What Hinders Greatness?

**Introduction**

Within the human element I believe there’s a desire to be the best or be among the best at whatsoever one endeavors to do. To describe this desire in words one would say; I aspire to be exceptionally talented, important, and powerful at what I do. This makes me skillful, inspiring, and enlarged being a very good example. I desire to leave my legalese for all to see and be remembered.

Perhaps someone might say what could be possibly wrong with this? Nothing, if you are not seeking greatness after a worldly standard. According to Jesus in Matthew chapter 18 versus 1 – 4, true greatness comes through conversion and humility. Saying; “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven”. If Jesus answer was to his disciples, *(note: a disciple is one who accepts the instructions his master and makes them his rule of conduct)* you must be converted, after they asked him, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom in heaven?” Just what was he saying and what did he see?

In this message we will take a look at conversion and humility as two focal points in Scripture in hopes of capturing the true meaning of greatness according to the Kingdom of Heaven. Micah:6:8: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God”? (KJV)

# I. True greatness comes through conversion and humility

# Matthew 18:1-4 “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 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. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

**II. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**

No doubt the disciples’ minds were full of images of the kind of person whom they thought would be seen as great. It is evident, they had not known greatness in the spiritual application in accord with the kingdom of heaven, and were in need of a lesson from the Master. Unto them, perhaps greatness was seen through the pride of life as masteries, personal image, self-esteem, possessions, privileges and glory, of which envy and strife could easily enter. Would this be the time when Israel would prosper over her enemies they thought? Would this be the Time of which the prophets had spoken? To which all they knew that something was going to happen and they stood to gain power. So they put the question to Jesus, “ Who is the Greatest in the kingdom of heaven”?

Likewise today many of us just as the disciples, reason among and within ourselves the same terminologies of greatness with concerns toward the church and its many positions of leadership or service. But we also and likewise to no avail stand in need of Jesus to answer the same question again. So today let us let Jesus answer the question through the four fold steps in greatness exemplified through typology in Scripture.

**III. Jesus called a little child and set him in their midst.**

**Four fold Steps in Greatness**

1). Jesus called – To answer a call one must be able to hear and distinguish the voice that’s calling. After distinguishing the voice one must be willing to stop and heed the call.

2). A little child – Not as a child in understanding, but as a child in parental relationship and trust. Not coming with perceived thoughts, but coming to answer a call. Saying; “Yes Sir, What is it you would have me to do”?

3). And placed him – I know the word says set, but it means he placed him. In answering the master’s call do we come willing to do God’s will or our own. Can God set you up anyway he wants too? As a floor scrubber, trash dumper, bathroom cleaner or does it have to be that job you consider would lead to greatness.

4). In their midst- Does it matter to you where the Lord places you or how long? Are you embarrassed where the Lord places you? Or do you go whereyou want to and when you want to, or say what you want to, to anyone you want to?

I wonder is God really your parent? Or the question is, are you really in a parental relationship with God as little children? Jesus said:

And said surely I direct this unto you, Expect you be converted and turn from your way of thinking and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

**A warning to change**

Jesus knows what hinders greatness, and it lies within our precepts and perception. The way we see and understand greatly determines our destiny in relationship to the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus said before greatness can come there must be a conversion, this involves bringing one’s thinking and life into a parental relationship with God, of which we serve God and one another in humility as a child with his parent.

**Now if you shall humble yourself as this little child, this is your answer and the kind of person who is greatest in the kingdom.**

**Conclusion:**

You see the disciples had reasoned and dialogued among themselves with no conclusive result that satisfied the concerns of their hearts. What they really needed was a change in heart, which could only come through conversion as they humbled themselves before God. Heaven’s greatness is not measured by worldly standards, but by conversion and humility. What could be said is “What hinders greatness is not reflecting God’s image as dear children”.