

Torrey 1991 Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom?

By David A. Johnson

Thank you, Ron. Hi. Yeah, that's good. I don't do well at blowin' smoke, and, you know, I feel awkward when I go to a new place. "I'm so glad to be here."

I really am glad to be here. I really am. I feel like you're supposed to say that. And so I did and-- but I've known about this engagement for quite a long time, and I can just tell you that about the middle of last week I started losing sleep, and it wasn't because I was nervous. It was 'cause I was really beginning to think about what God was going to do in terms of not just what I was doing here, but what God was going to do here among you this week.

And I may never know what the ripple effects of God's word through the variety of speakers this week will ever be in your life. But I believe it's significant. And I really am glad to be here because of those things. In the introduction time at the very beginning around 8:30 session, I indicated real briefly that my focus is going to be the theme is Kingdom living here now in my electives. The way I'm going to be getting at that theme is by dealing with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

We began that at the last session, and in these sessions, I'll be getting at that same theme.

Literally getting at the theme I'm dealing with in the beatitudes of brokenness and mourning and what that means by in this particular session. And these sessions bring to light three episodes in the Gospels, three vignettes, if you will, that I think, illustrate the truths that come out of the beatitudes.

For the first one, I want you to turn in your Bibles. During this session, we will only do this one in this session, Matthew 18 verses one through four, Matthew 18 verses one through four.

I'd like to pray as I begin. Spirit of God, I ask in the name of Jesus that beyond any word that I could possibly say, beyond any concept that I might want to explain, any thought that would stimulate some movement beyond any of that, there would be the irrepressible work of your Holy Spirit because it is by the work of your Spirit that anything of effect ever happens. And I don't think anybody here has any interest in hearing another speech. We've heard a lot of speeches all our lives.

We want to hear from you. That doesn't come from my mouth. It comes from you. I pray that you would move among us through the word. In Jesus name, Amen. Verse one. "At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, who then is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And he called a child to himself and set him before them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, specifically, like this child, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.""

Think about this picture. He took a child, after their question was asked about who was the greatest, and he--taking the child that says these words: "There. There's your picture. You guys want to talk about who the greatest is and what are the characteristics of greatness in the Kingdom? There you go.

"Take a look. In this child, guys, are all the necessary ingredients of greatness in the Kingdom. And right now, by the way, you don't happen to possess them. For you to enter the Kingdom, you'd have to change big time." Now, I see the disciples when Jesus takes this child and says, 'this is the characteristic' or 'in this child are the characteristics of greatness.' And the disciples looking at that child, a little bit confused. "Him?" I even think the kid is a little bit confused.

"Me? I mean, there's the disciples. Me?" What is this, going on here? What is it about this child that would in his life somehow have characteristics of the Kingdom that would allow him to enter into its reality and into its power, enter into it at all? Salvifically? Well, I think we get to the answer of that by looking at three things. First of all, the question that the disciples are asking. I want to examine that a little bit.

Second of all, the confrontation, and by the way, I think this is not just a nice little Sunday school lesson here that he's telling him how to do it. I think he's making a big time confrontation. That'll be clear in a few moments, I hope. Third thing is the culmination of the thinking.

First of all, let's look at this question that they are asking: "who then is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" That question reveals some things about these disciples to us. I don't think they knew they were doing it, but they were. It reveals at least two things about how they thought. It reveals, first of all, that they were, like many of us, born performers. They were born strivers.

They were competitiveness, competitive. They got their sense of value and their sense of meaning the old-fashioned way: they earned it. Who is the greatest or all in the race? Who's doing the best? When you ask that question, "who's the greatest?" it does indeed reveal that underneath that question, there is this question: "how am I doing in this quest to be the greatest? In the Kingdom? Of course. How does my performance look to you, Jesus? Am I doing well? More important than 'am I doing well?' am I doing better than him?"

