

Episode #833 Matthew 18 Part 3-The Sinning Brother

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was speaking of the twelve, His little ones, small in the eyes of the world, but extremely important in the eyes of God. He told a parable of one sheep out of one hundred that was lost, and the good shepherd sought and found it.

III. Parable of the Little Ones. Matthew 18:10-14.

- A. Verse 14. “Will” here is *thelema*, the wish or desire. I Thessalonians 4:3; God does not always get what He wants. Not a settled plan, *boulomai*, for some do stumble and perish; example: Judas, Mark 14:21. The “little ones” are again the disciples who believed in Him. “Perish” is *apollumi* or “be lost,” as in verse 11, or “be destroyed.”

IV. The Sinning Brother. Matthew 18:15-18.

- A. Verse 15. “Brother” is referring to a fellow disciple among the group of disciples. Every sin is ultimately against God, but this does not mean it cannot be against a human being as well. This seems very good advice. Keep the channels of communication open, and go and tell him his fault when he trespasses against you. “Tell him his fault” is *elencho*, which means “to make the facts known,” with the idea of correction, as an adult telling a child, “No, $2 + 2$ does not = 5. $2 + 2 = 4$.” If he “hears” it means he will listen to you and respond. Paul uses the word “gain” in the sense of gaining for Christ. Here you gain back the relationship.
- B. Verse 16. Now this is to become a legal matter, dealt with on the basis of testimony and witnesses. Yet our command today is in Ephesians 4:32. We are to deal graciously with others as God has dealt graciously with us. It is not our job to deal legally with fellow believers. Colossians 3:13. We should forgive (deal graciously) with one another if anyone has a quarrel against any. Those are our instructions, and they are entirely different than the kingdom, legal method in Matthew 18:15-17.
- C. Verse 17. A “heathen” is a man of the nations, a Gentile. Greek “just-as the nation-man and the tax collector.” Both of these were outsiders with whom the common Israelite would have nothing to do. This verse contains the second and third (and final two) occurrences of *ekklesia* or “church” in the gospels. The first was in Matthew 16:18. There are no occurrences at all in Mark, Luke, or John.
1. Christ gave the men His disciples this authority to bind a thing on earth and it would be bound in heaven, and this made them His *ekklesia*. This was not an unfamiliar term, but was used in government circles. An out-called man was a man who had a position out of another. We have much of this in our own government, such as the President’s cabinet. These positions are not spelled out in the Constitution, but are created by the President. If the President wished, he could take that power back to himself at any time. Thus these men have their power out of the President. So it is with *ekklesia*. Those who are *ekklesia* are out-positioned men, those who have a position out of another.
 2. Jesus Christ is to be the King of the kingdom, but there will be men who have a position out of Him, who have authority, who will mediate between Jesus Christ and others. For example, when the twelve apostles sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28), they will be the

representatives of the great Judge Who is in the heavens and will be mediating between God and men. The chief characteristic of an out-called man is that he mediates between the one he has a position out of and the one he may be dealing with.

3. People take *ekklesia* and make it to mean nothing, any old building, or any little group of people who get together and call themselves “the church.” This is what the Lord said the gates of hell will not stand against! But that is not what the Lord meant at all. *Ekklesia* had to do with the government in the kingdom.
4. This is the next step for a disciple to treat a brother who trespasses. Tell it to the *ekklesia*, which could be a single man who is outcalled, or it could be a dozen or more. It is interesting to note that Paul may have done just this with regard to Peter! In Galatians 2:11, he withstood Peter to the face, 2:14, he spoke to him before them all. We don’t have the middle step, but it appears that Paul did just this, and Peter did not hear until Paul brought it before the *ekklesia*! Since we have no indication of Peter being cast out, we assume that at that point he heard. But Paul had the right to do this. In the dispensation of grace I have no right to do this, and no out-called to bring a brother before.
5. Treat him like a nation-man. Am I going to treat someone like he is not an Israelite? Of course; I’m not one either! This is speaking to Israelite believers.

V. Conclusion: The Father did not will any of the little ones to perish, but Judas did, showing God does not always get what He wants. They were to follow a certain method if any brother sinned against them, but we had best use care before applying instructions to the twelve to ourselves. Let us learn and not do this.