

5.4.B(38).Children Enter the Kingdom.

Mark 10:13-31

Read Mark 10:13-31.

¹³ And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the **children come to me**; do not hinder them, for to such **belongs the kingdom of God**. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not **receive the kingdom of God** like a child shall not enter it.” ¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them: Mark 10:13-16.

Background:

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Children: Kingdom Disciples:

Jesus instructs that when entering the Kingdom of God, we must all become like *children* to enter.

This statement has been traditionally misunderstood because readers normally *underestimate* the Kingdom and *bristle* at the thought of regressing. So, let's clarify, for yes, the Kingdom is exceedingly more than we can "ask or think" and children are fitting, not demeaning role models.

First, let's consider the gap between children and fully formed adults. Although the difference is considerable, it is not infinite. In terms of height, the differences are perceivable—perhaps a meter

or two difference in height, and at most, several dozens multiples of weight rather than infinitely vast amounts. In other words, the differences are within the range of human perception, and these changes can be noticed over relatively small increments of time—years separate children and adults, multiple decades, rather than vast stretches of time—millennia, or eons.

But, when we consider this world of matter and physics into which we are born compared to the Kingdom reality inhabited and ruled by God-*Elohim*, the scales and values are vastly incomparable. For, the Kingdom of God is the *heavenly kingdom*, and its units are eternal and infinite measures. To start as a fleshly being to achieve spiritual maturity, in human terms, are certainly impossible and unattainable. Lifetimes of star systems, much less human spans, would prove insufficient. In fact, even the greatest and strongest of humans has no power to do the

slightest work of the Spirit. Consider that a single angel, with no apparent effort, overthrew an entire Assyrian army of 185,000 elite soldiers. In fact, God's denunciation took longer to recite than the reckoning to take place. Yet no human has access nor even the power to overturn the smallest item of the Kingdom.

So, we should approach the Kingdom and its Almighty Ruler as overmatched children, a fitting if not barely adequate way to depict our powerlessness in the face of total power.

Imagine how unsuited even the best of us people of mortal flesh would be if we did not approach the Kingdom as children. We will encounter a man with "great possessions" (10:22) on earth but who refuses to approach the Kingdom as a needy *child*. In moving from the land of death and darkness to the Kingdom of life and light, he is vastly ill-suited if he is not reborn. Clothed in earthly finery, he would appear in the

kingdom as if dressed in rotting flesh—his body a dead corpse itself. Carrying bags of treasure, he finds them less than worthless in a place where the least stone lining a wall would buy a vast fortune on earth, his gold not even fit to walk on. In his inert, dead condition, a little child and heir of the Kingdom runs past him—enjoying, playing in, experiencing, and rejoicing in the treasures that are all actually his! How wretched the *earthly rich* would be if they were transported intact to the Kingdom!

So, let's consider four ways that children give us the perfect model for approaching Jesus and the Kingdom:

- **Receptive** to Blessing: Grace.

Faith, being receptive to the things given freely, begins with a felt need. And, children are very needy and know it! Healthy children have great **appetites**, and so should we be for the *new life* of the Kingdom. And, children know that they have

nothing and need much, so they **receive** what they are given **freely**. In this way, the children of the Kingdom are hungry for the things of God, the new life that satisfies the new growth in them. And, they **receive freely** and without complaint, absent entitled demands.

- **Helpless:** Little children know that they are helpless, that they have no ability to secure what they need to provide for themselves. So, this helplessness focuses their faith in total dependence on their care-giver. In the spiritual realm, even the wisest and most capable mortal has no innate ability to secure anything by his own hand—he must ask and receive in the same way that a child asks and receives. It is no insult to approach the Kingdom helplessly, for even “Abraham” helplessly “believed in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6) To be “child-like” in humble dependence is not the same as being “childish” in silly folly. For, even

when our elders reached a millennium in age, they were still *infants* in light of the infinite spans of the Kingdom.

