



SUNDAY CLASS

6/7/09

Key Verses: Matthew 18: 1-6

Matthew 18 (New International Version)

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. ⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

"The gospels are, in short, a record of what Jesus began both to do and to teach. In the foregoing chapter, we had an account of his doings, in this, of his teachings; probably, not all at the same time, in a continued discourse, but at several times, upon divers occasions, here put together, as near akin.

We have here,

I. Instructions concerning humility (v. 1-6).

II. Concerning offences in general (v. 7), particularly offences given,

1. By us to ourselves (v. 8, 9).

2. By us to others, (v. 10-14).

3. By others to us; which are of two sorts,

(1.) Scandalous sins, which are to be reprov'd (v. 15-20).

(2.) Personal wrongs, which are to be forgiven (v. 21-35). See how practical Christ's preaching was; he could have revealed mysteries, but he pressed plain duties, especially those that are most displeasing to flesh and blood."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 18:1 (New International Version)

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"As there never was a greater pattern of humility, so there never was a greater preacher of it, than Christ; he took all occasions to command it, to commend it, to his disciples and followers."

****MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE*

Mark 9:33-37 (New International Version)

Who is Greatest?

³³They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" ³⁴But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. ³⁵Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." ³⁶He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Luke 9:46-48 (New International Version)

Who Will Be the Greatest

⁴⁶An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. ⁴⁸Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."

"The occasion of this discourse concerning humility was an unbecoming contest among the disciples for precedence; they came to him, saying, among themselves (for they were ashamed to ask him, Mark 9:34),

Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

They mean not, who by character (then the question had been good, that they might know what graces and duties to excel in), but who by name. They had heard much, and preached much, of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of the Messiah, his church in this world; but as yet they were so far from having any clear notion of it, that they dreamt of a temporal kingdom, and the external pomp and power of it. Christ had lately foretold his sufferings, and the glory that should follow, that he should rise again, from whence they expected his kingdom would commence; and now they thought it was time to put in for their places in it; it is good, in such cases, to speak early. Upon other discourses of Christ to that purport, debates of this kind arose (Matthew 20:19-20; Luke 22:22-24); he spoke many words of his sufferings, but only one of his glory; yet they fasten upon that, and

overlook the other; and, instead of asking how they might have strength and grace to suffer with him, they ask him, "Who shall be highest in reigning with him.""

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

*****Note, Many love to hear and speak of privileges and glory, who are willing to pass by the thoughts of work and trouble.**

They look so much at the crown, that they forget the yoke and the cross. So the disciples here did, when they asked,

Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

*****Note, Those are truly great who are truly good; and they will appear so at last, when Christ shall own them as his, though ever so mean and poor in the world.**

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 9:10 (New International Version)

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples.

Luke 6:1-5 (New International Version)

Lord of the Sabbath

¹One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. ²Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ³Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ⁵Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

John 6:3 (New International Version)

³Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.

Acts 6:1-5 (New International Version)

The Choosing of the Seven

¹In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of

God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." ⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

"1. They suppose that all who have a place in that kingdom are great, for it is a kingdom of priests.

2. They suppose that there are degrees in this greatness. All the saints are honorable, but not all alike so; one star differs from another star in glory. All David's officers were not worthies, nor all his worthies of the first three.

3. They suppose it must be some of them, that must be prime ministers of state. To whom should King Jesus delight to do honor, but to them who had left all for him, and were now his companions in patience and tribulation?

4. They strive who it should be, each having some pretence or other to it. Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him; he expects to be lord-chancellor, or lord-chamberlain of the household, and so to be the greatest. Judas had the bag, and therefore he expects to be lord-treasurer, which, though now he come last, he hopes, will then denominate him the greatest. Simon and Jude are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the Prince, and therefore hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and why should not he be first preferred?

*****Note, We are very apt to amuse and humor ourselves with foolish fancies of things that will never be.**

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

John 3:35 (New International Version)

³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

John 13:20 (New International Version)

²⁰I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

"The discourse itself, which is a just rebuke to the question, Who shall be greatest? We have abundant reason to think, that if Christ ever intended that Peter and his successors at Rome should be heads of the church, and his chief vicars on earth, having so fair an occasion given him, he would now have let his disciples know it; but so far is he from this, that his answer disallows and condemns the thing itself. Christ will not lodge such an authority or supremacy any where in his church; whoever pretend to it are usurpers; instead of settling any of the disciples in this dignity, he warns them all not to put in for it."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 18:2-3 (New International Version)

²He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:13-16 (New International Version)

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.