This question reveals not only that they were performers, but it also reveals that they were keeper-trackers, what I call keeper-tracker. They kept track of the performance. "Where do you get that, Dave?" Well, I get that from Mark chapter 9, which gives us the parallel passage to this particular event. And it indicates that they were not just coming to Jesus with this question prior to them coming with this question, it says they had been arguing amongst themselves.

Who was the greatest? "He's the greatest. No, he's the greatest." And on and on and on. What you need to get in your mind's eye was that they were not coming to Jesus, asking what I think, is a legitimate question. "Lord, we've heard you talk in the beatitudes about blessed of the broken blessed of the mourning that really confronted our thinking because that's not what we think really powerful Christians look like. And so we're a little confused. Would you kind of tell us what is greatness in the Kingdom look like?"

That is not what they're doing. They're coming to Jesus, expecting him to settle an argument because they've been arguing among themselves. They all had an opinion about what greatness

was. They all had an opinion about who among them was the greatest. They wanted Jesus to settle the arguments.

So they had an opinion. They had a grading system. I think that they had all done an inventory on themselves. And I'm sure that if you were to pull the twelve disciples about this time, some of them would have the opinion that Peter was the greatest. I can guarantee that there was at least one among the Twelve that thought Peter was the greatest.

Peter. Peter's great, I love Peter. The argument for Peter would have been he walked on water. This guy was incredible. We heard Peter at one time when Jesus asked him, who do men say that I am? And they told him what men were saying.

"But who do you say that I am, Peter?" And Peter said, thou art the Christ, the Son the living God." And Jesus said to Peter, "oh, flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. But my father, who's in heaven gave you those words.

"Out of my mouth came God's words! Who's the greatest? Easy, me! The walk-on-water guy." Well, there would have been some other disciples who saw different aspects of Peter's character in life. They did indeed see him walk on water. They also saw him sink like a stone.

And they did indeed hear from his mouth come the very words of God. But in the very next verse or several verses following, this same Peter, from whom the very oracles of God flowed, said,

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when Jesus said, "I must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things and fulfill the plan of God," Peter said, "no, you can't do that."

And Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan." We're talking extreme. This guy's inconsistent. He is not the greatest.

Guys like Peter are not the greatest. They are unreliable. I'll tell you who the greatest is. John. John was the disciple that Jesus loved. Love is the thing. And John was wonderful. And, oh, my, that's the gentle thing.

There's the problem with John. You know that love turns to mush. Sometimes he's kind of mushy. Yeah, John's not the greatest. It's probably James. James! Passion. Passion. What we need in the Church today is men and women of conviction and passion and do the right thing. James was passionate, but James also had a tendency to run people over like a steamroller. When they got opposed with Jesus, with Jesus, he was being opposed by a group that came from another place and he wasn't allowed to enter in. John--James said to Jesus, "Why don't you call down fire from heaven and burn him up?"

Well, I don't know about James. He's got a little too much passion. Andrew, Andrew is the guy. This is the greatest in the Kingdom.

He's gentle. He's behind the scenes. That's what really matters. That's the greatest thing. We do that. We all have our little grading system. We all have our little inventory that we take. But

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who's the greatest in the Kingdom? What's yours? What's yours? Who's the great in the Kingdom? The missionary?

Maybe it's not him. It's the Minister, the upfronter. Or maybe it's the miracle worker of some kind, somebody who operates real powerfully in spiritual gifts. Maybe that's what really wows you. Maybe it's none of those things. It's none of those up front guys, and they're all falling left and right. It's just being nice. Niceness is the greatest thing in the Kingdom. Okay, a broader than personal distinctives of people. Let's make it bigger then.

Who's the greatest in the Kingdom, like as a group? The fundamentalists! Evangelicals! Now it's the Charismatic. It's the Baptists, it's the Lutherans. It's the Catholics. "I hate that Catholics."

It's not the Bible thumpers. It's not the Bible thumpers. We've got too many Bible thumpers. We need people who are involved in social activism. It's not the social activist. It's just that regular guy, regular woman who goes to church every Sunday. And that's the greatest. Who is the greatest? That's the argument they were having on the way to talk to Jesus. You tell us, Lord.

