

Matthew 18;
Luke 10

Come, Follow Me

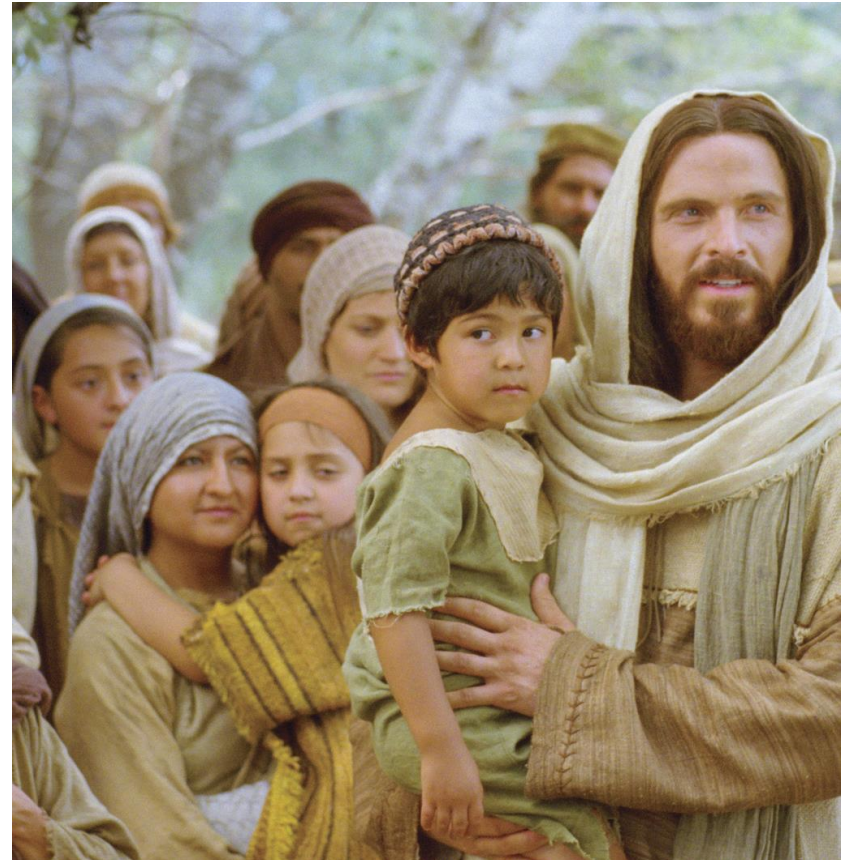


Matthew 23:12 As ye have done it unto me of the Least of these

“Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” (Matt. 18.1)

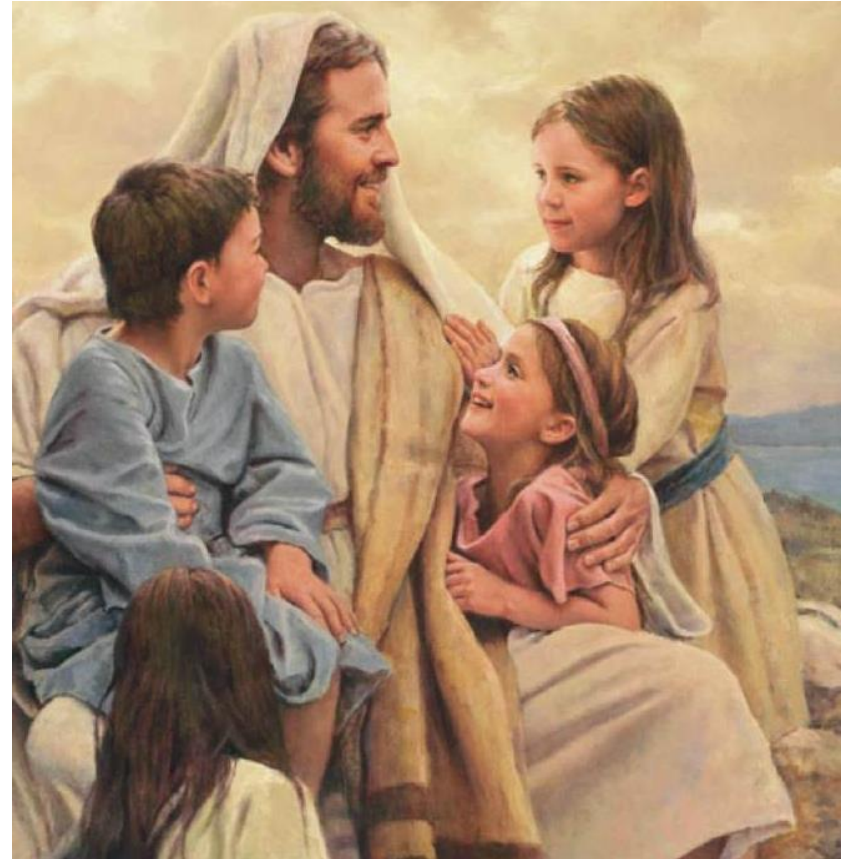
Some Jewish texts speak of different rewards and ranks in the kingdom. Rank and status were issues that members of ancient society confronted daily. Jewish sources valued the virtue of humility, often extolling rabbis who humbled themselves, for example, before other rabbis or before their parents. Yet such humility was rarely expressed toward children or by exalting children.

