

The Kingdom of God, pt.9, 9.9.07

The Kingdom Belongs to Kids

Intro: 1. Mark 10.13–16 2. Review about the KOG 3. Jesus gives His Kingdom (His presence) to the childlike. 4. BCN story of student prayed for who had chronic fatigue. 5. Story of the young man who stopped his car at the Minneapolis Bridge.

What keeps moral, Bible believing people out of the Kingdom of God/from experiencing the KOG?

Introd – The religious leaders knew the OT and were faithful to their commitments to God; they were looked upon with great respect..

1. Pride – Matt.23.12. Blind eyes. They loved to be prominent & having the seats of honor. They didn't serve anyone, but others served them.
 - a. Pride indicators:
 - i. When someone gets recognized and we don't
 - ii. A resistance to do the menial tasks
 - iii. What can you do for me rather than what can I do for you
 - iv. You want people to acknowledge your gift, ability, wit, influence, knowledge, money, etc.
 - v. You want others to think you're indispensable
 - vi. God has to use you
 - b. Pride is the great suppressor of God's activity in a person's heart & among a people.
 - i. Jesus cried out for Jerusalem to turn, but she resisted
 - c. Ss
 - d. ss
2. Sin – Matt.23.25–28. Cold heart.
 - a. They had a veneer of purity covering a dark heart.
 - b. They excused their sin
 - c. They bristled at someone calling their behavior into question.

3. False Belief system – Matt.23.16–24. Closed mind. always leads to closed
 - a. We have a belief system built upon our tradition & experience rather than the Word of God. We equate our man made rules = to the Word. We filter everything through our experience, instead of letting the Word speak for itself.
 - i. We have a belief system built upon unbelief.
 - ii. In Matt.12.38; 16.1–4, they demanded a sign from Jesus, while signs were all around. They chose to believe their lies. They had a belief system built upon unbelief.
 - b. They believed that God would operate through their door of influence & understanding. When Jesus began preaching they knew he wasn't the Messiah, b/c he didn't have their blessing & support.
 - c. They had God figured out. When God acted through Jesus, they were certain this wasn't God. They were fully convinced Jesus was from the devil.
 - d. The spoke of their devotion to God, but their hearts were far from him – Matt.15.8f.

Cultivating Childlikeness

Now, as always, God discovers Himself to "babes" and hides Himself in thick darkness from the wise and the prudent. We must simplify our approach to Him. We must strip down to essentials (and they will be found to be blessedly few). We must put away all effort to impress, and come with the guileless candor of childhood. If we do this, without doubt God will quickly respond.

A. W. Tozer

1. Deepen our trust in God – Mark 10.13–16

- a. A child enters into relationship with Jesus and spreads His kingdom through trust. Their attitude is, “God said it let’s do it.”
 - b. Luke 10.1–20 – Jesus commissions them to heal the sick, cast out demons. They do it and come back full of faith. Luke 10.21 – It gives Jesus great joy when we take him at his word and obey him.
 - c. In Matt.13.11f is key. The more you do the Kingdom (obey His Word & Spirit) the more you’ll receive.
 - d. Faith is an area where growing up means we must become more like a child.
 - e. The older we get the more qualifiers we put in the way of God’s activity. Bad experiences, unanswered prayers, the failings of others, questions about the trustworthiness of the Bible & we neuter the Word of God and relegate it to inspiration, comfort and sometimes providing direction.
 - f. Youth & adults who want to develop child like faith have to suspend judgment about why certain things happened or don’t happen. We need to search & dig deep, but we need a theology of suspension – let it ride until the Lord returns.
 - g. Instead of discarding the truth or questioning the truth, we hold onto the truth, ask God for greater understanding and move forward in faith.
 - h. Example of Bill Burnham & Lawrence Martin. I’m trying not to let my experience with Lawrence temper my prayers for Bill. It’s a new day & God’s promises are new every day.
2. Walk in humility – Matt.18.1–5
- a. Turning from a worldly mindset –
 - i. The disciples were posturing for position and Jesus is demanding a change in their sinful mindset. The word “converted” in KJV means to turn around.
 - ii. They were being influenced by worldly/sinful mindset.
 - iii. Where is the world influencing your mindset? The disciples didn’t think it was a bad question. They had no idea they were so far from the heart of God. Jesus

says you're headed in the wrong direction to greatness. It's in the opposite direction.

- iv. What areas of compromise are in your life? Where your belief system is more in line with the world than God? What habits, activities and the like have the world's stamp of approval, but not God's stamp of approval? (Give time for the Holy Spirit to deal with compromise)
- v. Owning up to your sins and turning from them is humbling. You have to admit, "I got caught and it's wrong. I'm stopping them."
- vi. Children more readily turn from their sin; whereas the older we get the craftier we become in indulging in our sins and we fortify our position (we justify our behavior) and we attack those who call them into question.

b.

3. Reestablish Innocence – Matt. 18:5–9

- a. Innocence towards sin keeps us pure before God. We've all been exposed to too much sin. This exposure is like getting an instant sunburn.
- b. We must deal ruthlessly with the temptations that lead to sin. You can't have a casual attitude or even semi-militant attitude. It's got to be wholesale war. Jesus says, "whatever is causing you to sin, cut it off."
- c. If it means going through the deliverance ministry, taking medication, throwing away the stuff, getting rid of the TV or internet, buying filters, etc. Jesus is saying do whatever it takes!
- d. Illustration: Drifting. Turning off the motor & letting the boat just float. You kick back & just let things happen. You can't afford to drift and hope it will right itself. Word picture of ship drifting because its sails are down. Drifting leads to departure which eventually leads to disaster.
- e. Recapturing innocence is possible by taking drastic action.

- f. You know you've lost innocence when you're negative, critical of others, impatient, people bug you, strongly opinionated, left alone, worry, fear, no hope...All those things are the fruit of some area of sin.
 - g. You can't remove sins past imprints, but you can dull their sheen.
4. Proclaim praise – Matt.21.15–17
- a. Ps.8.2 – God has taught children & infants to tell of his strength, silencing His enemies and all who oppose him.
 - b. Proclaiming God's praise through testimony, lifestyle, attitude, song, the Word of God is an indicator of childlikeness.
 - c. When your child sees his baseball hero, he naturally is excited and expressive.
 - d. This bubbling type spirit needs to be a part of our attitude towards God and the things of God. When we see God and his activity we applaud and enjoy it.
 - e. Cultivate a heart of praise & thanksgiving to God. Thanking him for the many, many good gifts.

Faith is the inborn capacity to see God behind everything, the wonder that keeps you an eternal child. Wonder is the very essence of life. Beware always of losing the wonder, and the first thing that stops wonder is religious conviction. Whenever you give a trite testimony, the wonder is gone. The evidence of salvation is that the sense of wonder is developing.

I don't know what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

Sir Isaac Newton

When my grandson, Billy, and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use, Grandpa. The mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."