“Christ here teaches them to be humble,

1. By a sign (v. 2); He called a little child to him, and set him in the midst of them. Christ often taught by signs or sensible representations (comparisons to the eye), as the prophets of old.

******Note, Humility is a lesson so hardly learned, that we have need by all ways and means to be taught it.***

When we look upon a little child, we should be put in mind of the use Christ made of this child. Sensible things must be improved to spiritual purposes. He set him in the midst of them; not that they might play with him, but

that they might learn by him. Grown men, and great men, should not disdain the company of little children, or think it below them to take notice of them. They may either speak to them, and give instruction to them; or look upon them, and receive instruction from them. Christ himself, when a child, was in the midst of the doctors, Luke 2:46.

2. By as sermon upon this sign; in which he shows them and us,

(1.) **The necessity of humility**, v. 3. His preface is solemn, and commands both attention and assent; Verily I say unto you, I, the Amen, the faithful Witness, say it, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"The disciples, when they put that question (v. 1), thought themselves sure of the kingdom of heaven; but Christ awakens them to be jealous of themselves. They were ambitious of being greatest in the kingdom of heaven; Christ tells them, that, except they came to a better temper, they should never come thither.

*****Note, many that set up for great ones in the church, prove not only little, but nothing, and are found to have no part or lot in the matter.**

Our Lord designs here to show the great danger of pride and ambition; whatever profession men make, if they allow themselves in this sin, they will be rejected both from God's tabernacle and from his holy hill. Pride threw the angels that sinned out of heaven, and will keep us out, if we be not converted from it. They that are lifted up with pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil; to prevent this, we must become as little children, and, in order to do that, must be born again, must put on the new man, must be like the holy child Jesus; so he is called, even after his ascension, Acts 4:27.

Acts 4:27 (New International Version)

²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people^a of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 19:14 (New International Version)

¹⁴Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Luke 18:17 (New International Version)

¹⁷I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Mark 9:42 (New International Version)

Causing to Sin

⁴²"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

Luke 17:2 (New International Version)

²It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

"What it is that Jesus requires and insists upon.

First, "You must be converted, you must be of another mind, and in another frame and temper, must have other thoughts, both of yourselves and of the kingdom of heaven, before you be fit for a place in it. The pride, ambition, and affectation of honor and dominion, which appear in you, must be repented of, mortified, and reformed, and you must come to yourselves."

*****Note, Besides the first conversion of a soul from a state of nature to a state of grace, there are after-conversions from particular paths of backsliding, which are equally necessary to salvation.**

Every step out of the way by sin, must be a step into it again by repentance. When Peter repented of his denying his Master, he was converted.

Secondly, You must become as little children.

*****Note, Converting grace makes us like little children, not foolish as children (1 Corinthians 14:20), nor fickle (Ephesians 4:14), nor playful (Matthew 11:16); but, as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the word (1 Peter 2:2); as children, we must be careful for nothing, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us (Matthew 6:31); we must, as children, be harmless and inoffensive, and void of malice (1 Corinthians 14:20), governable, and under command (Galatians 4:2); and (which is here chiefly intended) we must be humble as little children, who do not take state upon them, nor stand upon the punctilios of honor; the child of a gentleman will play with the child of a beggar (Romans 12:16), the child in rags, if it have the breast, is well enough pleased, and envies not the gaiety of the child in silk; little children have no great aims at great places, or projects to raise themselves in the world; they exercise not themselves in things too high for them; and we should in like manner behave, and quiet ourselves, Psalms 131:1-2.**

As children are little in body and low in stature, so we must be little and low in spirit, and in our thoughts of ourselves. This is a temper which leads to other good dispositions; the age of childhood is the learning age.

