

Introduction:

- After matters related to marriage (19:3-12) we come next to children.
- Here too, the disciples have much to learn about the paradoxical values of the “kingdom of heaven.”
 - The recurrence of that phrase, Kingdom of Heaven, here in v. 14 so soon after its use in v. 12 and preceding its use again in vv. 23 and 24 and in 20:1 keeps the primary focus of these chapters to the front.
 - Once again, as before, the disciples are not on the same page as Jesus when it come to Kingdom values.
- The Kingdom values that Jesus is re-educating his disciples with, like the sermon on the mount, are very challenging to them because they are not thinking like God thinks.

I. The Challenge of Innocence

- A. As before in Matthew, children paint a beautiful picture of those we are to emulate as we come to the kingdom. Children are a picture of weakness and a picture of innocence. They also are a picture of simple faith.
 1. Matthew sets up this lesson with parents bringing their children to Jesus to be prayed for by him. They want Him to lay hands on them and bless them.
 2. This is not about baptizing them it is about them receiving prayer/blessing by Jesus.
- B. The disciples mistake
 1. The disciples rebuke the parents and children.
 2. the purpose is to stop them from coming and bothering Jesus.
 3. The reality as we will see in a moment is that they were actually stopping them from coming to the Kingdom. Ie. Earlier that earned you a milestone around the neck. 18:6
- C. Jesus rebukes the disciples.
 1. Let them come to me! Gentle rebuke. Jesus wants believers to take very seriously the implications of stopping anyone from coming to him. IE. Tax collectors can, prostitutes can, religious leaders can etc....Why would you want to stop children and parents? Children are often the last ministry in the churches mind! Parents will think about it. But over all the church is not passionate about it. Just ask Joshua how hard it is to get volunteers to help support it.
 2. Dont stop them! Stronger rebuke!
 3. *“For the Kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like these children!”* Strongest rebuke! He is literally telling his disciples: “you still do not get it.” The disciples are wrongly assuming that kids have no claim to the Kingdom. *“the unimportant, the dependent, the vulnerable; the statement that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such people reminds us of 5:3”* *“The poor in spirit”* France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 727). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 4. In summary: Relationship reflect the glory of God- marriage is given the highest priority to do that. Children - the weak and innocent are gladly received into the Kingdom. (All are welcome to come). Next, the challenge of wealth and the Kingdom.

II. The Challenge of Wealth

- A. The rich man's social standing is the polar opposite of that of children. He is young. He is rich. He is important. He is moral. He is spiritually earnest.
1. vs 25 the disciples are astounded at what they hear Jesus say to this man. "ἐκπλήσσομαι: to be so amazed as to be practically overwhelmed—'to be greatly astounded.'" Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, pp. 311-312). New York: United Bible Societies. They can't believe that Jesus is sending this man away with his 'tail between his legs'.
 2. Jesus who just welcomed the weak ones and in so doing confounded the disciple, here turns away the 'great one'. This leads the disciples to think, "If he can't be saved who can?"
- B. It is harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. vs 23
1. "It is his actual wealth, and his attitude toward it, that is in focus rather than his social behavior; his affluence is a danger to the owner himself, rather than a threat to others." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 730). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 2. Matthew has already included in 6:19-24 a powerful section of teaching on the incompatibility of earthly and heavenly treasure, with the concluding maxim that "you cannot be slaves of both God and wealth." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 730). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 3. Jesus calls us to choose between God and riches. There is no blurring of the clear message of 6:24. Discipleship and the pursuit of wealth are fundamentally incompatible. Why?
 - a) The want of more riches is a common response of fallen man to want to be more secure.
 - b) The want of more riches for security puts us in a position to trust ourselves rather than to trust God.
 - c) Riches have the potential to become a distraction. The more you have the more you want. This stands in opposition to the Kingdom in the realm of giving.
 - d) For the rich man in our passage, his trust was in his wealth.
 4. The statement create two camp immediately.
 - a) The minority that take vs 21 literally.
 - b) The majority that look for exegetical ways to live it responsibly thus avoiding the literal interpretation.
 - c) Deliverance comes in verse 26 that what seem impossible with man is possible with God. Jesus therefore gives hope in the midst of a challenge! God is not bound by human possibility! Also in light of the other Gospels we know that not everyone gave away all they owned. Peter went back to fishing. Other supported Jesus and the disciples out of their means.
- C. The man's question seems to be one of genuine interest in his salvation. He is not trying to test Jesus.
1. His question and answer to questions assumes he is basing his salvation upon his works.
 2. Jesus leads him with question of 'doing' for salvation but then gets to the heart of the matter: "follow me" (v. 21) not simply as another thing to "do," but as the beginning

of a new and life-changing relationship with Jesus. Back to the theme of this chapter-relationship with God in the Kingdom. A greater righteousness Mt 5:20. (Unless your righteousness exceeds that of Pharisees.)

3. vs. 20 we have to give the young man credit, because in his heart he knows there is more to salvation than what he is experiencing. God is talking to this young man. He wants more! Therefore, *'what else?'*
4. The young man wants to be 'perfect!' so Jesus tells him what he must do.
 - a) perfect is not to be morally flawless but to be fully mature.
 - b) Jesus wants this too, Mt 5:48 be perfect even as your Father is perfect.
5. *"The imperatives "sell" and "give" are followed by "come" and "follow;" the essence of Jesus' demand is not disinvestment but discipleship."* France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 735). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co. *"The release from material preoccupation is not in itself the secret of eternal life; it is the introduction to a new way of life as a disciple of Jesus: "follow me."*
6. *"I tell you the truth..."* emphatic words of Jesus making a point in Matthew style! It is hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Vs 24 repeats how difficult: *"I will say it again."*
 - a) vs 23 hard for rich man to enter.
 - b) vs 24 impossible, humanly speaking.
7. If the rich cant be saved what is in it for us who have left everything to follow you?

III. The Reward of Overcoming

- A. vs 27-30 sets up the next chapter's long parable on rewards.
- B. Unlike the rich man the 12 have left everything to be followers of Christ.
- C. Jesus basically answers that those who put God's call first will not be losers in the end. vs. 30. 6:19-34 Do not store up treasures here on earth.
- D. Two fold reward:
 1. authority
 2. Recompense in the life to come.
- E. Vs 30 is repeated in 20:16 at the end of the parable.

Conclusion:

- The disciples are being rocked out of their slumber and schooled in the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Lets get schooled!