

*Invitation to Greatness: Faithfulness in the Least (Mt. 5:19)*

I. GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO BE GREAT IN HIS KINGDOM

<sup>19</sup> *Whoever therefore breaks (consistently) one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches (encourages) them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:19)*

A. God invites everyone to be great in His Kingdom. This is a core teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (constitution of the Kingdom). We cannot repent of the desire for greatness because the great God designed our spirit with this longing. We must repent for seeking it in a wrong way as well as for neglecting to seek it in the way Jesus exhorted us to. Without the paradigm of being on a journey to greatness, the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle is much more difficult to sustain.

B. Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. We focus on being great in His sight rather than in the sight of men. This greatness will be fully manifest in the age-to-come not in this age. It will be based on our heart responses not on natural gifting and resources and is thus, available to all.

C. The opportunity for promotion in God's sight is vast and available to all. However, we must pursue greatness in the right way through meekness and servanthood. We also must understand the timing of its release in stages. Its full manifestation will not be seen until the Millennium.

<sup>26</sup> *Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. (Mt. 20:26-27)*

D. Jesus taught on God's invitation for our greatness and for eternal reward more than any other man in Scripture. He referred to this vast subject directly and indirectly as He called people to be first, to gain treasure in heaven, or to receive rewards from the Father (which is a major theme in the Sermon on the Mount that is emphasized in Mt. 5:5, 12, 19, 46; 6:1, 4, 6, 18, 20; 7:2). Our reward is partially given in this life and mostly in the age-to-come.

<sup>5</sup> *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit (govern) the earth (Millennium). (Mt. 5:5)*

<sup>12</sup> *Rejoice...for great is your reward in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets... (Mt. 5:12)*

<sup>19</sup> *Whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom... (Mt. 5:19)*

<sup>46</sup> *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? (Mt. 5:46)*

<sup>1</sup> *Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 4 That your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. 6 Shut your door...pray to your Father...your Father...will reward you openly. 18 Do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 20 Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... (Mt. 6:1-6, 18, 20)*

- E. When God does reward us in this life, it is mostly by a release of His Spirit in our inner man and secondarily it is increased blessing in our circumstances (more honor, money and comfort). It is common for the few who do focus on receiving God's rewards to put most of their emphasis on receiving rewards in this age in their circumstances instead of their inner man.
- F. One important aspect of ministry is to help people be great in God by teaching them to diligently and consistently obey what seems like the least of God's commands.

## II. THE LEAST OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

- A. God invites us to greatness without regard to our outward achievements or the size of our ministry impact. Rather, it is based on the development of our inner man in love, meekness, and revelation or in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit (Rom. 14:17). The development of the inner man includes prayer and fasting etc. To some these are the least important issues in life.
- B. Obedience in the least or small areas of life depicts a deep and faithful secret life with God. Many believers simply disregard obeying God in the smaller areas of their life like their thoughts and words. They do not want to wrestle through these issues.
- C. The least areas are the private hidden areas of the heart that "seem least" in importance because they do not seem to overtly hurt anyone. These are in contrast to the areas that are emphasized by man because of their overt social consequences or impact on others (murder, adultery, stealing).  
*<sup>21</sup> You have heard that it was said..., "You shall not murder"...<sup>22</sup> but I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...<sup>27</sup> You have heard that it was said..., "You shall not commit adultery." <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery in his heart...<sup>33</sup> You have heard that it was said..., "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord"...<sup>37</sup> But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'...<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." <sup>39</sup> But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (Mt. 5:21-39)*
- D. Jesus understands that faithfulness in the least areas lead to faithfulness in the areas.  
*<sup>10</sup> He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. (Luke 16:10)*
- E. Some of the matters of the Word are weightier than others, but all must be obeyed.  
*<sup>23</sup> Hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. (Mt. 23:23)*

