

And Calling to Him a Child

Matthew 18:1-4

Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 18:1

- Matthew 18:1-4: 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 18:1

- Not sure what has inspired this question from the disciples.
 - Some assume this is the same event as recorded in Mark 9, where the disciples were arguing amongst themselves about which one was greatest.
 - And so this question is really about which of them is greatest.
- However, we know this seems to have been a recurrent discussion among the disciples, so we don't need to think that they are necessarily the same event?
- Matthew has them asking a very specific question. Just going with it ...

Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 18:1

- Who is greatest?
 - Jews would probably argue: Abraham (Isaac, Jacob); Moses
 - Hints from Matthew 16:14: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah
- But why ask this?
- Also,
 - Jesus, the Messiah is right there.
 - They've admitted that they see him as the Christ.
 - But maybe they didn't recognize him as the king of the kingdom?

Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

Matthew 18:1

- Why does it matter who is the greatest?
 - Why do we put so much emphasis on this?
 - Whether in sports, or acting, or politics, or combat

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Matthew 18:2-4

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Matthew 18:2-4

- Greatness is not determined the way that we often think (or been taught to think)
- Accomplishment, fame, wealth, impact
- So Jesus uses a child as an example, the opposite of what we would expect.
 - Children are often dismissed or overlooked, insignificant, or frivolous
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- But Jesus has a very specific focus with this example: humbles himself
- We can discuss a lot of ways in which children are humble.
 - They know their limits: knowledge, strength, ability.
 - Often though, we will idealize children at this point too.
 - But some kids can be not so good.
 - "terrible-two's" cliché exists for a reason
- But there's one aspect that stands out to me in this example

calling to him a child

Matthew 18:2

- “calling to him a child”
- When called, the child came to Jesus.
 - That’s not an easy thing for us to do.
- Turn
 - In immediate context ... turn from this obsession with being great?
- Believe (Trust)
 - Matthew 18:6 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.

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Follow me

Matthew 4:19

- Matthew 4:19-22 (ESV) 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.
- Matthew 9:9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

John 1:46

- John 1:45-51 (ESV) 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” 50 Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

John 1:46

Rabbi, you are the Son of God!
You are the King of Israel!

John 1:49

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Zacchaeus, hurry and come down

Luke 19:5

- Luke 19:5-6 (ESV) 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.
- Luke 19:8-10 (ESV) 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” 9 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

You lack one thing: go, sell all that you
have and give the poor, and you will have
treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.
Mark 10:21

- Mark 10:17-31 (ESV) 17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
- 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” 28 Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Matthew 11:19

- Matthew 11:16-19 (ESV) 16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 17 "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Come, for everything is now ready.
Luke 14:17

- 15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”
- 16 But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.
- 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

Come, for everything is now ready.
Luke 14:17

But they all alike began to make excuses.
Luke 14:18

- 18 But they all alike began to make excuses.
- The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.'
- 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.'
- 20 And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

- Maybe not just refusal, maybe later ...
- These are daily choices

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

Matthew 22:2-3

- Matthew 22:1-14 (ESV) 1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying,
- 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,
- 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast,
- but they would not come.

Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live;
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

Isaiah 55:3

- Isaiah 55:1-3 (ESV) 1 “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.
Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,
"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."
John 7:37-38

- John 7:37-39 (ESV) 37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Come to me, all who labor and are
heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28

- Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV) 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

And calling to him a child
Matthew 18:2

- Matthew 18:2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them
 - Will you come to Jesus when he calls?
 - Will you turn?
 - Will you humble yourself?
 - Will you believe in him?

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

And Calling to Him a Child

Matthew 18:1-6

Synopsis: When trying to find out who is greatest in the kingdom, Jesus used a child to help the disciples to understand true greatness in the eyes of God. And the first step in that humility is to hear the call of Jesus and come to him.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”