

# “The Greatness of a Humble Heart”

Luke 9:46-48

## INTRODUCTION:

- A. The title of this study, “**The Greatness of a Humble Heart**” almost seems like a contradiction in terms . . . “**Greatness**” and “**Humble.**”
1. If one has greatness . . . He is not humble.
  2. If one is humble . . . He lacks greatness.
  3. One can have a both a humble heart and the right kind of greatness at the same time.
- B. **Luke 9:46-48** – “Then an argument started among them about who would be the greatest of them. <sup>47</sup> But Jesus, knowing the thoughts of their hearts, took a little child and had him stand next to Him. <sup>48</sup> He told them, ‘Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me welcomes Him who sent Me. For whoever is least among you—this one is great.’ We need to consider this passage in light of Matthew 18:3
- C. **Matthew 18:3** - (HCSB) “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” <sup>2</sup> Then He called a child to Him and had him stand among them. <sup>3</sup> “I assure you,” He said, “unless you are converted and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child—this one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”
- D. The word “child” appears no fewer than **33** times in Matthew – John . . . And a total of **54** times in all of the New Testament. “Children” with its various usages, appears another **131** times.
1. These references to children in the gospel record seem to always be showing them to be the standard that we are judged by.
    - a. Why is this?
    - b. What is so special about children that we should take note of their attributes and apply them to our lives?
    - c. To gain a measure of understanding, in a few moments we will take a look at what it means to be a child.
  2. We know that we literally cannot become children again. Jesus settled that in his night-time conversation with Nicodemus in Jerusalem as recorded in **John 3:3-7** - “Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
    - <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’
    - <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

E. The disciples were probably ashamed to have Jesus hear them argue, so they attempted to do so in private. They should have realized, however, that nothing could be hidden from Jesus. He was aware of their inner thoughts, so he used this as an opportunity to teach his disciples a lesson about the "greatness" about which they were so concerned. So Jesus took a little child and put the child by his side. **This would have been a visual aid . . . An object lesson.** The disciples had two people before them. One who had great value because of who he was and what he could do; the other, a child, considered of not much importance in the ancient world. Children would eventually become valuable, but at this time they were not highly esteemed.

1. Jesus suggested that he and this child were peers -- "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me." Jesus equated the attitude of welcoming children with a willingness to welcome him. This was a new approach in a society where children were usually treated as second-class citizens. Jesus equated the attitude of receiving children with a willingness to receive him. Even more important is the profound truth of Jesus' identity -- "Whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." Jesus added that to receive him is to receive the one who sent him, God the Father. Jesus was saying that he and God the Father are one.
2. The disciples had become so preoccupied with the organization of Jesus' earthly kingdom that they had lost sight of its divine purpose. Instead of seeking a place of service, they were seeking positions of advantage. Jesus used a child to help his self-centered disciples get the point. **They were to have servant attitudes, being not "childish" (arguing over petty issues) but "childlike," with humble and sincere hearts.** Greatness would be measured by attitude toward service -- "For the least among all of you is the greatest." True greatness means to deny oneself, willingly serve others, and then follow and obey the Master.
3. Who are the people you know that you consider truly "great"? Perhaps they are particularly wealthy . . . or well-known . . . or influential . . . or talented. While these are wonderful qualities, they are not, according to Jesus, the essence of greatness

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN**

### **A. Children come into the world with nothing.**

1. No preconceived notions.
2. No preconceived ideas.
3. No prejudices.

4. No possessions.
5. No expectations.
6. No self-reliance.
7. No sin.
8. No anything.

**B. Children come into the world relying on others for their security and their needs.** Some, 6,000 diapers later, they have some independence.

1. Once enter the Christian life, we continue to rely on Christ daily.
2. **Job 24:24** – “He gives them security, and they rely on it; Yet His eyes are on their ways.”

