**Lesson – 9 Idols of the Soul and other Lessons from Jesus**

**Read for your study:** - [Eccles. 9:10](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eccles.%209.10); [Matt. 18:1-4](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2018.1-4); [18:21-35](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2018.21-35); [19:16-30](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%2019.16-30); [19:27](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt.%2019.27); [Gal. 3:21](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal.%203.21), [22](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%203.22);

**Memory Text: -** “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ **(**[**Matthew 18:1, NIV**](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matthew%2018.1)**)**.

**Introduction: -** Our environment and culture have greatly shaped our moral values, beliefs, and standards. But these are very different from the ones that are to mark citizenship in heaven. It was the mission of Jesus to point us to higher moral values that would make us comfortable to reside in heaven one day.

Matthew shows us that the kingdom of God should be central to our spiritual experience to enrich our earthly lives as well as prepare us for the heavenly life! But as humans, we fall short of it. We are ignorant of greatness, as defined by God’s standards because our hearts are full of idols of pride and jealousy! Let us dive into our study and learn about more about these idols of the heart!

**The Greatness of Humility: - Is it wrong to aspire for greatness and achievements?** No, it is not wrong but if we become proud on gaining our greatness and achievements then it is wrong. This is the worldly perspective and it must be avoided.

Teaching a lesson on greatness, Jesus made it very clear to His disciples when He put a child in front of them and said, **“Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven’” (Matt. 18: 4, NKJV)**

**What does being humble like a little child mean?** One of the indicators of humility is obedience, putting God’s Word ahead of our own will.

Christ chooses the humble. "The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die. . . . Before honor is humility. To\fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God. The heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls."—**The Desire of Ages, pp. 435, 436.**

Ellen G. White tells us that **‘the life of Christ was a life of humble simplicity, yet how infinitely exalted was his mission. Christ is our example in all things.’**

She also admonishes that ‘**A Christian reveals true humility by showing the gentleness of Christ, by being always ready to help others, by speaking kind words and performing unselfish acts, which elevate and ennoble the most sacred message that has come to our world.’**

**The Greatness of Forgiveness: -** Ever since the fall in Eden, there has been conflicts in our interpersonal relationships. These conflicts are not just in the world but in the church too.

In popular rabbinic theology, three times was the maximum that an offended party was obliged to forgive another person. When Peter asked whether seven times were adequate, he probably expected Jesus to commend him for his generosity.

In **Matthews 18:21-35** are the principles that Jesus taught regarding forgiveness.

* **Go to that person alone** and try to deal with the issue.
* **Bring two or three in the church with you,** if not receptive.
* If he is still unresponsive to your efforts, **bring up the issue before the church** or it may be necessary to cut ties with that person.

When we confess in Christ's name, our guilt is destroyed because it was borne on Calvary. (Compare Micah 7:19; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.) "The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' Isa. 53:6. He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart."—**The Desire of Ages, pp. 328, 329.**

Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God's pardoning grace. In God's forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner's soul, and from him to the souls of others… - **The Faith I Live By, Page 131.**

**Idols of the Soul: -** The Kingdom of God is one of service. In His kingdom the kings are those who serve as Jesus served. Christ's kingdom is filled with those who honor one another and prefer one another. The King is humble and righteous even while possessing His full authority and power.

In **Matt. 18: 16-30** Jesus teaches a lesson of humility through the story of a rich young ruler. “This ruler had a high estimate of his own righteousness. He did not really suppose that he was defective in anything, yet he was not altogether satisfied. He felt the want of something that he did not possess. Could not Jesus bless him as He blessed the little children, and satisfy his soul want?”—**Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 518.**

**Is it possible to have wealth, youth, power, and a good position and still feel like you need something else or more to make your life complete?**

**Why did Jesus ask Him to give his wealth to the poor and become one of His disciples? Matt. 19:16-22. Did his possessions become his idol that he felt powerless to give up?** Possessions can become idol, as this story reveals. Many are busy in their materialistic world, not knowing what they are losing or what they have lost. They are unable to depart from this idol. The rich, young ruler was incapable of showing enough love to sell his riches and follow Christ. He left Jesus sorrowfully.

After the rich young ruler left, Jesus told His disciples how hard it is to give up possessions. He showed them how impossible it is by saying, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle…”

The disciples were worried about this, but He encouraged them saying, “…With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26 NKJV.

We can’t worship God wholeheartedly when our heart and mind are occupied in material things. But how promising and encouraging to hear those words of Jesus!

**Conclusion: -** The theme that recurs throughout this lesson is that greatness does not involve the power of ruler ship, but the privilege of service. In our home lives, our lives at work, our contacts within the church, and outside the church, happy, meaningful relationships are based on two factors:

1. Our personal relationship with Christ; and (2) our willingness to serve unselfishly.

Jesus, the King of Kings, brought no less excitement when He rode into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion. Hailing Him the "son of David," the people were prepared for Him to proclaim the fulfillment of the covenant by ascending the throne and taking the kingly scepter. But they had little idea of the kind of king He really was, the nature of His kingdom, or the kind of authority He would exercise.

**What does it take for us to serve?** It involves taking down our idols that take the place of God and keep us away from His fellowship. Those idols could be:

* **a prideful, disobedient heart** (instead of the humility of a child–**Matthew 18:1-4)**
* **an unforgiving attitude** (see parable of the unforgiving servant–**Matthew 18:15-35)**
* **legalistic self-righteousness** (keeping the law to earn salvation–**Matthew 19:16-20)**
* **wealth and worldly possessions** and attainments (preventing us from being disciples–**Matthew 19:21-26)**
* **a thirst for power and recognition** (always wanting to be first, like the disciples–**Matthew 20:20-28**

Do you have any more idols that are keeping you away from God? Then bring them to the Lord! He will replace them with His love!

**God Bless You!!!**