

Lesson 36 Matthew 17.22-18.25 (18.1) Jesus at home teaches on the meek & humble spirit

The crucifixion-Jesus humiliation

Now when they retired back to Galilee in the busy *revolving* days of work and *engaging* (Greek *αναστροφη*) union of Master and disciple Jesus said, "The Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men and they will kill Him and the third day He will rise again." When they heard that they had shown annoyance, pain of mind and anxiety. (Greek *ελυπηθησαν*) The verb in its passive use suggests that they sublimated this experience as they became embroiled in the busy events that followed.

The poll tax-Jesus humility

The query of the tax-officer who approached Peter was "Does Jesus pay tax?" The query itself has as its background the resistance of Qumran whose members paid only once in a lifetime and of the Sadducees who did not pay at all. Jesus did ask Peter, "To whom do the princes of men pay tax?" hinting that as LORD he was not under obligation. However, Jesus settled the issue by despatching Peter to hook a fish which had dispersed its brood of minnows and out of habit had put a replacement coin in its mouth for comfort. The coin was sufficient for Peter and for Jesus. By sovereign miracle and humility and giving his contribution to the temple He gave us a model of grace & giving not debate & withholding.

The issue of this period-humility

The disciples who were busily supporting the popular ministry of Jesus at this time asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a little child to him and placed him in the centre of the disciples. He said, (1) "Truly I tell you, unless you turn right around (Greek *πιστρωθη*) and become as children you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." We are to assume that the child turned and buried his head in Jesus garments. He was unwilling to be at the centre of attention. He just wanted Jesus to shield him. (2) Whoever will humble himself carpet low (Greek *ταπεινωση*) as this little child the same is great in the kingdom of heaven. We are to assume that the child slipped to the floor in simple desire not to be seen. Jesus added, (3) "Whoever will accepts as an ally or with grace one such little child into my possessing name (Greek *δεχεται εν επι τω ονοματι μου*) receives me. The LORD teaches thirdly that the child can know Him and where there is an obedience and humbling at the call of Christ the young are to be received. (4) The fourth lesson is that tripping or causing the smallest child who believes to fall merits the severest penalty-the millstone of divine wrath and drowning at sea. Christ reaffirms that such a man who by one act of his hand or foot or eye causes like scandal should prefer to be maimed here than to face eternal punishment. (5) The fifth lesson is that we should not scorn or be contemptuous (Greek *καταφρονω*) of little ones for angels in heaven minister to them. The sixth lesson (6) is told under the story of the one hundred sheep. It is permissible to leave the ninety-nine mature followers or disciples and seek the erring one who is little. What joy follows the conversion of children! It was a saying of Spurgeon. "Those converted in youth are today pillars of the church".

Grace and humility and repentance in discipline

Already the Master has insisted on a tender care of the young. Now for those who fail He directs that three overtures be made. First that the brother offended approach and speak in earnest with the one who hurt or sinned against him. (1) If the other fails to humble himself then two or three witnesses may be taken to establish if a reconciliation built on humble acknowledgment can be effected. If not the offender may be brought before the whole church. (2) From this disciplinary principle Christ diverts to say that just as two or three can represent the church so two or three in symphony can apply the scriptures in declaring pardon or guilt. (3) Besides two or three in symphony will be heard in heaven as surely as the whole church. (4) Finally two or three in a home may be assured of Christ's presence as much as in an assembly.

The grace of forgiveness and humble repentance

The famous question of Peter is posed, "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Jesus tells of a king who forgave a servant owing 10,000 talents whereas the forgiven servant sent his fellow to prison for a meagre debt of 100 denarii or days wages. The lack of compassion on the contrite is taken as punishable. We have been forgiven so much that no occasion when we can offer pardon may be refused. So Corrie Ten Boom forgives the German officer that violated the women around her and shades his hand as he declares "I am a Christian now"

From Paper to practice



How did Jesus model humility in the temple tax incident?

Give three lessons we learn from the child who modelled humility.

Describe the stages in the model for retaining humility whilst effecting Church discipline

The model of forgiveness demands meekness-Why?