- **Heirs:** A child at home possesses more in that House than the wealthiest of outsiders. If the king were to enter a household, he would still need to ask for water, while a child could drink freely from his own faucet. In this way, children know that they belong at Home and home is “their home.” They live as natural owners and future managers of their household. So it is with the Kingdom. As children, we should naturally embrace, make ourselves home in, and enjoy the House that is ours, for we will inherit it fully one day!

Lordship:



**Teacher
to Student**

(Self-Righteous)



**Master
to Master**

(Self-Ruling)



**Lord
to Servant**

(Subject Sinner)

When we meet the rich man of this passage, he presents a mirror opposite picture of the child-like faith needed to enter the Kingdom. Because he has “great possessions” (10:22), he rejects following Jesus as his “Lord” but instead prefers to call him “Good Teacher.” Let’s consider why seeing Jesus as merely a “Good Teacher” prevents one from coming to Jesus as a “child” to his “Lord.”

As we have already considered, the distance between earth and the heavens is impassable, for the *righteousness* and “good life” of God are infinite. As we saw, Jesus embodies the surpassing glorious life of the Kingdom because he

is the Son of God, sharing the very nature of God-*Elohim*. Such life can only be passed on from life-to-life, never constructed from the defiled and dark materials of earth, much less by those *dead in the spirit* due to their sin.

Yet, this rich man supposes that whatever “good” Jesus has, he can be *taught* to possess this too through human works. So, this man’s first folly is to see Jesus as a teacher passing on the *procedural knowledge to attain life*.

The man does not want Jesus, only the knowledge which Jesus can pass on to him. So, approaching Jesus simply as a “Teacher,” the man retains the control and rule of his own life. In the Kingdom, there is no place for competing Lords, for there is one Lord of the Kingdom, and we are all servants who lay all at his feet.

For this man to come to Jesus Mashiach as his Lord, he cannot compete with Jesus for Lordship, in the same way that a child cannot compete with

a *parent* for the household rule. To become a child of the Kingdom who “inherits” eternal life, these changes must take place:

- **Surrender Rule:** Clearly, this man has lived his life as his own sole Ruler. Under his *Self-Rule*, he has enjoyed the unrivalled right to all his possessions, or so he thought. The reality is that his life and possessions were under the control of the *dark ruler* of this world. So, there are no real riches when one is enslaved by this world, for the *rich slave* is still a slave who owns nothing in his slavery. But, the freed Son is Heir of all and truly rich. As Jesus says, “The slave (to sin) does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed.” (John 8:35-36). So, to become a Son of the Kingdom, one must abandon all other rulers—Self Rule and even the Evil

One's enslaving Rule. For, only freed sons inherit life.

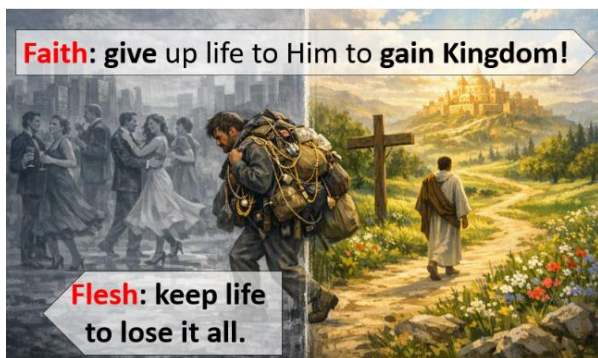
- **Offer life to the Lord:** The Lord Jesus does not save strangers to remain strangers. That is, there is no salvation for those who refuse to draw near to Jesus to be known, choosing to remain anonymous in the nameless crowd. Instead, to draw near to the Lord is to *honor* him as the *rightful Lord*, giving him the *gifts* befitting his title and place. Of course, to come near to Jesus is to give him your old life—defiled, dead, broken. Giving yourself over to his Care means to give yourself to his Lordship.

