

“Greatest in the kingdom of God”

Matthew 18:1-9

Introduction:

- A. Who then is greatest in the kingdom of God?
 - 1. Not necessarily best known or most influential among brethren.
 - 2. Not necessarily greatest secular successes. (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26 ff.)
 - 3. Not necessarily best “achievers”.
 - 4. Not necessarily most self-assured.
 - 5. Not necessarily most ambitious.
- B. Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of God?
 - 1. Who are they?
 - 2. What are their traits?

Discussion:

I. They Are the Converted. (v. 3).

- A. What needs converting?
 - 1. Attitudes and beliefs.
 - 2. Relationships.
 - 3. Priorities and goals.
- B. What changes take place in conversion - depends.
 - 1. Pagan (1 Thess. 1:9) changes more than Jew.
 - 2. Paul changed more than Appolos. (Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-5).
 - 3. Immoral (1 Cor. 6:9-11) more than moral (Acts 10).
 - 4. Denominationalist (Matt. 15:9) more than ambitious brother (Acts 18:1-4).
 - 5. Yet, all must be completely converted to the will of God.

II. They Are the Humble. (v. 4 cf. 1 Pet. 5:5).

- A. God resists the proud. (cf. Prov. 8:13).
 - 1. Pride seeks self-recognition. (Matt. 23:5-13).
 - 2. Pride seeks self-power. (Matt. 18:1-4; 20:25,26).
 - 3. Pride genders strife. (Prov. 13:10; 28:25).
 - 4. Pride precedes destruction. (Prov. 16:18).
 - 5. Pride disqualifies elders. (1 Tim. 3:6).
 - 6. Pride seeks vengeance
- B. God gives grace to the humble.
 - 1. Humbly submits to God and Christ (1 Pet. 5:6; Phil 2:3-11).
 - 2. Humbly serve others. (Matt. 20:26,27).

III. They Are the Honorable. (vs. 6-9)

- A. They are not the cause of scandal or offense.
 - 1. “Offend” from *skandalizo*, to bend a sapling for a snare, hence to cause to stumble (Strong)
 - 2. English word “scandalize” is from this word.
- B. Scandals come. (v.7).
- C. Scandal is serious.
 - 1. To the one causing it. (v. 6-7).
 - 2. To those overcome by it. (v. 8-9).
- D. Honorable, non-scandalous, conduct to characterize Christians.

Conclusion:

- A. Be converted, humble and honorable - be great.
- B. True greatness does not recognize itself.
- C. True greatness is humble enough to submit.