Oh, we are so spiritual. We will submit to your Lordship on this. After all, you are God. So tell us who is the greatest. It's me. I just know it's me.

You tell us, Lord, who is the greatest? It's us. I just know it's us. Who among us is doing the best at gaining their own life by our performance? Now comes the confrontation. That's the question they were asking.

Here's the confrontation. Unless you are converted and become like a child, you won't even enter the Kingdom. Oh, he dropped a bomb on these guys. They were expecting to get at least a pat on the back. Honorable mention, if they weren't the greatest. "You're good, though."

I mean, they weren't expecting anything like this at all. In fact, they were coming. This is good. This kind of caught me. They're all coming in a performance context of Kingdom work. This isn't even secular "who's the greatest?" It's a spiritual "who's the greatest?"

"We want to do God's stuff. Who's doing God's stuff?" The best. I need a major change. And you would even think you're in part of this thing, someone much different than you. Two things that have to happen to you to even enter. You'd have to be converted. You have to become like this child. Now, I think to really get a handle on what's going on here, to feel the impact of it, we kind of almost have to become the disciples in some way and ask ourselves a question. How do you think they would respond? Well, ask yourself this question. How would you respond? Again, you got to understand you're coming here expecting a word of approval.

The settling of this argument, somebody will be maybe seen as the greatest. Hopefully, I'll get as I said a moment ago, honorable mention. He drops this bomb. I think the first response would have been shocked. The shock: it never entered my mind that we weren't in the Kingdom.

In fact, I have this little thing playing out in my mind where Peter would--maybe this is maybe--speculation, would have gone to Jesus, and said "Jesus. You probably didn't hear the question.

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It's really hard work being Messiah, I know that. You've been doing a lot of ministry here. You didn't hear what said. We didn't ask you who gets into Kingdom. We asked you, who is the greatest in the Kingdom? You asked the wrong--You're answering the wrong question."

I think, in fact, past that being the performers that they are, we know their performance because of the question they ask, "Which one of us is the greatest?" I think being the performers that they are, having heard this: "in order to even get in, you're gonna have to change." Consider yourself part of this. "You're gonna have to change."

I think they probably started cataloging all the right behaviors and all the right beliefs that they had, that would prove that that's wrong. Lord, we've done demons. We've been healing the sick. We've been preaching the Kingdom.

We have been declaring your deity. There's all these people around here that don't even believe you're God and we're telling everybody you are and we're doing all the right things and we're following you. Doesn't that count for anything? If we haven't entered the Kingdom life, who has? Answer: someone who has the qualities of this child.

If nothing else has accomplished at this point in this dialogue between the disciples and Jesus, he at least has their attention. Let me make a little disclaimer here at this point, as I'm talking about entering into the Kingdom of God. I think there are different levels at which Jesus could say you won't even enter into the Kingdom. That will have different meanings.

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In other words, I think there's one way in which to say you won't even enter the Kingdom. Could have a salvific sense, meaning that you haven't entered the Kingdom in terms of Salvation, a relationship with God. Would you agree with me, however, also that there are people who have entered into a saving relationship with Christ who have not entered into the Kingdom in the sense that they have experienced the life of God in their living? They have not experienced the power and the Spirit and the work of the Spirit on the inside that would yield what we would call abundant life.

Spirit-led, Spirit-filled, directed life empowered by God's stuff.

I think we would. So I think sometimes when he's saying, you won't even enter into the Kingdom, part of what he's saying possibly is not just Salvation wise, but you'll never enter into the power of the Kingdom. You'll never to enter into the reality of the Kingdom unless you become like this child. Now, after this initial shock at this word that brought them up short, I think the next reaction would be confusion, not like "I don't understand His point, and I don't agree." More like, "I don't get it. What in the world could this child-what character could this child have that I am supposed to have to enter into the realities of the Kingdom?"

Let's look at this kid for a while and figure it out. The Greek word for child here helps us a little bit because it gives us a track on how old this kid--the word is "Paidion." And what that indicates is that this child would not have been a little tiny infant.

