

# SELFISH AMBITIONS REBUKED

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 18:1-20

LESSON 116 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Matthew 18:1-20 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

<sup>2</sup> And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

<sup>3</sup> And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>5</sup> And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

<sup>6</sup> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

<sup>7</sup> Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

<sup>8</sup> Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

<sup>9</sup> And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

<sup>10</sup> Take heed that ye despise not

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### **Jesus, the Greatest**

Jesus did not want His disciples to be concerned about their being greatest, or even the position they were to have in Heaven. There Jesus will be exalted and praised. When John the Apostle was on the Isle of patmos, it was revealed to him how Jesus will be praised in Heaven. "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God" (Revelation 19:1) . "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12).

One who has the love of God in his heart is not always thinking of himself. He is unselfish; and by helping others he helps himself spiritually. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). Jesus Himself set that example, for we read that He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor, that we might have spiritual riches (**II** Corinthians 8:9).

#### **Converted**

Jesus said that men should be concerned about getting to Heaven rather than being greatest there. He told them how to qualify to live **in** Heaven. Unless one is converted he will not even go to Heaven, to say nothing of being great there. What does it mean to be converted? The word means "to change." That is what happens when one is born again — he is changed from being sinful into being righteous. "He is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (**II** Corinthians **5:17**). The change that comes into one's heart and life is the evidence of being saved. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). A change is necessary if one is to get into Heaven. Conversion is not a mental acceptance, or even knowing that it is right, but the actual change in one's behavior. It is not a change that comes by works or will power but a transformation by grace divine.

**"Transformed by  
grace divine. The  
glory shall be Thine."**

#### **Humility**

One must also become as a little child in order to enter Heaven. Jesus gave the disciples an illustration by setting a little child before them that they might see if the same qualities were in their lives. Especially did Jesus stress humility. By being humble, each one could be great in Heaven, like Jesus — could be a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17).

God has given other promises to the humble, for He has respect unto the lowly but knows the proud only from a distance (Psalm 138:6). "**All** of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5). God has promised to lift up the humble and to bring down the proud (Luke 14:11). When

one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

<sup>12</sup> How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

<sup>13</sup> And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

<sup>14</sup> Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

<sup>15</sup> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

<sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

<sup>18</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

one is humble he does not think most of himself (Romans 12:3) but honors -God for what He has done.

We read in the Bible of men whom God used because they were humble. To Saul, the first king of the Israelites, the Prophet Samuel said, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" (I Samuel 15:17). Gideon said that he was the least in his father's house (Judges 6:15), but God used him to deliver the Israelites from their enemy (Judges 7:15-21). Solomon, who is known as one of the wisest men, asked God to give him an understanding heart; for, he said, "I am but a little child" (I Kings 3:7). These examples show that God lifts up a person who humbles himself in the sight of the Lord (James 4:10). **"What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"** (Micah 6:8).

Jesus not only taught humility but He lived it. He said of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He took His place among men as one who served (Luke 22:27) and took upon Himself the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7). He told the disciples that if anyone wanted to be first or greatest, let him be "servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Every disciple should be humble like Jesus, "even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). One must be humble not only to be great in the Kingdom but also to even get into the Kingdom. Have you been converted, and are you humble?

#### As a Child

In a little child are other qualities that every disciple should have. As a little child is eager to learn, so must a Christian have a teachable spirit: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). At one time the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). May we, too, have the spirit that wants to do God's will!

A little child is controlled by the parents, and so a disciple is obedient to Christ. "Teach me thy way, O LORD" (Psalm 27:11). A child does not have the experience nor wisdom to do things his own way; he needs one to point out the way to him "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). **A** child trusts his parents. He believes what they tell him and trusts them to take care of him, to supply his needs and to protect him. A Christian depends upon God, believes God's Word, and trusts in God to supply all he needs: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Can you think of any other qualities of a little child that the disciples of Jesus should have?

#### Stumbling Blocks

Jesus explained how careful one must live so that he does not offend one of God's children. There must be a severe punishment for those **who** hinder them, for we read that it would be better for those who offend **if** they were drowned. Those who believe in God are precious in His sight because they have been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus. "Ye **are** bought with a price" (I Corinthians 7:23).

The Lord watches over each one of His children as a shepherd watches his flock. When one is missing, has stumbled and gone astray, the Lord seeks him out and rejoices when he has returned to the fold.

**"Ring the bells of heaven! there is joy today, For a soul returning**

### **from the wild!"**

Are you safe in the fold with the ninety-nine or are you the one that **is** missing?

A Christian is warned that there will be stumbling blocks, but woe to the man who causes them. A stumbling block is anything which will hinder or -block the way of a Christian, cause him to fall and perhaps receive injury to his spiritual life. One should be very careful lest he **put** a stumbling block in the way of one of God's children. Of course, one would not do this deliberately, but a thoughtless word or deed can be **a** hindrance. On the other hand, God's children should guard against the stumbling blocks, and pray them out of the way.

A Christian will deny himself and get rid of those things which hinder him. When Jesus said that it would be better for a man to cut off his hand if it offended him, He meant that one must put out of his life the things that would come between him and God. How much better to go to Heaven deprived of that which you hold dear than to spend eternity **in** punishment. Jesus did not mean literally to cut off one's hand but to apply the illustration spiritually. For example, if a friend belittled you, caused you to sin and lose the love of God from your heart, it would be better for you to leave that friend, to cut him out of your life even though you love him dearly. You could serve God without that friend, rather than go to eternal punishment with him.

### **Agreement**

Jesus told how to conduct yourself if one commits a wrong against you. Go to that person and point out the misdeed. Usually it is a misunderstanding or a mistake, and will be corrected so that you both feel better. Sometimes one is stubborn and will not listen to you, but you are to try again with another for a witness. If he still refuses to make things right, then go to the leader who represents the church. He will spread the matter out before the Lord and talk to that person as he sees fit. You are to abide by the decision given and hold no grievance in your heart.

Rather than have selfish ambitions, how much better it is to help each other, to work and lift together for the glory of God. A wonderful promise is given to those who agree and meet in Jesus' name. He will be with them — though they are few in number — and He will answer prayer for them. `Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1** What does it mean to be converted?
- 2** How can one be humble?
- 3** Why must one become as a little child?
- 4** What is a stumbling block?
- 5** Why does the Shepherd leave the ninety and nine to seek for the one that is lost?
- 6** Instead of being selfish, how does a Christian act?
- 7** What promise does God give to two or three who gather in His name?

