

Christ Church

## **“Kingdom Values”**

Passage: Matthew 18-19

Main Idea: God’s Kingdom is an upside-down Kingdom

Doctrine: Kingdom of Heaven

### **PRAYER**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus moving towards cross; preparing disciples for what was coming

- He’s done that by revealing *Who* He was & the *Work* He came to do

Now, in Chapters 18 & 19, Jesus teaches the disciples how *Who* He is & the *Work* He’s going to do impacts them – what difference His Person & His Work would make in their lives, not just to get them to heaven, but to change them & use them on the way there

- So Jesus goes back to earlier theme in Matthew, Kingdom of Heaven
- A kingdom is a place where there’s someone who’s ruling as king
- God’s Kingdom is “now” & “not yet” = now God’s Kingdom is a *spiritual* Kingdom where He rules as King in hearts of His people
- “Not yet” aspect refers to second coming where Jesus will return to establish God’s Kingdom *physically* on earth & reign as King

Matthew 18 & 19 are about the character of those who belong to Kingdom of Heaven; description of what citizens of God’s Kingdom look like (similar to Sermon on Mount in Matthew 5-7)

Review: Chapters 14-17, Jesus fed thousands with a little boy’s lunch; walked on water; healed the sick; cast out demons

- Then we had Peter’s great confession of Jesus as “*The Christ, Son of the Living God*”; then Jesus pulled back His flesh to show Peter, James & John His glory
- Coming off of all that, in Matthew 18:1, the disciples ask Jesus: “So, *just who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*” Really?
- Notice Jesus didn’t rebuke disciples for desire to be great; they just had wrong idea of *how* to be great; wrong idea of what God values

Different Outline: Go through 2 chapters & see 7 things God values

**Main Idea:** God’s Kingdom is an upside-down Kingdom

- 19:30: “*Many who are first will be last, & last first*” Upside-down
- Open your Scripture Journal to Matthew 18; 7 things God values

## 1. GOD VALUES HUMILITY (18:1-4; 19:13-15)

Jesus answers disciples' question, "Who is greatest in Kingdom of heaven" with an object lesson:

- Verse 2: "Calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never even enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus says, "Become like children"; not childish, but child-like - needy; trusting; vulnerable; not afraid to ask for help; dependent on others

- World despises neediness, but God values it, in fact, He designed us to be needy so we would recognize our need & come to Him
- That's what it means to "turn" = repent; turn from trusting in ourselves to trusting in Jesus – not one & done; every day turning

This is what it means to "humble yourself"

- 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" How? Verse 7: "BY casting all your anxieties on Him"
- We humble ourselves by admitting we need help & turning to Jesus
- God values Humility; can't even *enter* God's Kingdom without it

## 2. GOD VALUES HOLINESS (18:5-9)

Jesus says, don't cause others to sin; don't be a stumbling block to "children in the faith"; not matter of age; talking about new Christians

- Don't judge them for being immature in their knowledge of or application of the Bible; pray for them; share truth with them

Verse 7 interesting: "Woe to the world for temptations to sin. For it is necessary ("inevitable") that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes."

- Sin is inevitable in our fallen world & our fallen natures
- But why does Jesus say "It is necessary that temptations come?"

Massive implications on worldview: God could have created a world with no possibility of sin; or, could have made it so that once we're saved, we never sin again; why is "temptation to sin" necessary?

Several reasons: So Jesus would live in a world filled with temptation & be tempted in every way as we are yet without sin; sympathize us

- Fact we never arrive keeps us dependent on & running to Jesus

- Shows power of the Gospel to not only save us, but to sanctify us
- Sin sets the stage for the cross; no sin means no need for a Savior
- So, God sovereignly ordains sin (*“necessary”*) to prepare for the cross as the greatest display of the fullness of Who He is

So, God is sovereign over fact there are temptations to sin; but we are also responsible; that’s why Jesus says in verses 8-9, get rid of everything that causes you to sin = whether foot or hand or eye

- We must take sin seriously; we must get rid of whatever is tempting us to sin – movies; social media; romance novels; YouTube; friends
- How? By loving Jesus more than we love our sin; more than we love our foot or hand or eye or social media or friends
- How can we love Jesus more? Pray; study Word; rehearse Gospel
- Abide; spend more time with Jesus than with these other things
- The way we *put off* whatever’s causing us to sin is by *putting on* Jesus; God values Holiness; Holy Spirit creates holiness in us

### 3. GOD VALUES COMPASSION (18:10-14)

Parable of Lost Sheep tells us about us: We are stupid sheep who are prone to wander off

But more importantly is what the Parable tells us about God:

- God is Compassionate; He cares for us individually; we may be 1 in a 100, but He will seek & find us & bring us home; why sent Jesus
- Gospel: God doesn’t wait for us to come to Him because we wouldn’t
- God pursues us; God rescues us; God rejoices over us; God keeps us – verse 14: *“It’s God’s will that none of His little ones perish”*
- And what God wills to happen, always happens

We value Compassion in God; He values Compassion in us as we care for others who have wandered off & bring them back into His flock

### 4. GOD VALUES COMMUNITY (18:15-20)

Jesus taught disciples that greatness begins with *humility*; then He taught them to be *holy*, to avoid sin & causing others to sin – but what if another person sins against you?

- Passage dealing with sin in church = *“brother”* who sins against you
  - 3 helpful steps: First, keep matter private; between the 2 of you
- If he doesn’t listen & confess sin, ask for help from others
- Bring in 2 or 3 others to witness the discussion; to help bring clarity to situation; to pray for the offending person AND for you
  - Then, if nothing changes, ask the church for help

- If still refuses to confess & repent of sin, treat them like a “*Gentile and a tax collector*” = unbeliever who needs to know Gospel
- Goal is always reconciliation; to win brother not to win an argument

Verse 20 often misunderstood: “*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them*” = look at context

- Not talking about praying together but about discipline in church
- “*For*” = because; “You are able to discern My will because I’ve given you this authority & because I am with you”
- God values Community; we need each other to hold us accountable; to confront us when sin; & to help bring us back into fellowship

## 5. GOD VALUES FORGIVENESS (18:21-35)

Love Peter, but he still didn’t get upside-downness of God’s Kingdom

- Verse 21: “*Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, & I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”*”
- Jewish tradition said you had to forgive 3 times; after that, no more
- See Peter’s grin, expecting to receive commendation from Jesus
- Jesus surprised him by saying, “Oh it’s a lot more than you think”
- Jesus illustrates this with *Parable of Unforgiving Servant*

Servant owed king zillions of dollars which he couldn’t pay, so king was going to have his family & all possessions sold

- Servant begged for mercy; king took pity on him & forgave his debt
- Then man found fellow servant who owed him \$20; he refused to give him more time to repay debt; had him thrown into prison
- When king found out, threw first servant in prison – Gospel issue

God values forgiveness because it’s the foundation of the Gospel:

1. Who God is: Holy & Just – can’t sweep our sin under the rug
  2. How great our sin is: Zillions & zillions of dollars; untold amount
  3. What God has done about our sin: Sent Jesus to pay penalty for our sin so we could be forgiven; freed from debt
  4. Respond by humbly, gratefully receiving His forgiveness
  5. Depend on Spirit’s power to forgive others as we’ve been forgiven
- Point of parable is that if we’re not willing to forgive others’ minor offenses against us, it shows we don’t really understand enormity of our sin & what God has done to forgive us

## 6. GOD VALUES COVENANT (19:1-12)

Pharisees tested Jesus, “*Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?*” Divorce was very common in Israel; didn't need a reason

- Trying to discredit Jesus with the people, who loved ease of divorce

Jesus went back to Old Testament for answer; verse 4: “*Haven't you read that he who created them from the beginning made them male & female, & said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father & mother & hold fast to his wife, & the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one; what God has joined together let not man separate.*”

God hates divorce because of why He established marriage; why vs 5 starts, “*Therefore*”; God designed marriage for a reason

