

LESSON 12 THE TRANSFIGURATION

AUGUST 12, 2020

True Greatness/Stumbling Blocks
Matthew 18:1-14; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50

TRUE GREATNESS AND STUMBLING BLOCKS

MATTHEW 18:1-14; MARK 9:33-50; LUKE 9:46-50

“They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, ‘What were you discussing on the way?’” (Mark 9:33)

- Luke tells us: *“And an argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.”* (Luke 9:46; cf. Luke 22:24ff)
- *“They kept silent for on the way they had discussed ... which of them was the greatest.”* (Mark 9:34)
- *“Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart ...”* (Luke 9:47)

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What was Jesus’ response?

1. *“Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’”* (Mark 9:35)
 - **“Last”** in what sense? (Philippians 2:3-4)
 - **“Servant of all”** - who does that include?

If one truly seeks preeminence, it will come through true humility and service.

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What was Jesus’ response?

2. *“And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’”* (Matthew 18:2-4)
 - Their **entrance into the kingdom** was in jeopardy.
 - They needed to be **“converted”** or changed in their perspective of themselves. (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6)
 - They needed to **“humble”** themselves **“as this child.”** (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-8)

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Key words Jesus used:

“Last”

“Servant”

“Converted”

“Humble”

“Become like children”

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In what ways are we to **“become like children”**?

First, we’re to become **as they should be**, in accordance with God’s plan, **not as they often are!**

- Humble. (Psalms 25:9; Isaiah 66:2; Matthew 23:12)
- Trusting and Dependent. (Deuteronomy 1:30-33; Proverbs 3:5; 16:20)
- Forgiving. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Submissive. (James 4:7)
- Respectful. (Malachi 1:6; Hebrews 12:9)
- Growing. (Ephesians 4:15; 2 Peter 3:18)
- Eager to please. (Colossians 1:10; Ephesians 5:10)
- Contented. (Philippians 4:11; Hebrews 13:5)
- Seeking refuge (Psalms 18:1-3)
- In fellowship with God.

In what ways are we NOT to **“become like children”**? (Matthew 11:16; Ephesians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 14:20; Hebrews 5:12-14)

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The following Psalm paints a picture of what Jesus is seeking:

Psalms 131:1-3, *“O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me. Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever.”*

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Not just *“become like children”* but willing to *“receive”* a child.

“Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, ‘Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.’” (Mark 9:36-37)

- It was the perspective of many in Jewish society that children never interrupt someone important. (Matthew 19:13-14)

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Requires one to identify with and not feel superior but reach out to the lowly and helpless. (Romans 12:16)

To do so to one so lowly is to do so to Jesus Christ Himself. (cf. Matthew 25:40)

The apostles are slow to learn this lesson. (Mark 10:13-14; cf. James 2:1-7)

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The apostles (John) next become alarmed of *“someone casting out demons in Your name”* who they *“tried to prevent ... because he was not following us.”* (Mark 9:38)

Claiming to do anything *“in Jesus’ name”* doesn’t make it so (Matthew 7:21-23; Acts 19:11ff; cf. Acts 3:6, 16).

Jesus said, *“Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able ... to speak evil of Me.”* (verse 39; cf. Hebrews 2:4)

The point is simple: *“For he who is not against us is for us.”* (verse 40; Matthew 12:30)

- There is no middle ground! (1 Kings 18:21)

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“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ (because you belong to Christ, ESV), truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.” (Mark 9:41; cf. Matthew 10:42)

Such as those who supplied the needs of Jesus and His disciples. (Matthew 10:9-14; 3 John 5-8; Matthew 25:37ff; Mark 14:8)

Jesus’ message: don’t focus on the glory (performing miracles) but on the little acts of service. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:22-25)