

DON'T GIVE UP ON ONE!

Text: Matthew 18:1-20 NAS 2020

Introduction: Dear friends: Every soul is precious to our heavenly **Father**. Because **Christ** came to save sinners, His **Church** ✦takes sin seriously and ✦lovingly seeks the wandering – *so the sinner may be restored*.

1. **Don't Look Down on One:** ¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "**Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**" ²And He called a [young] child to Himself and set him among them [as an example], ³and said, "Truly I say to you, **unless you change and become like children** [having little status, little authority, or little social importance], **you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.** ⁴So whoever [of any age] will humble himself like this child [-- making himself the opposite of greatness in the world], he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever receives one such child in My name [because of his or her relationship with Me], **receives Me** [implying that believers represent Jesus] ... // So, **don't look down on one!**
2. **Don't Cause One to Fall:** ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones [of any age] who believe in Me to sin, **it is better** for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷"Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to the person through whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸"And if your hand or your foot is causing you to sin, cut it off

and throw it away from you; **it is better** for you to enter life maimed or without a foot, than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye is causing you to sin, tear it out and throw it away from you. **It is better** for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fiery hell.

¹⁰ “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones [*believers*]; for I say to you that their angels in heaven [*who watch over, serve, and protect believers*] continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. // How might someone cause a believer to sin? Here are two of many possible examples:

- a. By *normalizing* sinful behavior [*for ex: homosexuality*] so that another believer is drawn into it.
- b. By teaching *false doctrine* to lead someone away from Christ.

So, don't cause a believer to fall – and don't treat lightly the sin that can destroy your own faith!

3. **Don't Give Up on One Who Wanders:** ¹² “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go and search for the one that is lost? ¹³ And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that have not gone astray. ¹⁴ **So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish.** // After a while, we tend to give up on a person, *but not God*. He cares about the person who ♦hasn't been in church, ♦is drifting from Christ, ♦is caught in sin, and ♦is forgotten by everyone else. **Let us not give up on one who wanders!**

4. **Go After the One Who Sins:** *Seeking the lost sheep...*

- a. One to One: ¹⁵ “Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private *[using the Bible]*; if he listens to you *[and repents]*, you have gained your brother.
- b. Two or Three to One: ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more *[believers]* with you, so that ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY MATTER MAY BE CONFIRMED. // Having two or three will strengthen the call to repent.
- c. The Church to One: ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church *[the whole congregation of believers]*; and if he refuses to listen even to the church *[refuses to repent]*, he is to be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector *[that is, an unbeliever, who is outside of God’s kingdom and does not possess God’s gift of eternal life]*. // Why such harsh words? We are dealing with things of **ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE:** ➡ Sin! ➡ Relationship with Christ! ➡ Eternal location! *Let’s love each other so much that we are willing to tell them when everything isn’t fine!* The goal from beginning to end is **†repentance, †forgiveness, and †restoration!**
- d. Act with the Authority of Christ:
 - i. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth *[declare unforgiven on earth – due to unrepentance]* shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth *[declare forgiven – due to repentance]* shall have been loosed in heaven *[think about the office of the keys]*.
 - ii. ¹⁹ “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. // What did they ask? ➡ For wisdom in dealing

with the sinner. ♦For the Father to bring the sinner to repentance. ♦For restoration of the sinner. **For all wandering sheep – let us pray!**

- iii. ²⁰ **For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”**
// How does that fit with vv. 1-19? Jesus assured His disciples that when even a small number of believers must carry out this difficult responsibility, *He Himself is present with them.*

Conclusion: Let's remember and apply this **important text**:

- **1–5** — VALUE THE LITTLE ONE: Humble yourself and receive Christ's little ones.
- **6–9** — DON'T CAUSE ONE TO STUMBLE: Take sin seriously because it can destroy faith.
- **10** — DON'T DESPISE ONE: Every believer is precious before God.
- **12–14** — DON'T GIVE UP ON ONE: When one wanders, go looking for him.
- **15–17** — GO AFTER YOUR BROTHER: When sin causes a brother to wander, seek to regain him.
- **18** — CHRIST GIVES HIS CHURCH AUTHORITY: Bind the sin of the **unrepentant**; loose the sin of the repentant.
- **19** — PRAY FOR HIM: Seek your heavenly Father's help.
- **20** — CHRIST IS WITH YOU: You don't carry out this ministry alone.

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, help us to ♦rightly understand Your words and ♦do what You said to reach the lost ones!

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