That helps because it's a child most likely around five to seven years old. So get a kid about that age in your mind. Some of you are probably doing some student teaching even now. And if you

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can get in your mind's eye, a kid about kindergarten, first grade. Got him? Got her? What is it about a child in kindergarten through second grade that has the character? What is the characteristic?

Well, look at him. They're cute. Is cute what you need? "Blessed are the cute, Dave." No, no. And the other thing is, they're not that. I mean, they're cute, but they're also embarrassing. They do things that embarrass you. So I don't know if that's it. What about behavior? Ah, behavior. Children.

You know, I have four kids. My oldest is 13, and my youngest right now is ten. Two girls and the two boys. And I can relate to that, it's their behavior that we're supposed to emulate. See kids, especially around kindergarten, first grade, they always obey. They always listen.

They always believe everything you say. They submit right now. They're very selfless, appropriate at all times. They have this incredible capacity and tendency to just kind of sit at my feet and look adoringly at me and go, Hello, Father. How may I serve you?

Well, my kids. You know, I think as I reflect on that kind of image, I think sometimes we get our impressions of scenes like this from pictures on the wall. When we were little kids in Sunday school. And the pictures were always soft colors and pristine and quiet. And all the children were sitting attentively at Jesus' feet. That's not how kids act. That's not how kids act.

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Kids are nuts, you know, I remember when I first preached this, you know, kids are kids. It's great. It's not bad. It's great. It's just kids.

When I first preached this in my church, I asked how many women or husbands and wives would be willing if I brought one of their kids up on the stage to use, like, as a visual and everybody's gonna-- "oh, not my kid." Why? Because he'll probably act like a kid. You know, at certain times, they're wonderful. And, you know, they do obey sometimes. And they do believe. Sometimes as parents, we can learn from our kids about what simple faith really is. But sometimes they don't. And sometimes they don't obey. And sometimes they don't submit, though sometimes they do.

And you get them in public. You ever see these kids' programs? They're so fun. There's always this one little girl, got her dress up over her head. You know, that's just what kids do. That's okay. It's kids. And there's some other little boy punching his best friend, you know, in the face and he have a little fighting. There's always some little kid picking his nose and looking at it. That's what my kid did. That's what they do. When I start talking about the behavior of this kid, you know who I'm reminded of now? That's how the disciples already act.

So that's not "well, if they started acting like a child that way, if that's what Jesus meant, that wouldn't be a new thing. The disciples already were inconsistent." They believed from their toes. They believed. And sometimes they didn't. And they obeyed sometimes from their toes. And they loved God, and they obeyed, but sometimes they didn't.

There's something else. It's not just their behavior. It's not just that they always believe because they don't always believe. I get a picture. It dawns on me. What this is about this kid, that Jesus is driving home.

One of the primary characteristics of a little boy or girl in kindergarten or first grade is this: they are absolutely dependent. They have absolutely no control over their lives. They are not at all self-sufficient, and they are infinitely vulnerable. If I were to take one of my little girls or my little boys at the age of five or six years, bring them out into the middle of the field, leave them there, walk away and let them get lost.

They would, by themselves, what? Die. Without resource, they would die. They cannot live on their own. Now, my kids like, we spiritually--sometimes, my kids posture. Kids are fun. We learned so many things, I think, even about spirits of truth from her kids. But my kids' posture, especially my two boys--I think boys are into looking tougher than they are. Anyway, girls don't care.

That's great about girls, but my oldest boy, Caleb, is his name, and he just walks around. It's like, "yeah, okay. I can handle it. No problem." He's always going like this when we're in a group and he's not real familiar with [inaudible].

Always going, "yeah, I can. You there? Okay? Yes. No problem. You still there. Okay. He's there, no problem." He's always checking if we're there.

We're on our way to camp. One year, I was speaking at a retreat and brought the whole family on this particular event. And my other boy, Christopher, was real nervous for some reason. He was asking us all these questions. "Have I ever been to this camp before? Do I know my way around there? Am I gonna get lost?"