But, fear not. When you give yourself and all that you have to the Lord, giving him the Lordship and rights over you, you give yourself to the Liberator, the Redeemer. When you give him all that you have held sway in the flesh, using your life for your

own Self-purposes, now give him your life that he may give back to you new life, Redeemed! Before Mephibosheth knew David, he was the *ruler* of desolation, outcast in a wilderness, broken, and impoverished. But, when he gave his *worthless life* as a “dead dog” to be covered under the righteous rule of David, he received his renewed life as royalty, as the King’s friend. Eating at the King’s table, near to his presence, and honored as his friend. So, Jesus calls this man to *give him what he has*—to put his possessions under his Lordship, to be used for **his purposes**. As we think further on “Kingdom Sacrifice,” we will see that it is never a complete loss but either the *redeeming* of what we have for Kingdom purposes or an *investment* in a greater return in the Kingdom. Either way, sacrifice actually enriches us as Heirs of the

Kingdom.

Again, considering this man with “great possessions,” notice that while Jesus urges him to sell “all” that he has, he does not command him to give “all” that he has. I imagine that once the man’s holdings were “liquid” and accessible to the Lord, the man would have the freedom of traveling with the disciples and having the distinction of being one to *support* this Kingdom ministry. Instead, he keeps all his possessions and is forgotten.



Kingdom Sacrifices:

When you think of the *sacrifices* which the Kingdom calls for, you may naturally think of what you give up in terms of “irrecoverable loss.” But, *sacrifice* in the Kingdom is better thought of as *investment*. When you give up what is yours, you give the Lord the place to use it for the Kingdom’s and your good!

For, when we “let go” of what we once clung to—our possessions, our time, our resources—we are not simply throwing it to the wind but entrusting these things into the Lord’s hands. We “let go” of what was once entirely ours to “leave” in his good hands. In this way, think of the sacrifices you make for Jesus and the Kingdom as:

- Offered up for **the Lord’s Use**: so, the Lord commands that some might be “given to the poor” (10:21).
- Such sacrifices are an **investment in the Kingdom**: such investments will reap a

future reward far outpacing what was sown. So, Jesus says, “you will have treasure in heaven.”

- **Redemption:** we give up the old to gain new life. So, the man had focused his old life on gathering and gaining “great possessions.” Instead, as he *would give up this old focus* on gaining “possessions,” he would gain the treasure of “following” Jesus! He would give up what he gathered by his fleshly works, and gain him who created all that is valuable in heaven and earth as a confidant and a companion!
- **Family Sacrifice:** As Jesus assured his disciples, suffering “loss’ in this world and enduring “persecutions” was the distinction given to the Family’s stakeholders, those counted worthy to suffer for the family. For we are “heirs” if we “suffer” with him, Paul

instructs (Romans 8:17).

Focus:

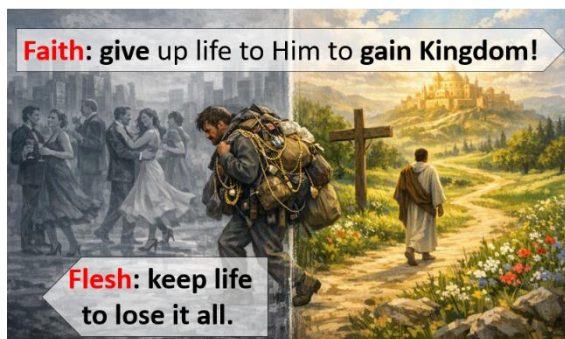
1. Entering Kingdom: Humble Heirs. 10:13-16.
2. Entrenched Self-Sufficiency: minimizes Lord/entitled alienation. 10:17-21.
3. Earthly Loyalty: Unwilling to give up possessions to Gain Lord. 10:22-27
4. Entrust All Life to Jesus: Gain eternal Inheritance. 10:28-31

Consider:

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Question:

Further Discovery: