

Sermon Discussion Guide

11.12.23 Message | Keith Ehresman | Matthew 18:1-6

Key Scripture:

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And 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 enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

- Matthew 18:1-6

Message Highlights:

- It would be of great value for us to rethink “why” we spend what we spend during the holiday season.
- The current approach is not working, not benefiting people and often not adding joy to the season.
- Rethink Christmas = not adding to the gift buying but rather cutting back and teaching the importance of generosity and its Kingdom impact.
- Even the disciples struggled with understanding the concept of greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Rethink and ask ourselves if the current approach is working or not and what we can do to benefit others.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Have you ever argued with friends about who was the greatest? Talk about a time when you were certain you were the greatest and argued over it with friends or family.

DISCUSS THE MESSAGE

How has the Spirit spoken to you through this section of God’s Word?

THINK DEEPER (Does your group understand the passage?)

What is the overall purpose of this text?

- What does this passage say about God's character?
- What does this passage tell us about how we are to approach a relationship with God?
- What does Jesus mean by his response in verse three, saying that unless you become like a child, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven?
- In verse four, Jesus says, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." What does humility look like in the context of following Christ, and why is it important?
- How does the concept of stumbling blocks relate to verses five and six, and what are some practical ways we can avoid being a stumbling block to others in their faith journey?

THINK LIFE CHANGE (Does your group recognize the personal implications for them as individuals?)

Keith used his message as an invitation to rethink how we typically approach the Christmas season and offer an alternative by suggesting we spend with generosity and Kingdom benefit in mind.

- Why would it be beneficial for us to think differently about how we approach the Christmas season and gift-giving?
- What are some ways our culture tries to find joy through this season?
- Does our typical approach to Christmas generally produce Kingdom fruit? Why or why not?
- Consider the idea of childlike faith. How does this coincide with what it means to approach God with childlike trust and dependence during the Christmas season?

THINK ENGAGE (Does your group recognize the communal implications for us as a Gospel-centered community?)

- How do the teachings in this passage and the questions above challenge common cultural values and expectations related to greatness, success, and the upcoming holiday season?

THINK EXPAND (Does your group recognize the missional implications for those we want to reach for Christ?)

- Discuss: How have our societal norms concerning the Christmas season impacted us as individuals and within our families?
- How could implementing the idea of Rethinking Christmas and childlike faith impact the culture around us?

THINK KINGDOM (Does your group understand the overarching Kingdom, that the work we do is bigger than ourselves?)

- How would altering how we approach the Christmas season and implementing this concept of a childlike faith impact hearts?
- How does it impact eternal perspective?
- What are some ways in which you could adjust how you spend money this Christmas season?