(Keener, [*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 89.)

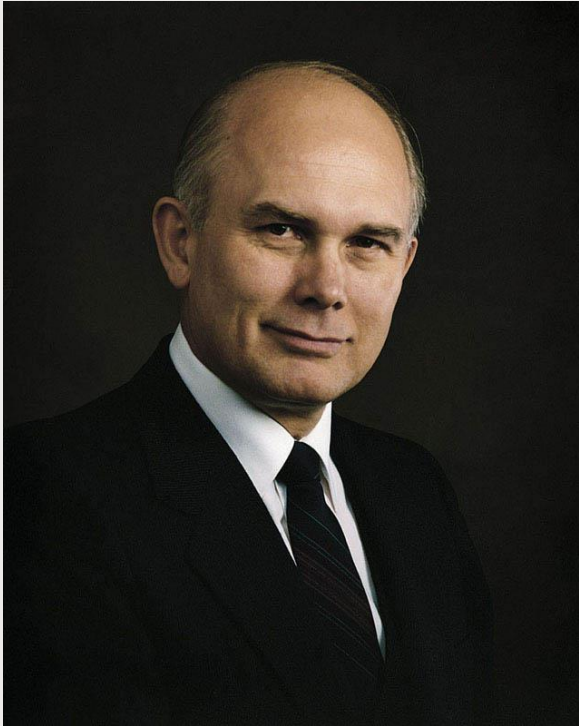


How to handle offenses and protect the Innocent (Matt. 18.1-14)

Dealing with offences – Note the progression. First, we save the person who is harmed (Matt. 18.1-6). Next, we save the body, or the body of Christ, meaning the Church (Matt. 18.7-10), by cutting out that which is destroying the body. Finally, we also focus on saving that which is “lost” (Matt. 18.11-14). You see, even those which harm others, at least to God, are “little ones” (Matt. 18.14) in need of saving. All sheep matter to the Good Shepherd.



“Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone” (Matt. 18.15)



Before Latter-day Saints initiate litigation they have a duty to pursue the settlement of grievances personally or with the aid of a mediator. This duty is grounded in the same eternal principles used to counsel the Saints against conflict and controversy...

Since litigation almost inevitably involves contention and is prevented by reconciliation and forgiveness, these teachings stand as a strong direction for Latter-day Saints to use every reasonable means to compose their differences and avoid litigation with their fellow members or others.

Dallin H. Oaks, [The Lord's Way](#), chapter 6 “Litigation,” Deseret Book, 1995.

The Unmerciful Servant and the 10,000 Talents (Matt. 18.23-35)

Right: The Unforgiving Servant, Scot's Church,
Melbourne.



