Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

Week 69: Living in the Kingdom of God

Day 476: Becoming like children

At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, had him stand among them, and said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven! Whoever then humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me." (Matthew 18:1-5)

Unless you become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven…

What is Jesus telling us we need to be like in order to be in our heavenly Fathers' house? What does "become like little children" mean and how do we know if we've accomplished it?

Share your thoughts with those you trust.

Day 477: Stumbling blocks

"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come.

"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into fiery hell.

"See that you do not disdain one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."
(Matthew 18:6-10)

Do not lead someone else down the path of harm. Do not open yourself to being tempted to harm either yourself or others. God has great love for all His people, especially the vulnerable and dependent. Do not look down on them.

If what you see tempts you to sin, do not look at it. If what you do tempts you to sin, stop doing it. Do not lead yourself or someone else down the path of sin, the path of harm. Instead, walk in righteousness, integrity, and love, seeking what is healthiest with Christ. Worship only God. Write down some things you have stopped looking at or doing, which were harmful to yourself or others.

Share your notes with Jesus, and bring them up with Him during your worship this Sunday.

Day 478: Trusting

"What do you think? If someone owns a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go look for the one that went astray? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that one of these little ones be lost." (Matthew 18:12-14)

Your Father in heaven is not willing that one trusting, dependent person be lost – but that all will be cared for.

Do you know a person who is dependent on others, and has to trust for their needs? Perhaps an infant or young child. In the same way, God wants us to trust Him. This does not mean that we do not need to work or provide for ourselves and others – doing so can be part of God's desires for you as well. Having faith, though, means trusting God in good times and bad, when you have much and have nothing. What examples of trust can you provide, from your own life or those you know?

Share your thoughts with those you love.

Day 479: Conflict

"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that at the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, treat him like a Gentile or a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17)

If a member of the family of Christ is doing something harmful, do you care enough for them to share with them a healthier way? If they will not listen, do you care enough to bring others with you for a wider conversation? If they still will not listen, do you care enough bring it to the entire body for prayer, discernment, and reinforcing of love? If they still will not listen to the Path of Life as discerned by the body, then they are choosing to become outsiders.

Can you share an example where you spoke in love to your brother or sister who is harming themselves or others?

How does God tell us to treat outsiders?

Share your thoughts with your fellow explorers.

Day 480: Binding and Consequences

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven. Again, I tell you the truth, if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:18-20)

'Whatever you decide is appropriate for the body on earth, you are deciding it is appropriate for the body in heaven as well. I am there with you, and our Father will implement in heaven what you implement on earth.'

Christ is giving you the keys to heaven.

Your words and actions matter, for they influence Christ's body on earth. The words and actions of Christ's body on earth matter, for they influence Christ's body in heaven.

What if the words / actions are ungodly?

Then that is very, very sad indeed. Our Father cries.

Yesterday Jesus talked about intervening with others. Today, He addresses our own actions and words. What do you say and do in your life that you look forward to continuing with God for eternity? What else can you add to your life today, that you would look forward to in the same fashion? Try and do and say things which will please your heavenly Father, and which He will be delighted to release in heaven.

Share your thoughts with your fellow explorers.

Day 481: Forgiveness

Then Peter came to him and said, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!

"For this reason, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves.

"As he began settling his accounts, a man who owed 10,000 talents was brought to him. Because he was not able to repay it, the lord ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, children, and whatever he possessed, and repayment to be made. Then the slave threw himself to the ground before him, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.' The lord had compassion on that slave and released him, and forgave him the debt.

"After he went out, that same slave found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 silver coins. So he grabbed him by the throat and started to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe me!' Then his fellow slave threw himself down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you.' But he refused. Instead, he went out and threw him in prison until he repaid the debt.

"When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very upset and went and told their lord everything that had taken place. Then his lord called the first slave and said to him, 'Evil slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me! Should you not have shown mercy to your fellow slave, just as I showed it to you?' And in anger his lord turned him over to the prison guards to torture him until he repaid all he owed.

"So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:21-35)

'Lord, should I forgive my brother as many times as perfection?'

'No, my beloved: perfection times perfection.'

Jesus was upfront, even contrary with people who were harming others, as we read in His confrontations with scribes, pharisees, and others. Yet one over-riding message He gave, more than almost any other message: forgive.

Peter picked the number 7, which stood for 'completion, wholeness, perfection.' The ultimate. And Jesus escalated even that. Forgive, until eternity. Like your Father forgives you. And, if you choose not to forgive? Then you are releasing unforgiveness into heaven – and your Father may not forgive you, either.

Is there anyone (including yourself) that you need to forgive, absolutely anyone? Please write them down here. If you cannot forgive someone, you are hurting yourself.

Talk with Jesus about forgiveness and your situation.

Day 482: Rest

Rest, receive nourishment, feed both body and soul. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). Pray. Dedicate this day to God. Worship! Fill yourself with Light. In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you. Celebrate, Rejoice, Give thanks, talk and walk with God. Be in shalom.