

CTW: Psalm 82

Reading: Matthew 18

AGD: Have you ever made a deal with God?

- Is it "and" or "so." When we pray are we dividing up the work or totally depending on God?

1. Children

- The greatest?—Jesus calls a child
- Receive a child in Jesus name and you receive Jesus
- Cause a child to stumble and there almost no chance for you to stand before God
- Don't despise/exploit/abuse little ones (they have angel assigned to them in constant contact with the Father)
 - Children have passive ways of coping (and we can get stuck carrying them into adulthood)

2. Disciples as children

- God goes out of His way to find the wandering, rejoices when they are returned.
- God doesn't want a single little one to be lost.
 - Here it is a sheep which has wandered off. How many of you know God comes looking when we wander off?
- Be like a child.
 - Humble
 - Obedient
 - not trusting in yourself
 - a child has little to offer but offers it happily [a child's "help"]
 - a child doesn't think his or her about "endeavor, accomplishment, and status." (ESV Bible notes)

3. Stumbling blocks

- Inevitable—the world because of sin is harmful
 - Even, especially, children are harmed
 - African proverb "When the elephants fight is the grass that gets trampled"
- God judges those who bring them in
 - Don't be a stumbling block
- Deal with the stumbling blocks in your life severely
 - Jesus says get rid of hands, feet and eyeballs that cause you to stumble.
 - Jesus didn't say they were diseased. In fact, it seems to me that these were perfectly healthy things but if our resources, abilities and strengths cause us to depend on them then they are stumbling blocks!

4. Justice

- God never exploits the vulnerable.
- It is great evil for the powerful to exploit the weak
- Even people who just don't notice the struggle of the vulnerable will be called to account.
 - Remember our Call to Worship—Psalm 82? Verse 3 and 4 "Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked!"

5. Vulnerability--In this world of sin being weak, poor and vulnerable is a risky thing but it is not so with God.

- Jesus is telling the disciples that the greatest in God's eyes are the ones who are the most vulnerable with Him
- Yet we struggle to be vulnerable with God. God's idea of greatness is not to be powerful, confident or self-sufficient. The greatest in God's eyes are the ones who totally depend on Him.
 - Nobody who ever put their trust in Jesus ever wound up in hell but there are no doubt more than a few there who were self-sufficient.
- Jesus would say, "Remove anything in your life that you trust in more than Me."
 - Even if it looks like a good thing
 - Even if it gives you security
 - Even if you can't imagine surviving without it

This world works on strength, effort and power. In the Kingdom, the little ones depend on the God who never fails. Don't divide up the work between you and God—you have nothing really to offer--just depend on Him.