"Yes, Chris, you've been here before. Yeah, it's Christopher. We've been here many times. You won't have a problem."

We get there. He recognizes it. It's late at night. Nobody's there yet. And we're walking down the hall of this dormitory, and it's just our family. And he's walking a little bit ahead really feeling good. He goes, "you know what, dad? I know this place like the back of my head. I can handle it."

Posturing. You can really handle it. But the truth is they can't handle it. The truth is they are dependent. And I think that as that concept of dependence, because by the way, I think it would dawn on them. Much of my even pulling this out of the text comes from all of the study I've done in Matthew coming up to verse 18. The theme of Matthew is blessed are the broken. Blessed are those who recognize they can't, by themselves, do anything of value in the Kingdom without the power of God. It dawns on them. Dependence is what's going on here.

And I think that very possibly from the core of their being, they would rebel against that. And now maybe I'm projecting. So I'll admit that. So I'll just say it this way: from the core of my being, when I hear the dependence is the key, I start going, yuck.

Because I've spent most of the energy in my life--and I would dare say most of you have too-- trying to figure out how to be independent, in control, self-sufficient and in need of nothing from anybody. So I think the third response very well could have been resistance. By the way, I think this posture of resistance began in the Garden of Eden. Scripture teaches that man is created in the image of God. What that means is that in some sense, all men and all women are bearers of the image of God.

That means in some way we're like God. Now be careful there. We're not God, but we're like God in some way. Question is, in what way? Well, God is a person. So am I. God has personality, if you will. So do I, meaning this. I am equipped differently than a rock. Okay. I have a capacity to love and hate, have capacity to think and reason, choose and feel things.

The next question would be if we are creating the image of God and therefore are like God in some ways, in what ways are we different? And there's a longer list there. But I think the primary aspects of our difference between us and God in terms of character as it relates to my lesson is this: God is independent.

God is independent. He needs nothing outside of himself to exist. And I kind of put God like this. Here is God. He is complete in and of himself.

When I was created, when you were created, when mankind was created in the garden, mankind was not created independent. He was created like this. And in this relationship of dependence in

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the beginning, getting his life from God, getting all of his needs met from God, in this position of dependence on God's independence, there was life.

There was fullness. There was joy. There was the fullness in deed of his humanity. Now we all know about the rebellion in the garden, and the rebellion is verbalized this way: "I want. I will. I. I. I." Pride. Okay.

The underlying reality, I think of the pride, that made him want to go "me, me, me, I, I, I" was a rebellion to this position. I don't like being dependent. I hate being dependent. I will do it myself. By the way, God, over here. By the way, God, I'll do stuff for you. I will. I'll build a church. I'll preach your word. But don't give me this. I'll do-- I'll do it like this.

By the way, when man and woman decided a dependence on God was this yucky feeling they got what they wanted. They got it. They got independence. And among other things, what God says when we're like this is, "go for it. Take your best shot. Hope you get life on your own."

Jeremiah 2:13 says "there are two sins that I have against you. One is that you have forsaken me the fountain of living water. You have forsaken this. And you've gone over here to dig your own wells." And among other things, God says "I want you to come back to me."

Dependence, which is where the fount of life is. But if you don't, here's why I just wanna give you, good luck digging your well. Let me tell you something about the well you're gonna dig for

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on your own. It'll leak. Now on the front end of digging your well, you're going to have all sorts of hopes to being able to do it yourself.

You know, I've never been able to talk anybody out of digging their own well in the front end because they are absolutely convinced they can do it. Give it a try. Take your best shot. Get your life from what you can crank out yourself. Go ahead.

When you're tired, we'll talk. When you're tired, you'll come up saying, I can't do this. And when you recognize you can't do that, you might start getting hungry for this again. My only hope is God. By the way, people who are living out here independently on their own cranking it out themselves? You know how you can spot them. They have a tendency to say things like this. Who's the greatest? How am I doing? How's my well look to you?