10,000 Talents

The sum of 10,000 talents was nothing less than astronomical. In fact, the number 10,000 and the measure of a talent were "the highest magnitudes in use" — "10,000 is the highest number used in reckoning, and **the talent is the largest currency unit in the whole of the Near East.**" In other words, the Lord was using figures specifically designed to emphasize the outrageous magnitude of the debt. A talent represented a particular weight in gold or silver, rather than a denomination of money. That weight could equal different values at different times.





10,000 Talents

However, during the first century A.D., it is estimated that 10,000 talents equaled 100,000,000 denarii. One denarius was a typical day's wage for a common laborer. If that laborer worked three hundred days a year, **it would take about 33 years for him to be able to purchase one talent.** And it would take over 300,000 years to earn 10,000 talents, the sum of the servant's debt. To give it another perspective, Josephus recorded that a year's combined taxes for all of Judea, Idumea, Samaria, Galilee, and Perea at the time of the death of Herod the Great (4 B.C.) came to only 800 talents.

Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry, [Understanding the Parables of Jesus Christ](#), "The Unmerciful Servant," Deseret Book, 2010. Above: Jan van Hemessen's depiction of the king and the servant (1556).



Do not be like the unmerciful servant

The message of the parable is that we should forgive others just as God has forgiven us. The king in the story represents Jesus Christ, who has forgiven us of our sins as we repent and come unto him. The unmerciful servant represents those who refuse to forgive others, despite being forgiven themselves. The parable shows that when we refuse to forgive others, we are essentially rejecting God's forgiveness and inviting judgment upon ourselves.

As the Prophet Joseph Smith emphasized, “The nearer we get to our Heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs.”

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 241. Left: Domenico Fetti's depiction of the Unmerciful Servant (1620).

“Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you” (Luke 10.20)

One interpretation of Luke 10.20 is that Jesus is cautioning his disciples against putting too much emphasis on the miracles they were able to perform. Instead, he is reminding them that their true source of joy and security is not in their ability to perform miracles, but in the fact that their names are written in heaven. This interpretation can be seen as a reminder to Latter-day Saints to keep their focus on their relationship with God and the things that matter most, rather than getting too caught up in the temporary successes and failures of this world.



The Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37)

