

Entering the Kingdom by Tim Timmons, Sr.

#1 - WHO WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM

[TimTimmons](#), July 28, 2013

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Jesus has definite ideas regarding who is going to get into the Kingdom and who will not. Although Christians have boiled everything down to believe and you'll go to heaven and don't believe and you'll go to hell, Jesus' concern seems to revolve more around entering or not entering the Kingdom of heaven. And, entering the Kingdom seems to be an immediate experience, since the presence of the Kingdom is a present reality according to Jesus. Jesus says the Kingdom is right here, right now!

This week I want to cover all of the times Jesus refers to what we must do to enter or not enter into the Kingdom. To enter the Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God may be the closest thing Jesus ever says about "getting into heaven". As we've already discussed, the emphasis of Jesus is on the Kingdom and how to enter it right now. Each of these references provides significant insight into what Jesus counts as most important in order to get into the Kingdom.

The **FIRST** reference is found in Jesus' first seminar in Matthew 5:20: "**For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.**" The requirement here seems really tough. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were known for their religious displays of righteousness.

Now, Jesus makes it clear that in order to enter the Kingdom of heaven, your righteousness must SURPASS that of the Pharisees and the teachers of

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the law. With all that Jesus teaches from here on out, I think what he means by surpass is to go beyond their levels of righteousness. To be more specific, I think what he requires is for righteousness to be INTERNAL with an emphasis on the heart rather than the EXTERNAL emphasis of the legalistic, letter of the law of the Pharisees. Their emphasis was to look good-to look and act religious and holy-to be seen by others as righteous. Jesus wants us to surpass that kind of righteousness by going internal or going deeper.

Three observations that come to mind here for me: 1. God looks on the heart; man looks on the outward appearance. So, if you want to please God, then pay attention to your heart's response to Him. 2. After developing a full sacrificial system, the Lord tells His people that He doesn't want their sacrifices any longer, but wants their heart of compassion. 3. Jesus wants us to first be people of the heart where we are allowing him to relate to us in a most personal and private way. All external actions should naturally flow out of that transformed heart. To Jesus, nothing else matters-nothing is more important.

Let me tell you how to enter the Kingdom according to Jesus. Focus your heart on a personal relationship with Jesus and make it your business to follow after him. And, don't allow yourself to be caught up in the religiosity of following a list or system of do's and don'ts, thinking that you are impressing God, while you are impressing others. Jesus makes it clear here that he is not impressed with this kind of thing, so don't you be!

If I have a choice as to whose word I'm going to accept as the ultimate truth-some bible teacher or Jesus, I'm going to choose Jesus' word every time. How about you? Do you want to enter the Kingdom, then you need a renewed focus and transformation of your heart. It's a heart transplant surgery.

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- See more at: <http://timtimmons.com/who-will-enter-the-kingdom/#sthash.9xL374vy.dpuf>

#2 ENTER BY DOING MY FATHER'S WILL

[TimTimmons](#), July 28, 2013

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The **SECOND** reference Jesus makes concerning entering the Kingdom is most powerful. It's found at the close of his first seminar in Matthew 7:21: **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."**

The context is fascinating! In the next paragraph it's clear what's going on. **"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"**

Jesus is referring to a group of apparent leaders or ministers who would naturally view themselves as believers, because of their actions. These "believers" are known for speaking in the name of Jesus, casting out demons in the name of Jesus and performing many miracles in Jesus' name. NOTE that Jesus rejects these so-called "believers" and says he doesn't even know them. Apparently, believing isn't enough!

Jesus clarifies it here by saying "only those who do the will of my Father" will enter the Kingdom of heaven. No matter what you say or do in the name of Jesus, the most critical issue is whether or not you are doing the will of the

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Father. What does he mean by "doing the will of the Father"? NOTE Jesus isn't focusing on something to believe, but to do the will of the Father.

To me, the answer is in the next paragraph, where Jesus illustrates exactly what he means by "doing the will of My Father", when he says: **"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."**

I think it's clear that what he is saying, when he says, "doing the will of the Father", boils down to hearing Jesus' words and practicing them. This is simply following Jesus! So, there is something more important and vital than being a "believer" in Jesus. It's being a follower of Jesus, which is doing the will of the Father.

Now there is a belief factor in following as well. You must believe in Jesus enough to follow him-to hear his words and practice them. Jesus repeatedly reiterates this same thought. In the early chapters of Mark, Jesus' mother and a couple of other family members came to see him. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach a very important truth. **He asks: "Who are my mother and my brothers?" Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."** NOTE the similarity to doing the will of the Father? Jesus says: "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." We are considered the family of Jesus, when we are doers of the will of God.

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So, do you want to enter the Kingdom? Then, do the will of the Father-keep on following Jesus. Whatever Jesus does and says to do, just do it!

- See more at: <http://timtimmons.com/enter-by-doing-my-fathers-will/#sthash.EyWdDEFv.dpuf>

#3 - ENTER BY BEING A LITTLE CHILD

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All four Gospel writers record the **THIRD** reference Jesus uses to show the way to be able to enter the Kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 18:3: And he said: **"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."** Mark and Luke bear the same message.

Then, in the Gospel of John, in a very familiar interaction with Nicodemus, Jesus uses a little different metaphor to say the same thing. He says in John 3:5: **"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."** He goes on to say: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."** Jesus is referring to being "born again" and means something different than what is normally believed. Being born again is not a salvation experience-a special faith event where a person passes from death to life. Being born again is just what it says. You are born all over again, so that you are like a little child again with all of the purity and simplicity of being this childlike person.