People here don't talk like that. You can spot it that way goes on. And Isaiah 50, verse 11, saying the same thing about the well is a different way. You are in darkness, he says. And instead of coming to me, who is the light, you decide to build your own fire. So build your own fires. But just know this. If you build your own fire independently of me, even if your fire is a fire, religious fire, you're going to have to warm yourself and you're going to have to be satisfied with the warmth and the light that your fire provides. So go for it.

Crank it out. Go do ministry in the power of your PhD. Knock them dead. Nothing wrong with PhDs. Nothing wrong with master's degrees.

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God can use those things powerfully. But where the power comes from is when people recognize PhDs and master's degrees don't release a whole lot of power. The only power that ever comes is when I'm going like this. Here is the life here, is it? But I--every fiber of your humanity rebels against dependence. I don't like dependence. I'm a man.

Go be a man. And when you're tired, we'll talk.

People who like their own fires and dig their own wells. Ask questions like, who is the greatest? Who's the greatest church? Who is the greatest denomination? Who's the greatest performer?

I got a word for you. It's this. If you ever hope to enter into the realities of the Kingdom of God, we're going to have to become like children who realize that at the core, our only hope is Jesus. For any aspect of our life, our only hope for Salvation is Jesus. Our only hope to ever live genuinely Holy is the power of the Spirit.

Our only hope. Forever serving in any significant Kingdom way that affects people's lives is the power of the Spirit. My only hope is you. Dependence. I think they went from shock to confusion to resistance. The question I would have coming off the resistance is this. How do you break the resistance? Let's say you even kind of--you know, I resist against that too. How do I kind of break that up? Well, the text says in verse 4, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

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No one says that in 1 Peter says, here, just humble yourself as his child. Okay. Well, I have another question after that. Where does that come from? How do you humble yourself? Well, you don't ask that question. You just do it. What do you mean? How do you humble yourself? Just do it. Ready? Set. Go. Done.

You know, I think there are a lot of people who act humble who aren't humble. I grew up in a church. I kind of did this a little bit in my in the elective class I just got done with. But having grown up in the Church, I've just seen a lot of stuff. I think I've seen the reality of God, and I think I've seen a lot of junk.

So have you. You're in the church. It's all there. It's all wheat and tare. It's all in mixed.

And I've met a lot of people in the context of the church who act humble who aren't. See, I don't know if you can choose a humble response, like I'm choosing to be humble. It'll look phony. In fact, if you've met people who act humble who aren't humble, you know the difference. There are people who act humble. They aren't humble.

I just want to poke them. Then I want to get it off my finger.

I think brokenness. I think humility rather, I think humility is a result of brokenness. I don't think you can choose humility. I think humility flows right out of brokenness. I've never met a broken person who came to the end of themselves as it relates to Salvation, who came to the end of themselves as it relates to sanctification, who came to the end of themselves as it relates to

service. And those are terms of brokenness. I can't do it anymore and began to earnestly move toward dependence on God. I've never met a broken person who wasn't humble because brokenness results in humility, an overwhelming awareness that if anything of value is going to flow from this pot of clay, it's going to have to be born of God because I know me too well to think that I can crank it out.

And I think the next question is, where does brokenness come from? I think brokenness comes when you begin to see your sin and your hopelessness to do anything about your sin. I think brokenness comes when we begin to get in touch, even as believers, with all the ways in which we light our own fires. When we begin as believers to get in touch with all the ways in which we dig our own wells, sometimes even doing them in the name of God. I spent some years in ministry digging my own well, lighting my own fire.

And a real motive for my ministry was me looking good. You think that's a aberration? You think that happens oh, maybe once or twice? I think it's everywhere.

I think you'll fight it all your life. I think brokenness comes when we begin to see all the ways we act independently of God. In fact, if I think we could just get a glimpse of the ways in which we really do act independently of God and act as if we don't need Him and act as if we can light our own fire and we can dig our own well and use a lot of God terminology to really pump ourselves up. I think if we really get a glimpse of how much we do that, I think it would be more than humbling. I think it would for some of us be devastating.

