

Final Kingdom: Who gets it?

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Reflection & Discussion

Jesus' Kingdom 'belongs to such as these'

Read and discuss Matthew 18:1-5 & 19:13-15(NIV)

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

2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. **3** And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

13 Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. **14** Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." **15** When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

*What does Jesus do with the disciples' question in these passages?

*What about children makes them like ones we should imitate?

In the Kingdom of God – honor comes from God alone

To enter the Kingdom we don't win honor competitions, we stop playing them.

*How are honor competitions still part of our day now?

*Where do you tend to seek to earn honor? What helps you to practice humility?

Entry is received, not achieved

Read and discuss John 3:1-7(NIV)

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^{must} be born again.'

*What does it mean that we can't generate Kingdom life from our flesh?

*How have you, at times, tried to think your way, believe your way or earn your way to the Kingdom?

After the initial entering of the Kingdom by being born again we don't remain static

We are in constant process of re-entering trust, receiving the kingdom of God again, and stepping back into dependence.

*Where in your life this week have you have taken control and need to allow the Holy Spirit to retake the lead?

*Are there places you feel pressure for your faith to be resolved and finished and impressive? What would re-receiving the Kingdom of God look like this week?

*What makes it difficult for you to live with radical humility, to be dependent and vulnerable, to be willing to be small and last? Is the Holy Spirit saying something specific to you about one of these areas?