**The Greatest in the Kingdom Matt 18:1-4 – Berry Kercheville**

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

It has always been in the hearts of men and women to seek greatness, to be at the forefront, to be the one who makes great things happen and be in exalted positions. It is not the desire to do a good job that concerns Jesus, it is the desire for importance. Later in **Matthew 20**, the disciples desired greatness by sitting on the right and left of Jesus when he reigned in his kingdom. Jesus expected his followers to “move mountains,” but not from positions of power.

None of the twelve ever sat on a throne or led great crowds of people. Even in **Acts 15**, when there was a controversy over circumcision, the apostles did not give an apostolic edict. Instead, they discussed the issue and convinced the brethren through “biblical” argumentation. They never forced, they never dominated, they never bullied, they never used carnal authority or carnal weapons (**2 Cor. 10:3-5**). They *reasoned* by using God’s revelation, always pointing the brethren to God as the only true authority.

Jesus illustrated greatness in the kingdom by placing a child in their midst. His intention was not to show the need for innocence, but humility. A child has personally attained to nothing. He or she has no inherent greatness. Their accomplishments are dependent on and guided by others. The same is true with kingdom disciples. Our ability and strength comes from the Lord. We serve, but he gives the power; he is the one who makes all good things happen.

At age 40, Moses wanted to deliver Israel by killing an Egyptian and starting a revolution. He was “mighty in all the words and deeds of the Egyptians” (**Acts 7:22**). But his effort was an utter failure. Forty years later, having come to the realization of his nothingness as he kept flocks in a desolate wilderness, God used him to lead *the Exodus*, still recognized as an unprecedented display of the creation of a new nation. And what did God say of this great leader? *“Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth”* (**Num. 12:3**). This was said of Moses in the context of Miriam and Aaron challenging his standing as the leader of Israel. The Lord justified Moses, informing us that he never abused his leadership; he was a servant-leader, not an authoritarian leader.

To whom does this apply? Obviously, it applies to all of us, but it especially applies to leaders. It applies to husbands in their home. It applies to men and women in the workforce. It applies to preachers, it applies to shepherds, and it applies to every member who seeks to influence others. Jesus said, *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave”* (**Matt. 20:25-27**). May there never be a “lord” in the church.

It is only with the humility of a child that we enter and serve in the kingdom of Jesus