But I got some good news for you who are devastated and broken. Blessed are the broken. Blessed are the broken. They get the Kingdom. Blessed are the ones who recognize they can't crank it out anymore, because when you recognize, you can't crank it out anymore, you could go one of two ways. You could go into despair, walk away from the whole thing, or you could go. I can't crank it out anymore. I need. I need desperately, need God. Blessed are the broken who are dependent. And from dependence comes power.

What time? Okay, good. Let's say that's where you're at. Let's say that's where you're at, you're at a place where you're past shocked, you're past confused, you're past resistance on this word of dependence. And you are broken.

I mean, I think it's safe to assume that many of you may be there. You might be talking like this if you're there. Lord, I really do want to get back to the dependence I was created for. And even though my flesh honestly despises that, my soul genuinely longs for dependence, because somewhere in my spirit, I know that I was made for this, not for this. And I want to get back to this. But, Lord, I got a new problem. I can't even do that. I can't even get back to this. So try hard to do that. I can't even get back there. I don't even know if I know all of what it means.

Lord, I can't be turned into that child. You have to turn me. Got some good news for you. If you recognize you can't even turn yourself. The word converted there, "you need to be converted." The word converted in the Greek is a passive verb. You know what that means, it means the action is done to you. It means you are turned when you humble yourself through the brokenness that comes to you. And you are humbled because of brokenness.

I can't do this anymore. The passive verb kicks in, meaning that you are turned by someone else. And the one who turns you is God. God begins to turn you and God begins to turn you and God begins to turn you. We think of conversion as when I was say that was converted.

Well, you were converted. But you know what? There is a sense in which we spend the rest of our redeemed life being turned, being converted, being changed, becoming more and more and more dependent. More and more and more like this child. And from this place comes power.

Culmination is the fourth thing, and it culminates in the fourth verse when it says, Whoever then does humble himself as this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. Well, let's say more than one person humbles himself, then. I mean, he is the greatest, the singular like-- no, no, no. What this means is this whoever does learn about this brokenness independence and humility does enter into the Kingdom.

And whoever does enter into the Kingdom is the greatest. You know what that means?

Everybody who enters into the Kingdom is the greatest. Know what else it means? Nobody is the greatest.

That's what it means. Let me give it to you this way. Billy Graham. Who are some big names out in this part of the woods? John McArthur, Chuck Swindoll and the thief on the Cross, who, by the way, didn't do a thing, are all the greatest in the Kingdom. Why?

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Because what makes greatness in the Kingdom? What makes greatness in the Kingdom is people who recognize my only hope is you. The thing that makes it. John McArthur great in the Kingdom. The thing that makes Chuck Swindoll and the Thief on the cross, great in the Kingdom, is because all of them have said and I believe in their living are continuing to say, I have no hope but Jesus.

The thief said that men and women who live consistently with Kingdom principles live their lives saying that my fires produce no light, my wells produce no water. And like a child every day of my life, I declare my absolute dependence. Without Jesus, I have no hope. I have no life. I have nothing of value to give.

Nothing. I can make you laugh. I could maybe make you come to my Church some way if it was really slick. But in terms of the Kingdom realities where God moves among people, nothing can be released out of this relationship of dependence. Do you want to know about greatness? It comes when people recognize they got to stay real close to the Father. They have no other hope but that.

Let's pray. Jesus. I think every one of us and I really include myself in this struggle with the very, the very issue of the disciples who, being the performers that we are, even wanting to do good things for you, have this incredible tendency to and capacity for without even knowing it, cranking it out on our own. And it kind of gets manifested because we want to grade ourselves and we want to know how we look and all of a sudden it's not even for you anymore. It's for what everybody thinks.

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And I pray that by the wooing of your spirit, the moving of your spirit among us there with come a, a gentle, maybe some that needs to be a little rougher confrontation of all the ways in which we light our own fires and build our own wells and bring us back as children to the source of our life and the source of our power. And I pray that you would release that power here at Biola University. I pray it in Jesus name. Amen. You're dismissed.