

Book Study – Matthew 18:10-19:12

The Lost Sheep – A Brother Who Sins Against You – The Unmerciful Servant - Divorce



Before We Begin Our Journey...

1. To what lengths would you go to recover: Lost piece of jewelry? Important document? Your missing child?
2. What are some approaches people adopt in conflicts or disagreements? What makes forgiveness difficult?
3. What ingredients make for a happy marriage?



Do Some Digging and Pre-planning...

4. How did Jesus say the owner of the sheep would react if just one of his sheep wandered off? (18:12)
5. According to Jesus, how would the owner of a lost sheep react upon finding his lost sheep? (18:13)
6. How did Jesus compare sheep to the way God views lost children? (18:14)
7. What did Jesus set forth as the first step in resolving conflict? (18:15)
8. What should we do if a person will not listen to correction and does not want to work things out? (18:16)
9. What extreme measures should be used if a wrongdoer turns a deaf ear to all pleas to reconcile? (18:17)
10. Who watched with dismay as the first servant refused to have mercy on the second? Why? (18:31)
11. How did the king react to the news he heard and how did Jesus apply this parable? (18:32-35)
12. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' first and second question? (19:4-6, 8)



Sort, Organize, Gain Understanding...

13. Why is it important for us to teach our children about God from the time they are very little?
14. Does it change your image of God to see Him described as a caring shepherd who searches frantically for one lost individual? How?
15. Why is it best to resolve conflicts in private?
16. In what ways has God shown mercy to us?
17. If God is so willing to forgive us, why are we sometimes unwilling to forgive others?
18. Which would be worse: to be unhappily married or never married?



Application for the Journey...

19. How can you become a better role model for a young person today?
20. What seemingly hopeless situation will you begin praying for today?
21. What habits can you develop, beginning today, that will make you a better marriage partner?

A prayer for your journey... "Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life." -Amen

Direction Finder...



My image of God includes these few ideas (circle your choices)...

God is...

boundless	infinite	loving
sovereign	holy	spiteful
perfect	all-knowing	good
faithful	angry	jealous
all-powerful	just	merciful
never-changing		eternal
giving	limited	gracious
wise	impartial	wrathful



GOD'S WRATH

Wrath is "the personal manifestation of God's holy, moral character in judgment against sin. Wrath is neither an impersonal process nor irrational and fitful like anger. It is in no way vindictive or malicious. It is holy indignation—God's anger directed against sin. God's wrath is an expression of His holy love. If God is not a God of wrath, His love is no more than frail, worthless sentimentality; the concept of mercy is meaningless; and the Cross was a cruel and unnecessary experience for His Son."

(Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary. Nashville: T. Nelson) (See also Holman Bible Dictionary)

The Apostle Paul addressing even "religious" readers who may not be truly regenerate warns that "because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality (note: their deeds don't save them but are external evidence of internal regeneration), eternal life but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation." (Ro 2:5-8)

A pastor I know has a pithy title for his sermon on God's wrath (A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God), explaining that... "Sometimes the title tells the whole story. My sermon today is about the wrath of God. It is truly a forgotten doctrine, even in the evangelical church. I'll dare say that many of you have never heard a sermon on God's wrath—that is, not a full sermon devoted to this one topic. The reasons for this apparent neglect are not hard to find. Most of us would rather hear about love and grace. I know I would rather preach about God's grace. After all, to speak of the wrath of God makes us appear narrow-minded, judgmental, and God help us, fundamentalist. **The thought that nice people we know might someday go to eternal hell is so overwhelming—and so disheartening—that we'd much rather not think about it at all.**

No Need to Apologize - Many Christians feel as if they have to apologize for this doctrine. Some think it a blemish on God's character. Others think that God's wrath is inconsistent with his love. Perhaps if you brought a friend this morning, you feel you need to say a word of apology after the sermon is over. Please don't! There is no need to apologize for God's Word so long as it is fairly and graciously presented. And I intend to be both fair and gracious in what I have to say.

Two facts stare us in the face:

1. **The Bible says more about wrath than about love.**
2. **Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven.**

We may speculate as to the reasons behind those two facts, but no amount of reasoning can change the truth. The Bible is filled with warnings about God's wrath and about eternal judgment. I would not be a faithful pastor if I did not deal with this topic. God has made no secret of his wrath, and neither should we.

Here's a working definition: *God's wrath is his settled hostility toward sin in all its various manifestations. God's wrath is his holy hatred of all that is unholy. It is his righteous indignation at everything that is unrighteous.*

Please note these distinctions. God's wrath is not...

- Uncontrollable rage.
- Vindictive bitterness.
- God losing his temper.

In fact, the Bible says in more than one place that God is "slow to anger" (Neh 9:17; Psalm 103:8). God never "loses his temper" the way we do. Wrath is God's "natural" response to sin in the universe. He cannot overlook it, he cannot wink at it, he cannot pretend it is not there.

- Wrath is what happens when holiness meets sin!
- Wrath is what happens when justice meets rebellion!
- Wrath is what happens when righteousness meets unrighteousness!
- Wrath is what happens when perfect good meets pure evil!

As long as God is God, he cannot overlook sin. As long as God is God, he cannot stand by indifferently while his creation is destroyed. As long as God is God, he cannot dismiss lightly those who trample his holy will. As long as God is God, he cannot wink when men mock his name."