

Matthew 18:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Analysis

Jesus declares that receiving 'one such little child in my name' equates to receiving Him. This elevates humble service to the overlooked and powerless as spiritual priority. The phrase 'in my name' signifies doing so for Christ's sake, seeing Him in the insignificant. Reformed ethics emphasizes that all service to others, particularly the weak and vulnerable, is service to Christ (Matthew 25:40). This teaching demolishes status-seeking by making humble service the measure of greatness.

Historical Context

Children in ancient society had no legal rights or social standing until maturity. Using a child as an example of receiving God's kingdom overturned cultural hierarchies. Jesus' consistent elevation of children, women, and marginalized people demonstrated kingdom values. The church's historical care for orphans and vulnerable persons reflects this teaching.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Who are the 'little children' in your context whom you're called to receive?
2. How does serving powerless people demonstrate kingdom greatness?
3. What ministry to overlooked individuals might God be calling you toward?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὅς	ἐὰν	δέχεται	παιδίον	τοιοῦτον	ἕν	ἐπὶ	τῷ
And	whoso	G1437	receiveth	little child	such	one	in	G3588
G2532	G3739		G1209	G3813	G5108	G1520	G1909	
ὄνοματί	μου	ἐμὲ	δέχεται					
name	my	me	receiveth					
G3686	G3450	G1691	G1209					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Mark 9:37 (Parallel theme): Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

John 13:20 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Galatians 4:14 (Parallel theme): And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.