

Being a kingdom person. Matt.18

We began to talk about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus inaugurated this kingdom when he came to earth and began preaching **“repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** We talked about that the Sovereign reign of Christ is not here yet. God’s people are to long for his coming kingdom, the time in which Jesus will return to earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords. As we wait for Jesus to return, **have you ever wondered what you are supposed to do in the meantime?** We are to continue spreading the good news that God’s kingdom is at hand and people need to repent and come to Jesus for salvation.

“A kingdom person” is the one willing to adjust his decisions to God’s decisions even if God’s decision is not the one preferred.” (Tony Evans)

Jesus called those who call God their Father to make God’s kingdom a priority in their lives. He promises that when you seek his kingdom and his righteousness, he will supply your main basic needs. **Matt.6:33**

The disciples’ expectation of the kingdom

The disciples were expecting the kingdom of God to start any moment since Jesus was there with them. They already had expectations concerning the kingdom. Their ideas about the *kingdom was more politically, and geographically* (the restoration of the kingdom to Israel); even after the resurrection, this is what they thought Jesus would do.

The whole idea of the kingdom generated interesting discussion among the apostles, to the point that they got angry at each other.

One time John and James requested Jesus to sit one at his right and the other at his left in his kingdom. The rest of the apostles were indignant (very angry with James and John) that they requested such thing. **(Matt.20:20-24; Mk.10:35-45)**

One time the apostles were arguing among each other as to who was the greatest in the kingdom. **Matt.18.1// Luke9:46; (Luke 22:24)** another argument about who was the greatest right after Jesus told them one of them would betray him).

The disciples were thinking about worldly greatness, the ambition to pursue great things. *We know that in every area in life there are people who are better than others at what they do. In sport, we find good players and great players; there are good students and great students.* We know this in our society. The apostles knew that Jesus was the messiah and eventually will establish what they thought an earthly reign. They wanted to know who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. **Matthew 18:1-4 the apostles brought the question to Jesus and Jesus gave them a response.**

Right in here Jesus gives the answer as to who is the greatest in God’s kingdom. *Jesus used a child as an example to illustrate the type of attitude they must portray in God’s kingdom.*

The kingdom of God doesn’t define greatness as we know it. Jesus used a child, the more vulnerable, smallest person in a family to illustrate how greatness is defined in God’s kingdom.

(v.3) unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

What did Jesus mean by that? He explains it in the following verse. (v.4) **Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

Greatness in the kingdom of heaven is characterized by humility rather than pride.

A kingdom person is characterized by humility rather than pride. Humility has a bad imagery in our society, people view humility as something weak. But even Webster's has a good definition for humility: meekness, modesty. In Scripture humility is associated with meekness.

The poor in spirit Jesus talked about in the sermon on the mountain are Meek or humble. Matt.5:3

In order for us to understand what Jesus means by being humble in the kingdom of heaven we have to look at Jesus himself. He is the greatest example of humility.

In the kingdom of heaven whoever wants to be first, must become last. Whoever wants to lead must be the servant of all. **(Mark 9:33-35)**

In the kingdom of heaven the one who leads or rules must be like the one who serves. Luke 22:26

Even the Son of man didn't come to be served but to serve and give his life for many. **Matt.20:28// Mark 10:45.**

Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. He humbled himself in service to his students and they didn't understand him.

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. **Matt.23:12// Luke 14:11; James 4:10**

A kingdom person exhibits humility.

Paul reminds us to imitate Christ in his humility. **Php.3:3** Do nothing out of self-ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of other. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

C.S. Lewis "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but it's thinking of yourself less."

Jesus emptied himself and didn't hang on to the fact that he is God, he made himself nothing becoming a human being, a servant.

He humbled himself to the point of death and even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name....

What are you to do while you wait for God's kingdom to come? You are to be a kingdom person characterized by humility.

Eph.4:2 Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.

1 Pet. 5:5 Young men in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **This is greatness in the kingdom of heaven.**