

# The Children Are Free

## Scripture Text:

Matthew 17:22-18:6 KJV

(22) And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

(23) And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

(24) And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

(25) He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

(26) Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

(27) Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

(1) At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

(2) And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

(3) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

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

(6) But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it

were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

**Message:**

Coming into Capernaum saw the Lord questioned about something called "tribute money".

- Peter was asked by a receiver of such money whether or not Jesus paid it.
- Jesus hears Peter say that Jesus most certainly did pay such things, for although Peter never actually heard or saw Jesus do it, he felt Jesus would always abide by Jewish customs and pay what He should pay.
- So Jesus takes Peter aside after the man leaves and asks Peter who are the people whom the king demands pay taxes to him... the people of the land (peasants, so to speak), or the king's children?
- Peter says the peasants of the land.
- Then Jesus says that means that the children are free.
- And he leaves Peter to figure out the point, and tells Peter that they should not offend the Jews so Peter would find the payment in the mouth of a fish.
- Sure enough Peter caught a fish and found the money sufficient for the tribute payment.

In order to understand what this is all about, we must learn what the tribute money actually was.

Exodus 30:12-16 KJV

(12) When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

(13) This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.

(14) Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

(15) The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

(16) And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

So it was ATONEMENT money.

- And it was called a **RANSOM FOR THE SOUL** of the people whenever they were numbered in a census survey.
- It was a TEMPLE TAX and would pay for the service of the temple that the blessing of having the temple with them might be financed.

The cost was 1/2 shekel per person.

It was only exacted for each man that was above 20 years old and above.

- Women, slaves and children did not pay it, by the way.
- (The book of NUMBERS is named after this from the very first chapter in that book.)

Numbers 1:1-4 KJV

(1) And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

(2) Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

(3) From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

(4) And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

This was a tax.

What is a tax?

Governments require taxation from the people to support the presence and services of a government.

- Why do we have governments?
- What services do they provide?
- They provide policing, service of utilities such as electricity and water, waste disposal, street construction and maintenance, organizations for merchants, etc.
- Imagine a city with no government.
- Criminals would abound and nothing would be there to stop them except whatever protection you could muster for yourself.
- No streets paved...
- No traffic lights.
- No garbage collection.
- No water to your homes.
- No electricity.
- No organized effort to ensure merchants are fair, and are not threatened by other merchants through force of violence etc..

So we desire governments, and the way they are financed is by TAXES.

Now temple tax was not a secular governmental tax.

- It was TEMPLE tax.
- It went towards the work and maintenance of having a temple.
- And why did they want a temple?
- Why did God give them instruction to build one?

Exodus 25:8 KJV

(8) And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

God would dwell among them.

Why would they want God to dwell among them?

- There was a devil.
- There were enemy nations.
- There was sickness, disease and death.
- There were the ravages of sin.
- We want God!
- We need God!

And the reason Jesus compared the temple tax to a king's tax upon the people is that God's presence is desired amongst the people as much as a king and his government is desired.

- And although the temple and religion was not a secular government, THE TEMPLE WAS LIKE A PALACE AND THE KING WAS GOD, HIMSELF!
- In fact, inside the temple's most holy place was the ark of the covenant with the MERCYSEAT which was like the THRONE OF GOD ON EARTH.
- Isaiah 6 shows God's throne with Seraphims above it, and the ark's mercyseat was a replica of that with cherubims overshadowing the seat.

And there was a cost for this temple presence amongst the people.

- There was a tax owing of the people.
- But it was not an ordinary tax to pay for policemen and garbage collectors and politicians.
- IT WAS A RANSOM FOR THEIR SOULS, USED TO KEEP THE TEMPLE MAINTAINED.

Exodus 30:12-16 KJV

(12) When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

In other words, we need to pay money to a government that it might be there for various reasons.

- And in order for GOD TO DWELL AMONG MANKIND, a payment had to be made.
- Not for traffic lights and so forth.
- But TAXES had to be rendered due to another reason that is quite spiritual.
- MAN IS BORN A SINNER.
- AND GOD'S PRESENCE IS HOLY.
- GOD'S PRESENCE CANNOT STAND SIN.
- And since man is a sinner, the bible says that THE SOUL THAT SINS MUST DIE.
- So how are you going to have sinful man who deserves death as far as God is concerned, have the blessing of God's dwelling place among them?

THE TEMPLE TAX WAS A RANSOM FOR THEIR SOULS because THEIR LIVES WOULD BE SLAIN IN DEATH DUE TO THEIR SIN IF GOD WAS GOING TO DWELL AMONGST THEM, AND THE TRIBUTE TAX WAS A SACRIFICE TAKEN INSTEAD OF THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE.

