

**Sermon Outline**  
“Caring for our Brothers”  
Matthew 18:6-9

- I.** Focus of the Discourse: Relationships within the Community of Faith
- a.** Jesus responds to the question: Who is the greatest?
    - 1. The example of the child vv. 1-5 – A revised social order
    - 2. The problem of causing offenses vv. 6-20
    - 3. The problem of forgiving offenses vv. 21-35
  - b.** The emphasis is *not* on individual behavior (humility), but on each one’s *behavior in relation to others* in the community of faith.
  - c.** Thoughts of “status” must be set aside, since we are all “little ones” in the Kingdom of Heaven vv. 3, 4, 6, 10, 14.
- II.** The warning regarding treatment of fellow believers vv. 6-7
- a.** The parallel construction of vv. 5 & 6
    - Receive such a child v. 5
    - Offend such a little one v. 6Not only must we receive such a child, we must also take care not to push one another to fatally stumble.
  - b.** Who are the “little ones?” *cf.* 10:42; 25:40, 45
    - Those who “believe in me” *cf.* the centurion in 8:5-13
  - c.** Disciples must take care not to damage their trust.
    - Rom 15:1-2; I Cor 8:10-13
    - Do not discourage the faithful v. 10
    - Do not unfairly criticize the faithful
    - Do not fail to care for the faithful
    - Do not fail to forgive the trespasses of the faithful vv. 21-35
  - d.** Better to be destroyed (*cf.* 5:29-30)
    - See Rev 18:1 (Jer 51:63-64 - Babylon); Mt 8:28-32 (pigs)
    - “Our life and our death is with our neighbor; if we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalize our brother, we have sinned against Christ.” — Anthony the Great (251-356)
- III.** The double woe as a strong warning vv. 8-9
- a.** Woe to the world
    - 1. The *people* of the world are in view *cf.* 4:8; 5:14; 26:13
    - 2. The world suffers from stumbling *cf.* 13:37-43
  - b.** Woe to those with whom stumbling originates
    - 1. Disciples should not be causing stumbling (*cf.* 26:24)
    - 2. Disciples should take great precautions against this
      - “It is better” – two hyperbolic examples *cf.* 7:3-5
      - To be maimed than sin against God 5:29-30
      - To be maimed than cause stumbling vv. 8-9