

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

November 5th

Daily Devotional #36

We Are in the Season of DEDICATION

As We Ask, “What Is GOD Preparing Us/for Us to Do?”

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

² He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³ And He said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:1–4 (NIV84)

In years gone by, and in truth until very recently (as in this morning), I missed a very critical part of Jesus’ teaching in this passage. Verse four, “whoever humbles himself like this child” has always been, in my view, the “moral” to the story – and it is. What I’ve missed for years and years, or as Ken Thornton would say, “Hey, that was not there last time (thousand times) I read it!” is verse three:

And (Jesus) said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Remember who Jesus was talking to – His very own disciples! The Big Twelve! The ones that had seen the miracles, heard the teachings, lived with the Master! And they were wrestling with the question of “who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus answer must have blown their socks off (no emails please, I realize they didn’t wear socks back then – it’s just an expressive saying ☺) and caused their heads to start spinning!

The “humble” of verse four comes from the change and becoming in verse three. Humility towards GOD is not shyness, it is a willed choice and efforted change to become trusting and obedient – just like the child in verse two that came to Jesus when He called.

This teaching introduces a series of teachings in Matthew about the centrality and significance of true humility. It really is important for us to recognize only Jesus as

the great Teacher, the True Good, the Only GOD. Our “station” is as His humble servant – no greater, no lesser than anyone else. But infinitely important to and treasured by – as are all others – the Great I AM.

So, in this Season of Dedication, let us – individually and as Family – renew our commitment to *change and become like little children*, intensely loving and trusting Jesus and therein finding great joy and value in living life – Kingdom Life – with each other and all others. Let’s continue to fight against the “pattern of this world” (Romans 12:1-2) and instead adopt and engage in GOD’s wisdom and joy for living (i.e. living life from His perspective and heart which is what we call Kingdom Living).

Now I look at this passage and think, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Jesus is! And He love me and He loves you and He has blessed us with each other... and I am grateful for that and for Him and for you!!!

*Dear Father in Heaven,
May Your Name be well known
As You teach us and help us change
And become like little children
Because You love us
Because You are the Great One
Because You have gifted us with one another.
Help us to fight the world’s pattern of judgment
And need for superiority.
Help us to change and become
Your children -
Loving You
Admiring You
Obedient to You,
And Loving each other
Loving all others
Grateful for all.
Bless us, Jesus,
That we be strong in You
And bless You
By being a loving blessing
To each other and
To this world
As a shining light
For You.
Amen.*