Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

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Introduction

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

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The values of the kingdom of heaven are different than the values of this world.

The kingdom of heaven values humility, not status or power.
Matthew 18:1-4

Look at what Jesus says:
• "I tell you the truth"
• "Unless you change."
• "And become like little children"
• "You will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Two things to notice:
• Jesus changes the focus of the question. Forget worrying about greatness. What you should be concerned about is being in the kingdom at all.
• The child is held up not as an example of purity or innocence, but as an example of humility.

The kingdom is gained not by merit or status, but by childlike trust in our heavenly Father. It is the meek who will inherit the earth.
The little children in this passage are disciples regardless of their age.

"Whoever welcomes a disciple, welcomes me."

One of the primary ways that disciples were welcomed was through hospitality.

In the kingdom of heaven God values teamwork and partnership, not independence.

Jesus gives a strong warning to anyone who would hinder his work and cause his children to stumble.

- Sin can come from the outside – from those who stand in the way of God’s work.
- Sin can come from the inside – from our own heart.

God values interdependence, not independence.

The church is a body. We need one another.

“Do not look down on one of these little ones.”

“Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

God is always looking out for his children and his angels are ever ready to help.
Then Jesus illustrates it by the story of the shepherd and the lost sheep. God's love for his children is a radical love. What does that mean for us in the church?

God values mercy and forgiveness. His desire is for restoration.

Conclusion

The values of the kingdom are different than the values of this world.

- Jesus values humility. The world values status and power.
- Jesus values community and interdependence. The world values independence.
- Jesus values mercy. The world values retribution.

Live like a child of the King!