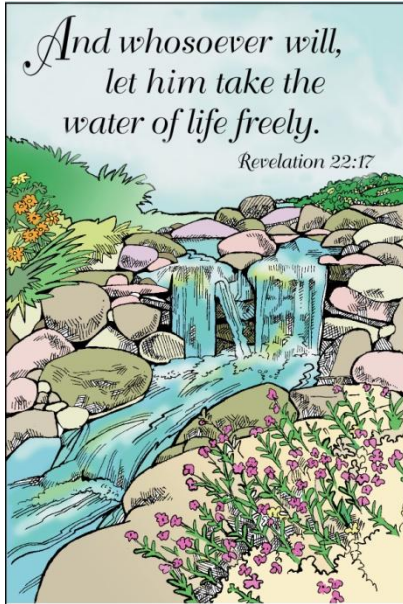


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 9



WHO CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM?

Scripture Texts: Galatians 5:19-21; Matthew 5:20; Matthew 22:2, Matthew 22:11-13; John 3:5, John 3:35-36; Luke 9:62

Last week we studied the way to enter the Kingdom of God. The kingdom is open to all. Jesus said, **Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17)**. But many will not. Because they will not meet the requirements they cannot enter. Today we look at who these are. Those with sin in the heart and without regeneration from God cannot inherit, or enter, the Kingdom of God.

MEMORY VERSE: *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*
—**Luke 18:24-25**

The Fleshly

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh—deeds and attitudes springing from the natural, fleshly, sinful, unchanged heart. These works belong to earth below, not to Heaven above. Here we read the grim list of the works of the flesh. Add to it others named in **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. These do not come from God, and are not of His nature. He came to destroy these, and He cannot accept them. Therefore, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. What will they inherit? At the judgment seat of Christ everyone will receive the things done in his body (while living in his body, in this life) . . . whether it be good or bad. Sinners will just have their fleshly works turned back to them (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). So we find that those with works of the flesh cannot enter the kingdom.

The Self-Righteous

Matthew 5:20 To enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. They tried to establish their own righteousness, but did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (**Romans 10:3**). They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others (**Luke 18:9**). They were self-righteous but God saw them as an unclean thing, for all our righteousness's are as filthy rags (**Isaiah 64:6**). We cannot of ourselves be good enough to enter the kingdom. We can enter only like Paul—not having mine own righteousness . . . but . . . the righteousness which is of God by faith (**Philippians 3:9**). So we find that the self-righteous cannot enter the kingdom.

The Unregenerate

John 3:5, 35-36 To enter the kingdom one must be alive. Unless he is made alive spiritually he cannot enter. There are two phases of this—**being born of water and of the Spirit**—the putting away of death and the putting on of life, or the washing away of sin and the coming in of Jesus Christ. It is an operation of the Spirit of God. It is done when the sinner comes to God in repentance and faith. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life . . . It is by grace . . . through faith . . . not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)**. So we find that the spiritually dead cannot enter the kingdom.

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LESSON 9

Those Having No Wedding Garment

Matthew 22:2, 11-13 Jesus said, **The kingdom of heaven is like . . .** then described it as a king making a marriage for his son. God is the king, Christ is the bridegroom, and the church is the bride. Inspecting the guests, the king saw one not having a wedding garment. This was great disrespect for the king and his son. In the reality which the story symbolizes, the guests are the bride, for Christ is to marry the whole church. The bride cannot be without a wedding dress as this would be shameful. The unready guest was speechless—no excuse. He was bound and cast into outer darkness.

What is the wedding garment we must have to be in God's kingdom? This question is answered in **Revelation 19:7-9**, describing the marriage of the Lamb. It says **his wife hath made herself ready**. She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: **for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**. How can this fine linen dress be obtained? Surely not of us, for that would be filthy rags. And it says it was granted her to wear it. That is, it was given her by another. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (**Revelation 7:13-14**). So we find that those without a wedding garment cannot enter the kingdom.

Those Who Turn Back

Luke 9:62 Some who are regenerated at one time and given the wedding garment will lose it, or allow it to become soiled or wrinkled in some way, and be found outside the kingdom. This is the result of looking back to the world with desire and being overcome by it—in plain speaking, backsliding. Jesus said that looking back after putting one's hand to the plough—entering the service of God—makes one unfit for the kingdom. This should be a sobering thought to all of us. It is not to be taken lightly. Peter wrote, **For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (2 Peter 2:20-21)**.

There is no eternal security without eternal faithfulness. No one need turn from the Lord, even under the strongest pressure, **for God will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13)**. So we find that those who turn back cannot enter the kingdom.

The Gospel makes a separation here between those in Satan's kingdom and those in God's kingdom. Each will go to the master he served here to be forever in the kingdom he lived in here. **THINK OF IT!**

JUST A THOUGHT

**We hear a lot about good mixers these days, but
what we really need is more separators.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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