- F. Jesus referred to the often repeated exhortation in the OT to be careful to obey all of God's commandments. Over 25 times in the OT, God urged Israel to be careful to obey all of His commandments (Deut. 4:6; 5:1, 32; 6:3, 25; 8:1; 11:32; 12:1, 32; 16:12; 17:10, 19; 26:16; 28:13; 32:46; Josh. 1:7-8; 22:5; 23:11; 2 Kings 17:37; 21:8; 1 Chr. 28:8; 2 Chr. 33:8; Ezek. 20:21).  
<sup>32</sup> *Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deut. 12:32)*
- G. It is necessary to be found faithful in pursuing 100-fold obedience if we are to receive the maximum blessing that God invites each of us to lay hold of. Faithfulness is determined in the simple (or private and seeming least) areas of our life which include making a covenant with our eyes (Ps. 101:3; Job 31:1), bridling our speech (Jas 3:2; Eph. 4:29-5:4), managing our time (Eph. 5:15-16) and money to increase the Kingdom (beyond personal comfort and honor) (1 Tim. 6:8; Mt. 6:19-21) as we engage in communing prayer with the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).
- H. We need to see the value of faithfulness in very little or in the day of small beginnings. Over 99% of the Body of Christ is given small things (very little) in terms of their sphere of accomplishments or ministry impact.  
<sup>21</sup> *Well done...you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many. (Mt. 25:21)*  
<sup>17</sup> *Well done...you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities. (Lk. 19:17)*  
<sup>10</sup> *For who has despised the day of small things? (Zech. 4:10)*

### III. THE SMALL NUMBER OF FAITHFUL BELIEVERS

- A. My primary premise in this teaching is that only a small percent of the redeemed are considered faithful in bearing fruit to maturity (Lk. 8:14-15) so as to work closely with the Lord as He establishes His government across the earth in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27; 3: 21).
- B. Jesus taught that there would be a range of degrees of glory and greatness in God's Kingdom including those who are called the least and the greatest. Our rewards in eternity greatly differ from one another. ([The largest star known is the Pistol Star, which has a mass about 100-150 times that of the Sun, and is about 10 million times brighter](#)).
- <sup>41</sup> *There is one glory of the sun...and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)*
- B-C. The term "faithful" in Scripture usually speaks of those who consistently follow through in diligent obedience to the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle or those who bear fruit with maturity and patience (Lk. 8:14-15), rather than to all who are saved (Lk. 8:13-14). The idea of being faithful implies consistency over years. Conversely, the saved who lack consistency and follow through are not referred to in Scripture as the "unfaithful" but rather as unfruitful.
- C-D. Scripture describes four categories of people who hear the Word. Only the fourth category is rewarded as a result of a life of consistent faithfulness to seek a Sermon on the Mount lifestyle.

D.E. The first category hears the Word, but Satan takes Word out of their hearts so that they would not be saved (Mt. 13:19; Mk. 4:15; Lk. 8:12).

*<sup>12</sup> Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. (Lk. 8:12)*

E.F. The second category receives the Word and responds to God for a season. They are genuinely saved yet eventually fall away from the faith (Mt. 13:20-21; Mk. 4:16-17; Lk. 8:13).

*<sup>13</sup> But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. (Lk. 8:13)*

*<sup>16</sup> These are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup> they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. When tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake...they stumble. (Mk. 4:16-17)*

F.G. The third category receives the Word to be saved yet they bring no fruit to maturity (Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:18-19; Lk. 8:14). These are the ones who are least in the Kingdom and have no rewards, but are saved as though by fire (1 Cor. 3:15).

*<sup>14</sup> The ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Lk. 8:14)*

*<sup>19</sup> The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mk. 4:19)*

*<sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:15)*

*<sup>8</sup> Look to yourselves, that we (you; NAS, NIV) do not lose those things we (you; NIV) worked for, but that we (you; NAS, NIV) may receive a full reward. (2 Jn. 8)*

*<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness (unfruitfulness) may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock (invite a response). If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him...<sup>21</sup> To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His Throne. (Rev. 3:18-21)*

G.H. The fourth category are the faithful ones with varying degrees of faithfulness and fruitfulness. Some bring forth fruit at 100-fold, some 60-fold and 30-fold (Mt. 13:23; Mk. 4:14-20; Lk. 8:15).

*<sup>15</sup> The ones (seeds) that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. (Lk. 8:15)*

*<sup>23</sup> He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Mt. 13:23)*