

Sermon for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

'Truly, I say to you, whosoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child shall in no wise enter therein.'

+INJ+

'The kingdom of God has come upon you.' 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his rule is charged upon all.' 'For the time is fulfilled.' 'Seek first, therefore, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.'

And yet what
manner of kingdom shall this be? What kind of kingdom must we seek?

'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking.' For The Lord instructs: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' 'For the God of heaven shall establish a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.' 'For the heathen rage, and their empires falter; and at the voice of the Lord, the lands are melted.' 'But the kingdom of God shall break in pieces all the rule of men and bring them to nothing.' 'But the dominion of the Lord shall endure forever.'

*'For the world
of men is like grass, the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more,' even as 'heaven and earth shall pass away.' 'But behold God is exalted, and the number of his years is unsearchable.' 'For the world is perishing, and the lust thereof.' But The Lord is 'from everlasting to everlasting.' 'Therefore Jesus answered 'My kingdom is not of this world.'*

Who then shall
receive this kingdom *which shall have no end?*

The godless and wicked shall *in no wise enter therein.* 'Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not

deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' 'For unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter the kingdom.'

The powerful of mankind and those counted great of this world shall in no wise enter therein. *'For the mighty shall be cast down from their thrones' and 'the proud shall be scattered in the imagination of their heart.'* For *'God opposes the proud.'* *'He will break them with a rod of iron.'* But *'the meek shall inherit the earth.'*

The celebrated of self imagined righteousness and those who receive praise in the eyes of mortals shall in no wise enter therein. *'For there is none that doeth good, no, not one.'* *'Both prophet and priest are godless, and even in the temple is found their wickedness.'* For *'possessing the form of godliness, yet they have denied its power.'* *'They practice their justice in the synagogues and streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say to you, they have their recompense.'* *'For all their works they do to be seen of men.'* *'Ye vipers, ye generation of serpents, how can these escape the damnation of hell?' 'Behold, their house is left unto them desolate.'*

Who then shall receive this kingdom *which shall have no end?*

And Jesus said, *'Let the little children come to me.'* *'For unto such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven.'* Remember, now, *'whosoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child shall in no wise enter therein.'*

To gain this *everlasting kingdom, this dominion without end,* you must be as a child. What is it, then to be *as a child?*

A child is innocent, you may say. Therefore be *innocent as a child.* Yet Adam was innocent in the garden, and Eve knew not guilt. Neither was their guile in their newborn hearts. *'But death reigned from Adam.'* *'And the woman, being deceived, fell into transgression.'*

A child is simple, you may say. Therefore be simple *as a child*. Yet *'the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.'* *'For how long, ye simple ones, shall ye love simplicity, and fools scorn knowledge?'*

A child is trusting, you may say. Therefore be trusting *as a child*. Yet the Lord commands *'be cunning as serpents'* *'and test the spirits'* *'for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.'* *'Be sober, therefore, be vigilant.'* *'Watch, therefore,'* *'lest ye likewise perish.'*

What is it, then,
to be *as a child*?

It is not in
innocence, it is not in simplicity, it is not in credulousness that one is made
a child. In none of these things is salvation to be found.

For innocence does not make a child. Simplicity does not make a child. Trust
does not make a child. We have become blind because we strain too much to see.
We have become foolish because we covet too much to be wise. We have become
lost because we have endeavored to much to search.

To be a child is
to have a father and a mother.

From where comes a father and a mother? From a man given a wife, and a woman
a
man. *'So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man.'* *'And they
crucified him, between two thieves.'* *'And while he slept God took one of his
ribs from his side.'* *'For one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear,
and immediately blood and water came out.'* *'And the rib that the Lord God had
taken from the man he made into a woman.'* *'For Christ loved the church and
gave
himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the
washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself
in splendor,'* *'as a bride adorned for her husband.'* *'and they divided his
garments among them, what each should take.'* *'And the man and his wife were
both naked, and they were not ashamed.'* *'for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready.'*

*'This mystery
is profound. And I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church.'*

Who then is Our
Father, but God the Father Almighty? Who then is Our Mother, but Our Mother
the
Church?

Who then is the firstborn, but Christ, the Son of God? And who are the late
born children, but the baptized? *'For as many as have been baptized into
Christ have put on Christ.'* *'And as many as have received Christ, to them He
gave the right to become sons of God, born not of blood, nor of the will of the
flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'*

*'For he who
sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is
not ashamed to call them brothers.'*

For if we are by the
washing of regeneration children of the Father, we are surely brethren of
Son of God, and fellow sons of the God, children of the kingdom of the
Almighty.

*'And the slave
does not abide in the house forever, but the son abides forever.'*

Mark yourselves
with the sign of the cross, O ye baptized children of the King. Confess the
faith of your Holy Mother, ye brethren of the Son of Righteousness. For Christ
cries out to the Father *from the foundations of the earth, 'Behold, I and
the Children you have given me.'* And Your Father declares his invitation: *'Come
to me.'* *'For unto such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven.'*

'And He took His children into his arms and blessed them.'

+INJ+

Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Texts: Genesis 2:18-25;

Hebrews 2:1-18; Mark 10:2-16.