



A just weight
and balance



are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Who Is the Greatest?

- Matthew 18:1

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying,

Who is the greatest
in the kingdom of heaven?

- 18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him,
and set him
in the midst of them,

- **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.**

- **18:4 Whosoever therefore
shall humble himself
as this little child, the same
is greatest in the
kingdom of heaven.**

- **Matthew 18:5**

**And whoso shall
receive one such little child
in my name receiveth me.**

- **18:6 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.**

- The section begins with **“At that time.”**
(Matthew 18:1)
- Jesus had been talking **about his suffering and death;**
 - But it was as if the disciples were **on another planet.**
- They are concerned with **who would be the greatest.**

- It may be that Jesus' attention to the three disciples and to Peter as the rock, might have set off the rivalry.

- It would continue in Matthew 20:20-23 with the request of the mother of James and John.

- The point is that the kingdom cannot be gained by merit or force.

- The disciples have to change, they have to become like children in their heart attitudes.

- The person who truly humbles himself will be the greatest in the kingdom.

- A good illustration of this is **King Solomon.**
- He humbled himself and prayed for wisdom to govern the people of Israel, saying, **“I am only a little child”** (1 Kings 3:7).
- And God made him **great in every way.**

- The disciples ask a very revealing question,
- Jesus gives a very revealing answer.

- The disciples asked who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - Jesus took a child and said that unless they turned and became as this little child,
 - They would not get into the Kingdom at all.

- The very fact that they asked that question showed that they had not yet grasped what the kingdom was about.

- Could this inquiry have proceeded from any but the nine disciples
- Who had not been privileged to witness our Lord's transfiguration?
- Peter, James, and John, were surely more spiritual in their views!

- **But, how quickly
we forget!**

- **Mark 10:35**

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

- **10:36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?**
- **10:37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.**

- Jesus said,
"Unless you turn."
- He was **warning** them that they were going in completely **the wrong direction,**
 - **Away** from the Kingdom of Heaven and not towards it.

- In life it is all a question of what are we aiming at?
 - Is it the fulfillment of personal ambition,
 - The acquisition of personal power,
 - The enjoyment of personal prestige.
 - If so we are aiming at precisely the opposite of the Kingdom of Heaven.

- To be a citizen of the Kingdom means the complete forgetting of self,
- The obliteration of self.
 - Jesus says that to reach the kingdom, we must turn around.

- So Jesus said
that in a child

we see the characteristics
which should mark
the true Christian.

- There are many lovely characteristics in a child
- The power to wonder.
 - The power to forgive and to forget.
- The innocence to learn, not to unlearn;
- The innocence to do, not to undo.

- **“Whoever humbles themselves like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”**
(Matthew 18:4).
 - It is giving up claims to power and status.
 - It is knowing our total dependence on God.
 - That is greatness in the kingdom of heaven.

- The child has other great qualities which make him/her the symbol of those who are citizens of the Kingdom.

- First and foremost, there is the quality which is the keynote of the whole passage, the child's humility.

- A child does not wish to push himself forward; rather, he wishes to fade into the background.
- He does not wish for prominence; he would rather be left in obscurity.
- Sadly, it is only as he grows up that his instinctive humility is left behind.

- There is the **child's dependence.**
- To the child a state of dependence **is perfectly natural.**
- He **never thinks** that he can face life by himself.

- He is perfectly content to be utterly dependent on those who love him and care for him.
 - If men would accept the fact of their dependence on God, a new strength and a new peace would enter their lives.

- There is the child's trust.
- The child instinctively trusts his parents that his needs will be met.

- When we were children:
- We set out on a journey with no means of paying the fare,
- With no idea of how to get to our journey's end,
- And yet it never enters our heads to doubt that our parents will bring us safely there.

- The child's humility is the pattern of the Christian's behavior to his fellow-men,
 - And the child's dependence and trust are the pattern of the Christian's attitude towards God, the Father of all.

- Jesus says that whoever receives one such little child in his name receives himself.

- To bring up a child in the way he ought to go, is something which is done not only for the sake of the child, but for the sake of Jesus himself.

- Every parent has a life to save.
- And a soul to save.

- He who brings Jesus and the blessing of Jesus into a child's life is bringing the blessings of eternity into a child's life.

