

Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of God?

Matthew 18:1-6

Intro:

1. This question was asked 3 times by the Lord's disciples.
 - a. In **Lk 9:46-48**, right after the transfiguration, when Jesus announced His crucifixion.
 - b. Here in **Matt 18**, after they had arrived in Capernaum from the transfiguration.
 - c. In **Matt 20:20-28** when James & John's mom lobbies the Lord for special positions for her sons in His kingdom.
2. So - what is the Lord's answer to this very important question?

I. v3 - The One Who is Willing to be Converted

A. **Change** (στρέφω) = to turn around, to change your life, so - to commit your life to a different Lord.

1. The lord of the world's ways is Satan.
 - a. **Mk 8:33** - But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."
 - b. **Lk 4:5-7** - The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."
2. The way of the world is to seek greatness.
 - a. By dominating others. **ILL: Absalom prepared chariots to ride in & 50 men to run in front of him (II Sam 15:1).**
 - b. By seeking power & admiration. **ILL: The Tower of Babel was built to make a name for themselves (Gen 11:1-9).**

B. God's plan for conversion to Him.

1. Recognize that you are lost.
2. Realize that because of the cross you can be found.
3. Trust Lord Jesus to provide the salvation He promised. That's faith!
4. Desire to commit your life to Him. That's repentance!
5. Make this commitment known publically through your Good Confession & your baptism.
6. Through the power of God's Holy Spirit begin to walk with the Lord daily & grow spiritually. Develop the habit of Bible study, fellowship & prayer!

II. v4 - The One Who is Willing to Be as Humble as a Child

A. Lord Jesus said a child should be your example; not childish, but child like!

1. Being childish is being:
 - a. Gullible & easily deceived.
 - b. Short sighted by choosing what will bring immediate satisfaction.
 - c. Selfish & needing continual discipline.
 - d. Immature & lacking responsibility.
2. Being child like. Look at a typical 6 year old!
 - a. They are willing servants.
 - b. They recognize their position in the family chain of command.
 - c. They are humble.

B. God's word tells us how to be humble!

1. **Rom 12:3** - Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
2. **Gal 6:3** - If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
3. **Matt 23:12** - For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

III. v5-6 - The One Who is Willing to Give Himself to Others

A. **v5** - Whoever welcomes someone welcomes the Lord.

1. **ILL: The Sheep & the Goats (Matt 25:31-46).**
2. **Welcome (δέχομαι)** = receive or show hospitality.
3. This implies taking a certain amount of responsibility for them.
 - a. When you receive a guest, either a friend or a stranger, it implies responsibility.
 - b. When you bear or adopt a child - you take responsibility for them.
 - c. The greatest earthly example must be caring for a special child. **ILL: "Welcoming a Special Child"**.

B. **v6** - Whenever you place a stumbling block in the way of someone seeking a spiritual life & turn them off, you're in big trouble with the Lord!

1. The millstone/drowning practice was capital punishment in Syria & Greece during this time.
2. So - the implication here is God's wrath, spiritual death, eternal punishment.
3. **ILL: The church's rejection of the prostitute!**

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' - Matthew 25:40!"

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