- Marriage is a *Place* for us to fulfill God's creation mandate to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth with little image-bearers
- Marriage is also a visual aid; object lesson – *Picture of Gospel*
- Picture of our union with Christ, becoming one flesh; picture of relationship of Church, the Bride, to our Bridegroom, Jesus
- Picture of *Covenant*; the unconditional, never-ending love & commitment of God for His kids
- God hates divorce because it says a lie about Him; He is a Faithful God Who will never break Covenant with His people

## 7. GOD VALUES THE GOSPEL (19:16-26)

Verses 16-26, Matthew recounts story of The Rich Young Ruler

- Verse 16 starts, “*Behold*” = This is going to surprise you; God's Kingdom is not like the kingdoms of the world

You know story; can't read it all; point out wrong thinking of young *man* & what story teaches about *Gospel*

- Man was rich in *morality* & in *money*; like people today, Jews thought these 2 went together; “If you're good, you'll do well”; “If you've done well, especially financially, it's because you're so good”
- But God's Kingdom is an upside-down Kingdom

19:16, man comes to Jesus asking, “*What good deed must I do to have eternal life?*” Today: Just tell me what to do

- Jesus, “*Keep the commandments*”; Man, “*Which ones?*”
- Jesus takes him to commandments regarding relationship with other people = “*Don't murder; commit adultery; steal; bear false witness; honor parents; love neighbor as yourself*”
- Man, “Got it; I've done all that since I was a boy; what else?”

Jesus did not bring in the Law to show young man *how* to be saved, but to show him that he *needed* to be saved = purpose of the law

- To show us God's standard & how short we fall of God's standard
- Man didn't think he was sinner because he looked good on outside
- So, Jesus goes right to the root of the problem; not what man was or wasn't doing on outside, but who he was on *inside*
- Verse 21: "Jesus, *"If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."*
- But man's stuff was more important to him than Jesus, so he left
- Not money issue or morality issue; it's a heart issue; Gospel issue

Gospel – Verses 23-26: "Jesus said to his disciples, *"Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."* When the disciples heard this, they were shocked, saying, *"Who then can be saved?"* Jesus said, *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

- Salvation is a supernatural work of God; impossible to please God with our own works, regardless of how good they are
- Not that it's *hard* to get camel through eye of needle; it's impossible
- God does the saving or we don't get saved; same with sanctification

*Becoming & behaving like a Christian is not difficult; it's impossible*

- Whole point: If we could do it, we wouldn't need Jesus
  - Don't read any of God's Word like "to do" list; point is not that we try hard to be better, but we admit we can't, turn & cry out to Jesus
  - God never asks us to do anything that He intends us to do alone
  - Sent Jesus to live a perfect life & die in our place for our sins; sent Holy Spirit to give us desire & power to obey His commands
  - That's why God values the Gospel; it's His work start to finish
- Peter probably asks questions other disciples are thinking - *"That rich guy wasn't willing to give up his stuff to follow You, but we've left everything & followed You. What's in it for us?"*
- In His answer, Jesus doesn't deny the cost = *"Deny yourself; take up your cross & follow Me"*; He affirms the reward
  - And it's not simply a future reward when Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on earth & disciples will sit on thrones judging Israel
  - It's the promise of blessing right now – *"hundredfold"* abundant, purposeful, joy-filled life now & life with Him forever (US)

## **CLOSING**

God's Kingdom is upside-down Kingdom; passage has cut me open

- Do I even care about God's Kingdom, or am I so caught up in my own little kingdom most days that I don't give His a thought?
- Is Humility high on my list, casting all my cares on Him, running to Him for everything every day, or do I think I got this; I'm good?
- Do I value my own personal Holiness, or do I look down on & judge others because they're not as "holy" as I am?

Do I value Community, or do I like to retreat & isolate myself?

- Am I willing to leave my safe, comfortable place to show Compassion to those who have wandered off?
- Am I so overwhelmed with the depth of my sin & the enormous value of God's Forgiveness that I'm willing to forgive others?
- Do the Covenant promises of God create a heart of gratitude in me?
- How do I respond to the Good News of the Gospel that if God hadn't saved me, I wouldn't be saved?

*Matthew 18 & 19 should not only change how we think & what we want & what we do, but they should change how we pray: "Father; Your Kingdom come; rule & reign as King in my heart every day"*

## **PRAYER**