

# “The Extreme Importance of Keeping Jesus Front and Center”

Matthew 18:1-14

*The Gospel of Matthew*

## Theme:

The gospel is *the* clear and direct path to God; anything else is scandalous and damnable.

## Outline:

- I. The Extreme Question – who is the greatest
- II. The Extreme Answer – deny, die, follow / “Unless you become like a child you won’t even enter the Kingdom” [they are worried about being great and Jesus is only speaking of getting in] The negation in Greek (οὐ μή, *ou mē*) is very strong here.  
In fact,
  - It would be better to die physically, than to lead someone [i.e. a child] away from believing in Jesus spiritually (vv. 5, 6).
  - It would be better to live physically maimed and enter the kingdom, than to die spiritually “whole” and enter into hell (vv. 7-9).
  - God is passionately pursuing to restore the “one child” who has strayed from the flock (vv. 10-14).
- III. The Extreme Warning [scandal] – Keeping people out / “Do not become an obstacle to the gospel.”  
i.e. Pharisees, etc.
  - The scandal consists of blocking others from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. This is what the Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees were doing. The Religious establishment was keeping people from entering the kingdom of God. They are the recipients of the WOE (Matt. 23:13-28).
  - The great scandal is to teach works righteousness.
  - The great scandal that is unforgiveable is to teach that somehow you can do what only Jesus does.
  - That is the offense that demands church discipline. Anything that would divert the church from carrying forward this message is to be checked at the door.
- IV. The Extreme Response – Drown (v. 6), cut off (v. 8), put out (v. 17)
- V. The Extreme Mission (vv. 6, 10-14)
- VI. The Extreme Forgiveness “Anything other than gospel scandal is to be forgiven.” (vv. 21-35).

*Continued on the other side. . .*

**Author's Emphasis:**

The gospel is *the* clear and direct path to God; anything else is scandalous and damnable.

**Shepherding the Sheep:** (WHAT'S NEXT?)

1. Know the gospel path [small tract].
2. Keep the path cleared of congestion and clutter.
3. We are to fight against anyone or anything that would congest or clutter the clear gospel path.