typically with a sum of money. *A binding contract.*
 - 4.4. (be bound by) Be hampered or constrained by: *Sarah did not want to be bound by a rigid timetable.*
5. Fix together and enclose (the pages of a book) in a cover: *a small, fat volume, bound in red morocco.*
6. Trim (the edge of a piece of material) with a decorative strip: *a ruffle with the edges bound in a contrasting color.*

Nouns:

1. A problematical situation: he is in *a political bind over the welfare issue.*
2. *Formal* A statutory constraint: *the moral bind of the law.*
3. Bind someone over. (Usually be bound over) (Of a court of law) require someone to fulfill an obligation, typically by paying a sum of money as surety:
He was bound over for trial on a felony charge

Questions

1. What lengths do you go to in order to find something or someone lost: a set of car keys or a person?
2. How do you settle a disagreement with a friend?
3. What are ways to deal with estrangement in a family?
4. How has God answered your prayers?
5. How do we know the instruction to take problems to a church are a later addition to Jesus's sayings?

Notes

1. This is the simplest of the parables of Jesus, for it is the story of a lost sheep and a seeking shepherd. The villages had communal grazing for the sheep, and the shepherds worked together to keep them safe. A shepherd could go find a lost sheep and the others kept the remainder.
2. Sheep were valuable, and even if a sheep were lost or eaten, the shepherds were duty bound to bring back the fleece or bones of the sheep to prove it was truly dead. Imagine the attention the villagers gave to their flocks and shepherds, for any wild animal or serious problem could cause great losses.
3. This parable gives a picture of the love of God. It teaches us about the individual love of God for each and every one of us. No parent can just give up one child, even if he has twenty children.

4. It also teaches that God's love is patient. Sheep, like people, are foolish and can wander into great trouble. God even loves the foolish ones.
5. The love of God seeks us out. He doesn't wait for us to return on our own, but searches the hearts of his children, and welcomes them home.
6. The love of God rejoices as each person returns to God. He forgets and forgives our sins and wrongdoings. It gives joy.
7. Lastly, the love of God protects each of us and gives us strength for the day. *It is a protecting love which makes the wanderer wise, the weak strong, the sinner pure, the captive of sin the free man of holiness, and the vanquished by temptation its conqueror.*
(Barclay, p. 186.)
8. William Barclay tells us about Matthew 18:15-18: *In many ways this is one of the most difficult passages to interpret in the whole of Matthew's gospel. Its difficulty lies in the undoubted fact that it does not ring true; it does not sound like Jesus: it sounds much more like the regulations of an ecclesiastical committee.*
9. *It is not possible that Jesus said this in its present form. Jesus could not have told his disciples to take things to the Church, for it did not exist; and the passage implies a fully developed and organized church with a system of ecclesiastical discipline. Also the church has no right or ability to forgive sin—only God can do that.*

10. *In addition, it talks of tax collectors and Gentiles as irreclaimable outsiders.* Yet we know that Jesus chose Matthew and Zaccheaus to serve him, and both were tax collectors. He healed both Jew and Gentile.

11. This is not a correct report of Jesus, but it did go back to something Jesus did say. Can we press behind this and come to the actual commandment of Jesus? Perhaps: *If anyone sins against you, spare no effort to make that man admit his fault, and to get things right again between you and him.*

12. Within the Christian fellowship, we have a whole picture of what we should do to mend the problem:

- Put the complaint into words! Don't brood about it. Sometimes putting it into words or writing can show us if it is petty or important.
- See the person personally! No e-mail or written statement that can sound terse, harsh or incomprehensible. Face to face is the way to mend.
- Use a third party with you. This might help a lot with the reconciliation. Deuteronomy 19:15 help us understand. A wise and gracious person can help the atmosphere.
- Remember Jesus never set a limit to human forgiveness.

13. Verse 18 is also a very difficult saying. *It cannot mean that he Church can remit or forgive sins, and so settle a man's destiny in time or in eternity. What it may well mean is that the relationships which we establish with our fellow men last not only through time but into eternity—therefore we must get them right. (Barclay, p. 190.)*
14. If we take verses 19 and 20 literally, we know they are untrue. We have often agreed to pray about something or someone and the results we requested have not happened. But the saying itself has much depth to it.
15. Selfish prayer is not answered, and will not be. The basic law of prayer: In prayer we receive not the answer which we desire, but the answer which God in his wisdom and his love knows to be best.
16. God doesn't give us escape from a human situation, but he enables us to accept that which we cannot understand. He enables us to endure what without God would be unendurable. He strengthens us to face what without Him would be beyond all facing.
17. God is in the midst of a two or more when they pray. In church and in the home, God is in the midst of those who call upon his name.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 56 - Matthew 18: 21-35 The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, / “Lord, / how many times / shall I forgive my brother or sister / who sins against me? / Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, / “I tell you, / not seven times, / but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore, / the kingdom of heaven is like a king / who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. / ²⁴ As he began the settlement, / a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold / was brought to him. / ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, / the master ordered / that he / and his wife / and his children / and all that he had / be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this / the servant fell on his knees before him. / ‘Be patient with me,’ / he begged, / ‘and I will pay back everything.’ / ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, / canceled the debt / and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, / he found one of his fellow servants / who owed him a hundred silver coins. / He grabbed him / and began to choke him. / ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ / he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees / and begged him, / ‘Be patient with me, / and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. / Instead, / he went off / and had the man thrown into prison / until he could pay the debt. / ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, / they were outraged / and went and told their master everything / that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. / ‘You wicked servant,’ / he said, / ‘I canceled all that debt of yours / because you begged me to. / ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant / just as I had on you?’ / ³⁴ In anger / his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, / until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father / will treat each of you / unless you forgive your brother / or sister from your heart.”

Vocabulary

1. To choke: To strangle. To have something obstruct the air passage.
2. Wicked: Mean. Mischievous. Doing bad things.
3. To cancel a debt: to annul. To stop or withdraw the debt.

Questions

1. How often should we forgive someone who has injured or hurt us?

2. How hard is it to actually forgive a person? What happens physically to a person who cannot or will not forgive?
3. What does Jesus mean when he says we are to forgive 7 times 70? Could you actually keep a count of that in your practical life?
4. Contrast the two servants and their behavior.
5. Why would the master forgive such a large debt from his servant?
6. What does it mean to be merciful?
7. Can we ever match God in his ability to forgive us? What does that mean to you?

Notes

1. Peter often spoke without thinking. His question gave Jesus an opportunity to explain forgiveness. Peter was being generous when he said seven times. The Jews believed that to forgive three times were right and the fourth time, the person could be punished.
2. Jesus then told the story / of the servant / forgiven a great debt / that went out and dealt mercilessly with a fellow servant / who owed him a debt / that was a small fraction / of what he himself had owed the master.

3. The parable teaches us that a man must forgive in order for himself to be forgiven. *Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.* Jesus said this in Matthew 5:7.
4. The contrast between the two debts was unbelievable. Yet we think how much God has give and forgiven us. We could never match the goodness and generosity of God. If God can forgive us, then we must forgive our fellow men.