**C. Children begin to grow at birth.**

1. We enter Christ and begin to grow from that point forward.
2. **1 Peter 2:2** – “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” “Baby Christians”
3. **2 Peter 3:18** – “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
4. They learn to crawl before they walk, and walk before they run. They learn in sequences.
5. There may be some awkwardness at first and the first steps are ever so gingerly taken . . . Wobble before walking steadily . . . But with experience they accomplish the task.
6. **2 Corinthians 5:7** – “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

**D. Children delight in bringing about happiness in their parents.**

1. Children desire to please their parents . . . Should we not desire to please our Heavenly Father?
2. **Philippians 3:16** - “. . . Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

**E. Children try to walk in the footsteps of their parents.**

1. Try to walk around in their parents shoes.
2. Very awkward at first . . . easier when their foot grows larger.
3. **Ephesians 5:1** – “Walk in Love Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.”

**F. Children have pure expectations.**

1. The face of innocence pressed against the window watching for you to arrive at home.
2. Is that not how we are to wait for our face-to-face introduction to our Father in Heaven?
3. **Matthew 25:13** – “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

**G. Children have love because they are loved.**

1. Children let you know that they love you.
2. **1 John 4:19** – “We love Him because He first loved us.”

3. How long has it been since you told your Heaven Father that you really love Him?

H. **Little children are honest. Their though processes are pure.**

1. Honesty is refreshing . . . Isn't it?
2. **Romans 12:17** – “. . . Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”
3. **Matthew 5:8** – “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

I. **Little children are not afraid to ask questions for fear of sounding stupid.**

1. Part of their innocence is a hunger for knowledge.
2. Their minds are like little sponges . . . They absorb knowledge.
3. **Matthew 5:6** – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”
4. **Matthew 7:7-8** – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

j. **Children have trust . . . They have that “Child-like faith.”**

1. Some even try to take advantage of that simple faith and trust.
2. **Romans 10:17** – “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
3. **1 John 5:4** – “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith.”

K. **Concerning their souls . . . Children are safe.”**

1. Beyond the safe years . . . One must be saved in order to be safe again.
2. **Romans 5:9** – “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”
3. **Romans 5:10** – “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
4. **John 10:9** – “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”
  - a. How does one enter Christ? How does one enter a coat? By putting it on.
  - b. How does one put on Christ? **Galatians 3:27** – “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. So when you look at the verses of the Bible that tell us to be like children, you can see that this commandment has nothing to do with becoming immature . . . But everything to do with lessening our self-importance to magnify our reliance on our Heavenly Father for everything.
- B. A little girl, in her sincere honesty, said, “**God can see everything because He has lots of eyes.**”

1. **Psalms 11:4** – “The LORD is in His holy temple, The LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold . . .”
2. **Job 34:21** – “For His eyes are on the ways of man, And He sees all his steps.”

**C. Characteristics of little children:**

1. Children come into the world with nothing.
2. Children come into the world relying on others for their security and their needs Children begin to grow at birth.
3. Children begin to grow at birth.
4. Children delight in bringing about happiness in their parents.
5. Children try to walk in the footsteps of their parents.
6. Children have pure expectations.
7. Children have love because they are loved.
8. Little children are honest. Their thought processes are pure.
9. Little children are not afraid to ask questions for fear of sounding stupid.
10. Children have trust . . . They have that “Child-like faith.”
11. Concerning their souls, little children are safe.

**D. Your care for others is a measure of your greatness.**

1. How much concern do you show to others?
  - a. This is a vital question that can accurately measure your greatness in God's eyes.
  - b. How have you expressed your care for others lately, especially the helpless, the needy, the poor -- those who can't return your love and concern?
2. Your honest answer to that question will give you a good idea of your real greatness.

**E. Some things to think about:**

1. God uses Christians who stay cool in hot places . . . Sweet in sour places . . . And little in big places.
2. Humility is that precious quality that makes us feel smaller as we grow greater.
3. The smaller we are, the more room God has for us.
4. Meekness is power under control.
5. It is better to be the least inside the Kingdom of God than the greatest outside it.
6. True humility is that precious quality that makes us feel smaller as we grow greater.
7. True humility is not looking down on yourself, but looking up to Christ.

**F. GOD PLAN FOR MAN'S SALVATION**