What stress he lays upon this; Without this, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

*****Note, Disciples of Christ have need to be kept in awe by threatening, that they may fear lest they seem to come short, Hebrews 4:1.**

Hebrews 4:1 (New International Version)

A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God

¹Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

1 Corinthians 14:20 (New International Version)

²⁰Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

1 Peter 2:2 (New International Version)

²Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Matthew 5:20 (New International Version)

²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

1 Corinthians 8:12 (New International Version)

¹²When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Matthew 7:21 (New International Version)

²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 19:23-24 (New International Version)

²³Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 9:47 (New International Version)

⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

John 3:5 (New International Version)

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Matthew 18:4-6 (New International Version)

⁴Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. ⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

"He shows the honor and advancement that attend humility (v. 4), thus furnishing a direct but surprising answer to their question. He that humbles himself as a little child, though he may fear that hereby he will render himself contemptible, as men of timid minds, who thereby throw themselves out of the way of preferment, yet the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

*****Note. The humblest Christians are the best Christians, and most like to Christ, and highest in his favor; are best disposed for the communications of divine grace, and fittest to serve God in this world, and enjoy him in another.**

They are great, for God overlooks heaven and earth, to look on such; and certainly those are to be most respected and honored in the church that are most humble and self-denying; for, though they least seek it, they best deserve it.

The special care Christ takes for those that are humble; he espouses their cause, protects them, interests himself in their concerns, and will see that they are not wronged, without being righted. Those that thus humble themselves will be afraid,

That nobody will receive them; but (v. 5), Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. Whatever kindnesses are done to such, Christ takes as done to himself. Whoso entertains a meek and humble Christian, keeps him in countenance, will not let him lose by his modesty, takes him into his love and friendship, and society and care, and studies to do him a kindness; and doth this in Christ's name, for his sake, because he bears the image of Christ, serves Christ, and because Christ has received him; this shall be accepted and recompensed as an acceptable piece of respect to Christ.

Observe, Though it be but one such little child that is received in Christ's name, it shall be accepted.

*****Note. The tender regard Christ has to his church extends itself to every particular member, even the meanest; not only to the whole family, but to every child of the family; the less they are in themselves, to**

whom we show kindness, the more there is of good will in it to Christ; the less it is for their sakes, the more it is for his; and he takes it accordingly.

If Christ were personally among us, we think we should never do enough to welcome him; the poor, the poor in spirit, we have always with us, and they are his receivers. Matthew 25:35-40.

Matthew 25:35-40 (New International Version)

³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'⁴⁰"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.'

They will be afraid that every body will abuse them; the basest men delight to trample upon the humble. This objection he obviates (v. 6), where he warns all people, as they will answer it at their utmost peril, not to offer any injury to one of Christ's little ones. This word makes a wall of fire about them; he that touches them, touches the apple of God's eye.

First, **The crime supposed**: offending one of these little ones that believe in Christ. Their believing in Christ, though they be little ones, unites them to him, and interests him in their cause, so that, as they partake of the benefit of his sufferings, he also partakes in the wrong of theirs. Even the little ones that believe have the same privileges with the great ones, for they have all obtained like precious faith. There are those that offend these little ones, by drawing them to sin (1 Corinthians 8:10, 11), grieving and vexing their righteous souls, discouraging them, taking occasion from their mildness to make a prey of them in their persons, families, goods, or good name. Thus the best men have often met with the worst treatment in this world.

Secondly, **The punishment of this crime**: intimated in that word, Better for him that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. The sin is so heinous, and the ruin proportionally so great, that he had better undergo the sorest punishments inflicted on the worst of malefactors, which can only kill the body.

Note, 1. Hell is worse than the depth of the sea; for it is a bottomless pit, and it is a burning lake. The depth of the sea is only killing, but hell is tormenting. We meet with one that had comfort in the depth of the sea, it was Jonah (Matthew 2:2-4, 9); but never any had the least grain or glimpse of comfort in hell, nor will have to eternity.

2. The irresistible irrevocable doom of the great Judge will sink sooner and surer, and bind faster, than a mill-stone hanged about the neck. It fixes a great gulf, which can never be broken through, Lu. 16:26. Offending Christ's little ones, though by omission, is assigned as the reason of that dreadful sentence, Go ye cursed, which will at last be the doom of proud persecutors."

JESUS' LOVE IS THE MOST UNCONDITIONAL LOVE EVER!!!!!!



RED AND YELLOW BLACK AND WHITE
THEY ARE PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

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RED AND YELLOW BLACK AND WHITE

