

Little Ones

Scripture Reading — Matthew 18:1-5, 10-14

“In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.”
—Matthew 18:14—

A good place to start our labor of loving our neighbor is with our little neighbors: children— abused, bullied, orphaned, trampled-in-war-zones, failing-in-school children. There are many places where we can help—schools, libraries, hospitals, social agencies, churches, and more. We can also help as we do our daily work.

One day I saw a family anxiously gathered at the library counter as the librarian told them their outstanding fine was past the limit where they could take out more books. The father did not have enough money; the children looked disappointed that they could not take out books. Then the librarian found a solution: “Pay what you can now to get below the fine limit, and you may borrow the books.” Joy returned and learning continued because of a loving use of the rules.

Our idea of loving our neighbors expands when we remember that “these little ones” are all who humbly follow Jesus like a child. Jesus explains the reverse math of his kingdom with his story of the lost sheep. We could rationalize that one percent loss on a hundred sheep is not bad, but the Good Shepherd risks all to go after one lonely, lost sheep. That logic could get us into some hard, hopeless situations, but today’s verse provides hope, for our “Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.”

Prayer

Father in heaven, please help us to be humble and to see the needs of little ones and others overlooked by our world. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

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