

MATTHEW 18

WHO IS THE GREATEST? (18:1-5)

Epiphanius Scholasticus on becoming like a child:

For this purpose Jesus used the example of the child, that what He had been through His nature, we through our holy living might become—innocent, like children innocent of every sin...(A child) believes what he hears. What he is ordered he does not analyze. He loves his parents with full affection. Therefore, what children are in their simplicity, let us become through a holy way of life, as children innocent of sin.

HANDLING TEMPTATION AND SCANDAL (18:6-9)

St. John Chrysostom on avoiding those who tempt us:

Do you see how He checks the future damage from temptations? First He predicts that they will happen, so that no one should be lazy, but everyone should be awake expecting them. Then He predicts that the evils will be very great...Then, not content with this, He shows us the way by which we can escape temptations to sin. What is that? The wicked, He says, even if they are very friendly to you, cut them off from your friendship.

LOST SHEEP AND DISCIPLINE (18:10-20)

Blessed Theophylact on binding and loosing sins:

If you, He says, who have been wronged deem the wrongdoer a publican and a Gentile, he shall be so in heaven as well. And if you loose, that is, forgive him, he shall be forgiven in heaven as well. For it is not only what the priests loose that is loosed, but also whatever we who have been wronged bind or loose, those things too shall be either bound or loosed.

FORGIVENESS (18:21-35)

St. John Chrysostom on the punishment we will suffer if we do not forgive others:

For since you did not become better by receiving blessings, it remains for you to be corrected by punishment, For since you have not become better by the kindness shown to you, it remains that you will be corrected only by vengeance. Although it is said that the blessings and gifts of God are irrevocable, our recalcitrance may frustrate even this intention of God. For what, then can be a more grievous thing than to be vengeful, especially when it appears to overthrow so great a gift of God.

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Quote Sources: Manlio Simonetti, editor. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Matthew 1a and 1b* (IVP)

Blessed Theophylact. *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Chrysostom Press)

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