What does that mean to be childlike? A little child naturally trusts, knows very little, and is eager to mimic what he or she sees. In a very real sense,

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for an adult to become childlike is to be willing to unlearn and start over again with respect to what it means to follow Jesus and not remain dependent upon the religious system from which he or she originally came.

So, in the case of Nicodemus, who was probably the head of a rabbinical school, Jesus was challenging him to rethink his entire spiritual education-to start over and learn the ABC's of what it means to grow up spiritually into a personal relationship with God through his Messiah Jesus. Once a person turns from his ways and begins to act as a little child, then he is being born again.

A few years ago I had breakfast with a man who has rejected religion in the form of Christianity. As he says, "I just can't stand being approached by the 'born-againers' who keep trying to save me from going to hell." As we have been meeting together, he is becoming fascinated with trying to understand who Jesus really is. He continually tells me he knows nothing and wants to learn this Jesus lifestyle and the basics. As we discussed what it means to be born again, I suddenly realized that my friend was in the process of being born again. He's becoming like a little child with respect to spiritual things.

Becoming as a little child with Jesus means the following: 1. You don't know everything. 2. All that you have been taught needs to be stripped away. 3. You want to learn all you can about this new life with Jesus. 4. In order to learn more about the ABC's of walking with Jesus, it's most helpful to watch him carefully and mimic what you hear and see. 5. Learn to simply trust Jesus for your life-your strength, direction and future.

Adults think they know everything and have the ugly habit of trusting themselves. Children know they don't know everything, therefore they gladly develop the beautiful habit of simply trusting.

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Do you want to enter the Kingdom of heaven? Become like a little child!

- See more at: <http://timtimmons.com/enter-by-being-a-little-child/#sthash.B1KY6CfJ.dpuf>

#4 - VERY DIFFICULT ENTRANCE FOR SUPER-SPIRITUAL

[TimTimmons](#) July 31, 2013

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The **FOURTH** reference Jesus made concerning what it takes to enter or not enter the Kingdom of God has a couple of dimensions. Both of these dimensions here contain direct warnings toward the religious. The first dimension is in Matthew 21:32: **Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him."**

Beware of being so religious and self-righteous. Jesus became most disturbed and angry with those who didn't see their need for God-those who thought they were right and righteous because of their beliefs and practices. In this dimension Jesus points out that those who see their need most are the ones who are actually entering the Kingdom right now ahead of the religious and the righteous. In fact, he is not just saying that the most despised tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the Kingdom someday, but that they are entering right now!

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The second dimension is in Matthew 23:13: **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.”** Note the specifics of what Jesus is saying here. He is clearly saying that these religious leaders in positions of authority are not entering the Kingdom. He has made several observations at other times about the reasons why they will not enter the Kingdom, primarily the leading one is their religious pride-that they know it all and know they are right.

Now Jesus points out that these religious leaders who are not entering the Kingdom are also stopping others to enter by shutting the door of the Kingdom of heaven in their faces. How is this done? I think it’s done by continually setting up certain restrictions and limitations on who can get in and who will not. I did this as a teenager. I had been taught that no one could come into a relationship with God, unless he goes down front at the altar call at the end of the service and confess Jesus publicly before men. Either you go down front at the altar call or “invitation” or you won’t get into heaven. In many discussions with my good friends I made this clear to them and basically kept them from entering the Kingdom. The man-made “rule” or “requirement” I had embraced served to be a major barrier to my friends being attracted to Jesus.

This fourth reference to entering and not entering the Kingdom boils down to this: 1. Those who don’t have it together will enter the Kingdom first. 2. Those who think they have it together through what they know/believe and what they do may not enter the Kingdom at all. 3. And these religious “know-it-all” tend to shut others out of the Kingdom, too.

Two things to beware of: **FIRST**-Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that your belief system or your behavior will get you into the Kingdom. **SECOND**-

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Don't divert others away from Jesus, because of your dogmatic belief system.

Be careful to follow Jesus and put your trust in him and him alone. He is the only way you'll ever get out of this world alive! That's why he said: **"I am the way, the truth and the life."**

- See more at: <http://timtimmons.com/very-difficult-entrance-for-super-spiritual-2/#sthash.G5A6uV0B.dpuf>

#5 - ENTERING IS DIFFICULT FOR THE RICH

[TimTimmons](#) August 1, 2013 AUDIO [CLICK HERE](#)

The **FIFTH** reference Jesus makes concerning what it takes to enter the Kingdom of heaven has to do with the rich. Three of the Gospels record this one. The context for this Kingdom entrance principle is in relationship to a conversation Jesus had with a young, rich man. Let's listen in to this conversation: **Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, " 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"** (NOTE that Jesus equates eternal life with entering life and then later in this passage he speaks of entering the Kingdom of God.)

The young man shockingly states: **"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will**

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have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." By "perfect" Jesus means to be complete and whole in your search for life.

Then, note the man's final response to Jesus' words: When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus knew the man's heart and that he was holding on to his riches-his stuff-very tightly. In other words, his stuff had become his security, maybe even his god. For sure, his stuff had distracted this rich, young man away from filling up his heart with the ultimate desire to give it all up and follow Jesus.

Then, Jesus makes the following observation recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke: In Matthew 19:23-24: **Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."** (Mark 10; Luke 18)

Whether the image here truly is a camel or a rope going through the eye of a needle, the essence of what Jesus is saying is still the same. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD! The difficulty for the rich person is that he tends to trust in his riches for security and tends to think that people, places and things can make him happy or whole and complete.

Do you want to enter the Kingdom of God? If you are rich and have a lot of stuff, then hold on to that stuff "loosely", so that you are not trusting in your riches, but in God for a complete and full, eternal life.

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- See more at: [http://timtimmons.com/entering-is-difficult-for-the-rich/
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