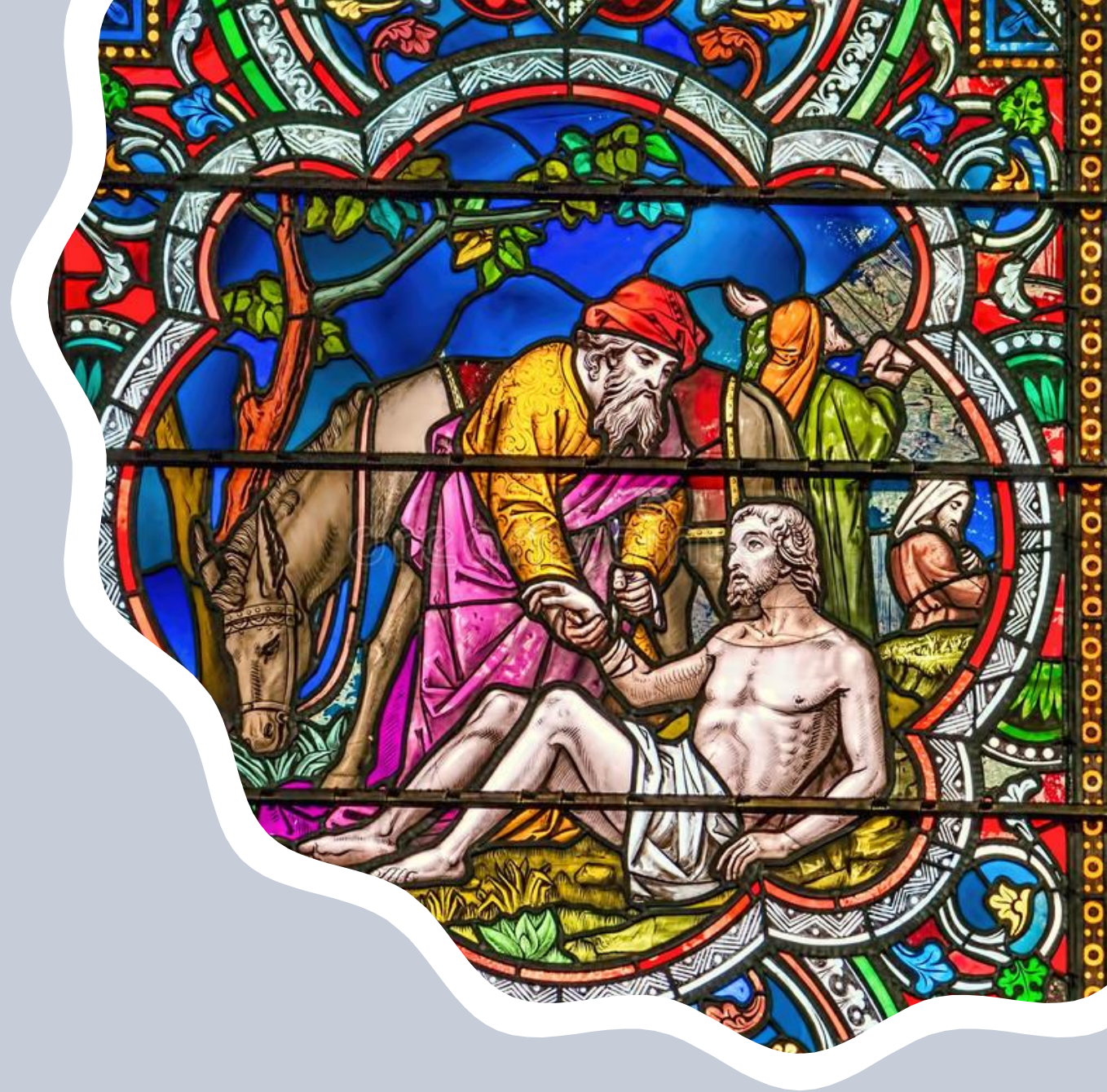
The parable of the Good Samaritan can be seen as a type or allegory for the fall of Adam and the redemption of man through Christ. In the story, the beaten and left-for-dead man represents humanity in a state of sin and death, after the fall of Adam. The lack of care and compassion shown by the priest and Levite represents the inability of the law to save and redeem humanity. However, the Good Samaritan represents Jesus, who comes to save and redeem humanity by showing compassion and love.



The Good Samaritan

Just as the Good Samaritan takes the beaten man (who can represent Adam and Eve in their fallen condition) to an inn and pays for his care, Jesus takes on the sin and death of humanity and pays the price for our redemption through his death on the cross and the power of his resurrection.

In so doing, he can accomplish what man cannot: complete restoration, and a return into Father's presence.



Early interpretations

Origen (185-253 AD) taught:

The man who was going down is Adam. Jerusalem is paradise, and Jericho is the world. The robbers are hostile powers. The priest is the Law, the Levite is the prophets, and the Samaritan is Christ. The wounds are disobedience, the beast is the Lord's body, the *pandochium* (that is, the stable), which accepts all [pan-] who wish to enter, is the Church. And further, the two denarii mean the Father and the Son. The manager of the stable is the head of the Church, to whom its care has been entrusted. And the fact that the Samaritan promises he will return represents the Savior's second coming.

Origen, quoted in Joseph T. Lienhard, trans., *Origen: Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, vol. 94 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1996), 138.



Mary and Martha (Luke 10.38-42)

Luke 10.41

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Μάρθα Μάρθα
ἀμεριμνάς καὶ τυρβάζη περὶ πολλὰ

"And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and distressed about a lot!' (my translation)

Μεριμνάω: anxious, troubled, careful

Τυρβάζη: agitated, distressed, troubled in mind



The principle taught by the Savior in this encounter with Martha and Mary is one that is particularly relevant in our fast-paced, ever-changing world. It is all too easy to become caught up in the things of this world and lose sight of the things that truly matter. However, we must remember that the things of God should always take precedence over the things of man.

This does not mean that we should neglect our responsibilities, but rather that we should seek to understand and prioritize the things of God in our lives. Through the example of Mary and her willingness to learn and listen, we can be reminded to prioritize our spiritual development.