- **Matthew 18:5**

**And whoso shall receive
one such little child
in my name receiveth me.**

- Jesus may well be saying
that the most important people
are not those
who have climbed
to the top of the tree
by pushing everyone else
out of the way,
but the quiet, humble,
simple people,
who have the heart of a child.

- To satisfy the physical needs of a child, to wash his clothes and bind his cuts and soothe his bruises and cook his meals may often seem a very unromantic task;
 - The stove, the sink and the day-to-day drudgery have not much glamour.

- But there is no one
in all this world
who helps Jesus Christ more
than the teacher of the little child.

- All such will find
a glory in the gray,
if in the child
they sometimes glimpse
none other than Jesus himself.

- But the great keynote of this passage is the terrible weight of responsibility it leaves upon every one of us.

- It stresses the terror of teaching another to sin.
- Sadly, it is often others who lead us into sin.
- The Jews took the view that the most unforgivable of all sins is to teach another to sin.

- It stresses the terror of the punishment of those who teach another to sin.
- It would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea.

- The millstone in this case is a **mulos** (moo' los) (<**G3458**>), **onikos** (on-kos') (<**G3684**>).
 - You will notice **two Greek words** listed above.
 - This is the reference Jesus made regarding **this terrible sin.**

- What we have here is two Greek words **melted into one English word.**

- **mulos onikos** was a grinding-stone of such a size **that it needed an ass pulling it.**

- The very size of the millstone **shows the awfulness of the condemnation.**

- Further, in the Greek it is said,
not so much that
the man would be better
to be drowned
in the depths of the sea,
- But that it would be better
if he were drowned
far out in the open sea.
 - pel'-ag-os
(pel' a goss)
(**G_3989**)

- Drowning was sometimes a Roman punishment, but never Jewish.
 - To the Jew it was the symbol of utter destruction.

- **Josephus**
(Antiquities of the Jews
14. 15. 10)
has a terrible account
of a Galilaean revolt
in which the Galilaeans
took the supporters of Herod
and drowned them
in the depths of the Sea of Galilee.

- It has a warning **to silence all evasion.**
- This is a sin-stained world and no one can go out into it without meeting seductions to sin.
 - Jesus says,
"That is perfectly true,
**but that does not lessen
the responsibility**
of the man who is
the cause of a stumbling-block
being placed in the way
of a beginner in the faith."

- It is therefore the Christian's duty to remove stumbling-blocks, never to be the cause of putting them in another's way.

- **How hard it is for us**
to become as little children!
- Our **heads** rule our **hearts**
in so many ways.
 - **We have lost**
the innocence of childhood,
 - **We have lost**
the art of entrusting things
into the hands of our Father.

- We want to do everything for ourselves,
- Because we feel we know best what is good for us.

- Jesus is telling us very clearly that every life is precious in his eyes.
- Every person I meet is invaluable and irreplaceable.

- Jesus turns conventional attitudes upside down:
- The 'little ones', the people whom the world does not rate as important, are the most precious of all.
- Will my attitudes today reflect this?

- Because we are competitive
we are anxious to know
who is the best,
the cleverest,
the greatest.

- **Status** means a great deal to us.
- Jesus **shocks** the disciples by saying that without the humility and simplicity of little children, **we are not even in the race.**

- ‘Despise’ not one of these little ones.
(Matthew 18:10)

- “Despise”
is a strong word.

- It implies
hatred and contempt.

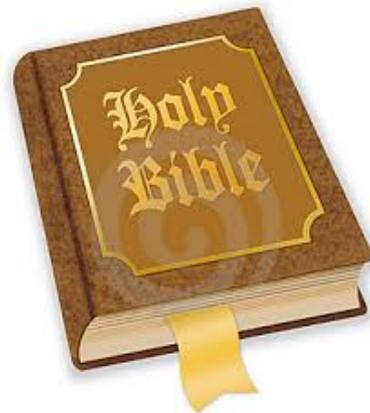
- Our Lord shows His care for the lost,
- The Good Shepherd searches for
the wandering sheep.

- In our lesson for today
Jesus is expressing
His concern
for the church.
- His concern is
for the one
whom nobody wants.
- That's why he looks
for you and me!

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



- 06/17/2018 Tryon, NC

-

