

The Kingdom Of Heaven Kingdom Greatness Matt 18.1-6

We have been discovering what the Word of God reveals about the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven consists of all who claim to belong to the Kingdom of God. There are many who claim to belong to God but follow false worldly religious systems that do not follow the revealing Word of God; Our Lord referred to these as hypocrites. In Matthew our Lord describes what His kingdom should be like in contrast to what those who claim to be a part of the Kingdom of heaven really were like. What a glory it is to know that you are a part of God's promised kingdom and to know that His soon coming Kingdom will be your eternal home.

In our text the disciples were discussing who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? Who would have the greatest authority? Who would have the greatest privileges? Who would have the greatest rewards? Many different things come to mind when one thinks about being the greatest of anything. Our Lord directly answers their question.

Notice in our text,

- A. The Striving For Greatness (vs 1; Philip 3.14; Heb 4.12; 1 Cor 9.24-25) –**
At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? - There is nothing wrong with striving for greatness.

1 Cor 9.24

The Word of God teaches us,

*Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark **for the prize** of **the high calling** of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us **run with patience the race** that is set before us,*

When you run a race you run to win. You win by being the best or the greatest in that race.

Folks, there is nothing wrong with striving for greatness. **Notice in our text that our Lord does not rebuke His disciples for their debate concerning who will be the greatest in God's Kingdom.** Again the Word of God reveals,

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? **So run, that ye may obtain.***²⁵ *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

Our Heavenly Father has imbedded in our character a natural desire to strive for excellence and greatness.

Our Heavenly Father has placed us in this race in which we run and He calls us to **run to win.**

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A. The Striving For Greatness

B. The Signs of Kingdom Greatness

1. The Conversion Of Greatness (vs 2-3) – *And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*³ ***And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, . . .*** – By conversion here we understand the need for,

Gal 4.5

- **The New Birth or salvation.**

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

You are not a child of God unless you are first Born Again.

2. The Adoption Of Greatness (vs 3) – *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, **and become as little children, . . .*** – They that would be GREAT in the kingdom of heaven must become as children.

Some would misunderstand the statement of our Lord to mean to become immature and childish. Our Lord is implying no such thing.

He is calling us to become the Children of God.

- **The Adoption of Sons** – To become the child of God

Galatians 4:5-7 *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive **the adoption of sons.***⁶ *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

⁷ *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

Eph 2.11

John 1:12-13 But as many **as received him**, to them gave he power to **become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name:
¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

One must be a child of God in order to achieve greatness in the kingdom of Heaven. You are not a part of the kingdom of heaven if you are not a New Born child of God.

- **A Citizen of Heaven** – When one is adopted into the family of our God, as they are at the very moment of their salvation, then they also become a citizen of heaven.

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Ephesians 2:11-13 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; ¹² That at that time **ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:** ¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Eph 2.19

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, **but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;**

Only those who are born again will have an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said,

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, **ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

Understand that you must be,

- Born Again to see an entrance into heaven – The adoption of sons
- A Child of God to have an entrance into heaven
- A Citizen of Heaven to know greatness in heaven.

3. **The Humility of Greatness (vs 3-4) - And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

- **The Trust in Humility** – A child will trust with greater simplicity than an adult. Our Lord called a little child and set him in the midst of His disciples. With simple trust the child came to our Lord.

So the children of God needs to conquer their adult pride, in respect to our Heavenly Father, and must trust God.

We must trust the Word of God. When you know and trust the Word of God then you will have Biblical Faith. To trust the Word of God is to trust what God says in His Word.

**Trust and obey,
for there's no other the way,
to be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.**

- **The Obedience in Humility** – When our Lord called the little child the child came. **The little child obeyed**. Do not make the mistake of thinking you can ignore the will and Word of God and somehow be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In order to obey God then you must know the Word of God.

In order to know the Word of God you must desire the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2 **As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**

- **The Love of Humility** – A normal child loves their parents and loves other people. Hence for kingdom greatness we must,

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- Love God Greatly
- Love our fellow person as ourselves.

The two Great Commandments given by our Lord.

- 4. The Ministry of Greatness (vs 5) –** *And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.* – In our Lord’s kingdom there is Ministry.

The seven fold ministry of our Lord’s kingdom, (As given to the Church of our Lord)

- **Evangelism** – The great commission calls the Church to bring people to salvation.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

A Church cannot be a Great Commission Church unless it people are Great Commission Christians.

- **Assimilation** – The great commission calls the Church to bring people into the body of Christ, the Church. This is the Baptism in the Great Commission.
- **Discipleship** – The great commission calls the Church to teach people the Word of God.
- **Ministry** – The Church of our Lord is called to minister to one another within the Church and to our community around our Church.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

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- **Worship** – The Church of our Lord is called to Worship our Lord as a collective body. How do you know when you have worshipped our Lord? You will surrender to our Lord and Obey Him.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

- **Missions** – The Church is called to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth.

*Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: **and ye shall be witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

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- **Prayer** – The Church and its members are called to pray and intercede for one another and for our world.

*Ephesians 6:18 **Praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

- 5. The Warning in Greatness (vs 6)** – *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* – Be very careful about how you treat those who belong to our Lord. Minister to them in keeping with the Word of God. Because if you cause the Children of our Lord to stumble there will be a stern accounting with our Lord one day soon.

It is clear to me that this verse in our text is speaking of Christians and the way they care for and disciple other Christians. If you think our Lord is not keenly aware of His children, you had better think again. He has said that every one of the hair on their head is numbered by our Lord.

C. The Struggle of Kingdom Greatness

Notice in our text that our Lord never says that one disciple will be greater than another. We do not compete against one another for greatness in the Kingdom

of our Lord. **Every born again Child of God has the opportunity to achieve eternal greatness.**

Your Only Competition For Kingdom Greatness is you.

I will achieve my kingdom greatness as I help you strive to achieve your kingdom greatness. Remember the ministry part of achieving greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, a large part of this ministry is my helping your to achieve kingdom greatness.

We must stop thinking with a mortal mindset. **The corrupt worldly mindset that believes that I can only truly be great if those around me are not as great as me.**

When it comes to our Lord's Kingdom and Greatness in His kingdom, we can all be overcomers and we can all be truly great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

If you fail to receive rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ, or if you suffer loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ as many will, it will be no one's fault but yours.

You are responsible for your heavenly greatness.

Let us all overcome together.

Let us all help each other to achieve Kingdom Greatness.

But always remember that you cannot achieve Kingdom Greatness until you are first born again.

CrossRoads Baptist Church, Jan 5, 2020

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