

Matthew 18:10-14

Sermon date 11/23/2025

Connect

- 1) What's the most ridiculous or farthest place you've ever gotten lost (as a child or adult)?

Unpack It

What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon and why? What was a takeaway or something that left you wondering about?

Looking Back

Matthew 18:10-14 falls within a larger section where Jesus teaches about life in the community of believers. This passage is part of Jesus' response to a question from the disciples about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1). In the ancient world, children were considered low in social status, so Jesus' elevation of their value would have been radical. His use of a child to illustrate humility and dependence on God sets the stage for this parable about God's care for the "little ones," both children and those who are vulnerable or marginalized in the faith community.

In verses 10-14, Jesus tells a short parable about a shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to find the one that went astray. This teaching highlights the deep value God places on each individual, especially the wandering or lost. This was a significant theme for Jesus' audience, who would have been familiar with Old Testament imagery of God as a shepherd (e.g., Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34). Jesus' focus on pursuing the one straying sheep offers a contrast to the prevailing religious mindset of the time, which often prioritized purity and exclusion over restoration.

Diving In

Read together: Matthew 18:10-14

Diving Deeper

- 1) Who do you think the "little ones" refer to in this context—children, the vulnerable, believers who wander, or someone else?
- 2) Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the importance of "not despising" the little ones?

- 3) How does this parable challenge the way we view people who have strayed from the faith?
- 4) Which character or element in the parable do you most relate to right now—the shepherd, the lost sheep, or the ninety-nine?
- 5) Is there someone in your life right now who might feel forgotten or overlooked? What might God be inviting you to do?
- 6) What “good news” does this passage offer you today, and how might you share that encouragement with someone else?

Closing It Out

- 7) Suggested prayer time together to close out: Pray for someone that you love would fall in love with Jesus.