

Call to Obedience #387
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On Entering the Kingdom Of Heaven

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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 (Matt. 18:3).

Notice that Matthew gives **two prerequisites** for entering God's kingdom: conversion and becoming as a little child (The words kingdom "of God" and "of heaven" mean the same).

That means conversion alone will not get you into God's kingdom. That is what Jesus said. It is unfortunate that most believers know practically nothing about God's kingdom even though it is mentioned over 120 times in the New Testament. Jesus began His ministry by saying: *repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. He ended his ministry by saying: *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matt. 24:14).*

There is no other gospel but the gospel of the kingdom. **If your gospel is a gospel without the kingdom, you give the new convert no place to go.** He will dry up, shrivel up and die. The newborn is not designed to live anywhere but in the kingdom. That is why as soon he is born of God he must enter it (John 3:5). And what is the kingdom of God? It is the supreme rule of God over our lives. It is where our spiritual life is sustained. *It is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Now, what does it mean to become as a little child? Let us focus on the major characteristic of the little child and that is **total dependence** on its parents. To enter the kingdom of God, we must come to utter dependence on God. It means the end of what we want to do, of what we want to have and of what we prefer. It is what the King wants for us and from us. It is losing our life to find it in Christ (Matt. 16:25). This is the kingdom of God lifestyle. There is no room in it for disagreement, for questioning or for arguing with the King.

That is the way man lived in paradise. He lived by the rule of God. It was a happy way of living - a life without sweat, without thorns and thistles - until man declared his independence of God, until he thought he knew better than God. Man lost paradise because he wanted independence.

But thank God, Jesus came to establish a new paradise; it is the kingdom of God. It is a better paradise than the first, because there God was *with* man.

But in the new paradise, God is *in* man. Jesus went to the cross to get it for us and now He wants us to live in it. This is the new home for every convert. But for us to get in it, it will cost us everything. It cost Jesus everything to get it for us, it costs us everything to get into it. That is why the way into it is narrow. The way in is *be converted, and become as little children*.

This reminds me of a medical doctor I met several years ago. When he was asked to comment on our need to become as little ones he said: "It is more difficult for me to become as a little child than it has been for me becoming a doctor." Why is this so? The reason for this difficulty is that it is against human nature to want to be as a little child. Human nature helped this man become a doctor because human nature wants human accomplishment. It strives for recognition, for honor and respect. Human nature glories in its resources, its intelligence and its strength. It uses all of them to get somewhere. Jesus brings this out in the parable of the wedding feast: *When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room...* (Luke 14:8).

Jesus meant it is human nature for us to seek the highest places, places of honor. When we get to the feast, we want to be rewarded by sitting with people of our level, of like accomplishment, education and recognition. That makes us happy. It is better even yet when the host mentions our name a few times. But when somebody gets ahead of us and we end up near the bottom, we are disappointed. It will spoil the whole evening for us. That's human nature! That is only natural. But **Jesus came to get us out of the natural** (acting out of our animal nature), **to get us into the supernatural**. Jesus said this is not the way we should go to a wedding. This is not the way we should go anywhere - seeking the praise of men, the best places. He wants us to be born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, to live in the Spirit. And that includes becoming as dependent on God as a child is on its parents. Jesus tells us that seeking our honor kills our faith (John 5:44). Then Jesus tells us the way He wants us to go to a wedding, and anywhere else:

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee (Luke 14:10).

Don't promote yourself, don't seat yourself. **Let Jesus promote you and seat you in all stations of life** so that He gets all the glory. And when you glory in God, He is glorified in you (John 17:10). When the woman put the anointing oil on Jesus, it also came on her (Luke 7:37-38).

Until you become as a little child, utterly dependent on God, the kingdom of God will be closed to you and your life will be drab, without the glory and without anointing no matter how well you know the Bible and how much you pray.

Jesus also had to say "no" to His human nature. He received His divine nature from God and His human nature from His mother. He chose to live in the divine nature by making Himself entirely dependent on His Father, saying: *I can of mine own self do nothing... I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me* (John 5:30). This is what God wants from you.

The devil tempted Jesus in His human nature when he took Him up into a high mountain to offer Him all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worshipping him. Yes, Jesus *was in all points tempted like as we are*. The devil appealed to Jesus' natural desire to be somebody, to reach for greatness. And how great would it have been for Jesus to have governed every village, city and nation! But Jesus rejected this offer. He rejected what human nature wanted because human nature puts us under Satan's rule.

Instead Jesus reached for a servant's towel to wash His disciples' feet. From there He went to the cross, from there He arose, from there He went to His throne to crush the devil and to give us a new paradise. This was all in the supernatural. God wants us to live in the supernatural. Hallelujah! Reject the natural and God will be able to do something with you. Live at the bottom and everything will come down to you. As you set down roots in humility, your spiritual branches will spring upwards.

There is nothing wrong with being a doctor or any profession. We need doctors. But be sure you don't become a doctor for your glory, but for God's glory. Don't seek to be a doctor wearing a crown. Rather be one putting on the apron of humility. Be a kingdom doctor. When we live in this state of mind, we become an extension of Christ's mercy and love.

This is illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The scribe and the Levite, probably men of letters, did what human nature does - they passed by on the other side when they saw the man in the ditch. Because they had not become *as little children*, they were disconnected from needs and the God who meets needs. They had *their* agenda. They knew how to officiate, but they refused to put on the apron. They did not know how to serve.

In summary, there is no place for the new convert to go to survive and be used of God except in the kingdom of God. He has to become as a little child. That which is natural of the earth has to come under the control of the supernatural. Being born of God is God's work, becoming as a little child is yours! And because it is your work, you don't need the altar for it. What you need to do is to just start obeying God, one step at a time. That will get you into becoming as a little child. That will get you into the kingdom of God. That gets you Spirit-filled (Acts 5:32). Begin your journey today. The welcome mat is out for you.