

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6TH

DAILY READING ASSIGNMENT: **Matthew 17-20**

"TRUE GREATNESS"

SCRIPTURE Matthew 18:1-10

OBSERVATION

We miss the full impact of the first ten verses of chapter 18 unless we understand the place of women and children in the first century. In short, it wasn't very good. Women were the personal property of men and were, for the most part, terribly mistreated.

Children didn't fair much better. They were largely to be kept away from the men, especially someone as important as Jesus (a rabbi).

How shocking then that Jesus not only welcomed children but told his disciples (then and now) that "unless you turn from your sins and become like little children you will never see the kingdom of heaven."

Jaws dropped at that statement. Audible gasps would have been heard. What fueled the question about who will be greatest in God's kingdom? PRIDE. What was Jesus' response? HUMILITY. Unpretentious, authentic, humble people--like little kids--they are the inheritors of God's kingdom.

And when you think about, it HAS to be that way. Not only is humility one of the clearest character qualities of Jesus (see Philippians 2:1-11), but can you imagine heaven being filled with proud, arrogant people? Who would even want to be there?!

APPLICATION

Being "child-like" is not the same as being "child-ish." It is to approach God with a genuine, humble, grateful heart. It is to delight in being with Jesus, not being pretentious in a sad attempt to impress Jesus. My/Our approach to Jesus should be as humble, transparent and genuine as a small child (the meaning in this text). There goal is not reward but relationship. If we focus on the relationship with Jesus and honor him out of true love and humility, the rewards will be a life well-lived here and heaven when we die.

Sounds good to me...

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding me to set aside my pride and pretension and to come to you with the heart, faith and delight of a little child. It isn't my performance or accomplishments you want. It is me that you want. I can hardly believe that, but I thank you that I matter to you. Help me to reflect my gratitude today by the way I live my life. Amen.

HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND!

S.O.A.P. Entry Author: Nick Twomey