Hear that again carefully.

In order to have GOD IN OUR MIDST, something had to be done about our sin.

- And RANSOM MONEY is money that is given INSTEAD of something that should rightfully be confiscated.
- OUR VERY SOULS should have been confiscated due to our sin.
- But what good would that be in having our lives taken so we could have God with us?
- It sort of defeats the purpose, doesn't it?

THAT IS WHAT SACRIFICE IS ALL ABOUT.

- Paying the debt due to sin, and enjoying God's presence.
- SO IT WAS CALLED ATONEMENT MONEY.
- AT-ONE-MENT, because it makes us AT ONE with God in fellowship

again!

And notice that whether you were rich or poor, THE SAME PRICE WAS PAID BY EVERYONE.

- Why?
- Because you might be rich in this world or a pauper, BUT IN GOD'S EYES EVERYONE IS EQUAL AND NO ONE IS LESSER THAN OR GREATER THAN THE OTHER.

ONE LIFE IS WORTH JUST AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER LIFE THERE IS!

God is no respecter of persons.

So this is what Jesus was questioned about.

And Jesus makes a wonderful statement to Peter after asking Peter the question of who pays taxes in a secular government -- peasants or the king's children.

- The children of the ROYAL FAMILY DO NOT PAY.
- Jesus used the term CHILDREN because HE WAS SON OF GOD.
- GOD WAS KING and HE WAS SON OF GOD.
- ROYAL FAMILY.
- The God of the temple was KING.
- And JESUS WAS PRINCE OF PEACE!
- ROYAL FAMILY.

And that implies that just as GOD HAD NO SIN, JESUS HAD NO SIN.

- It is royalty in their realm that a people wanted, and they paid for it.
- Royalty does not pay for itself to be present.
- So the children of the king are free.
- He had no sin to have to pay a tax for the temple that God's presence might be there.

That is fine.

...for Him.

But something powerful occurs in the very next chapter.

Matt 18:1 **At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**

AT THAT SAME TIME...

- When the issue of KINGS' FAMILIES being free of temple TAX is fresh in their minds...
- Someone raises the issue of DISCIPLES IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.
- And Jesus takes a LITTLE CHILD.

Matthew 18:3 KJV

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Put two and two together and realize that JESUS IS IMPLYING HE IS A KING'S SON AND FREE FROM TEMPLE TAX DUE FOR SIN, AND WE CAN BECOME A CHILD IN THE KINGDOM AS WELL!

He spoke of ENTERING the Kingdom of Heaven by becoming as little children.

**WE CAN BE FREE!**

John 3:5 KJV

**(5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

We become like little children in a very literal way WHEN ARE BORN AGAIN OF THE WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT.

What does that mean?



- As much as Jesus had no sin and was ROYAL FAMILY and therefore did not have to pay a tax due to sin in order to have God's presence, OUR SINS ARE WASHED AWAY AND WE ARE NOW ROYAL FAMILY AND DO NOT HAVE TO PAY ONE THING FOR THE SIN THAT PREVIOUSLY WOULD CAUSE US TO DIE AROUND GOD'S PRESENCE.

**We can enjoy the presence of God FREELY.**

- We need not pay for it.
- WE ARE ROYAL FAMILY.

Jesus is OUR ATONEMENT and HE PAID THE PRICE.

1 Peter 1:18-19 KJV

(18) Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

(19) But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

This is a reference to the TEMPLE TAX OF SHEKELS.

And being royal children means we SHOULD NOT FEEL TAXED.

- So many act like they are TAXED by sin all the time.
- Their Christian lives are lives as though they are TAXED.

And this FEELING OF BEING TAXED manifests in people who feel they are no good.

- They feel unworthy of being a child of God.

So many live in a completely false manner of feeling guilt.

- They are conditioned to feel unworthy.
- They would never think of themselves a ROYAL FAMILY, but as filthy peasants in a kingdom where they must grovel at the mere sight of the king.

- BUT WE ARE IN GOD'S VERY OWN FAMILY!
- We're His children!
- He treats us so tremendously loving.

People who call themselves "sinners saved by grace" are the very people I am preaching to.

- That is the lowest thing to call a Christian.
- How can we be sinners if the bible says this:

Romans 6:1-2 KJV

(1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. **How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**

How can we be sinners if we are dead to sin to no longer live in it?

That lie will make you feel rotten and think God only tolerates you due to your sin.

And this sort of false thinking will affect the way you think about yourself.

Do you think God merely tolerates you?

Matthew 18:4-6 KJV

(4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (5) And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. (6) But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

**Jesus cares so much for one person who like this little child and born again into the kingdom that if anyone offends them the severest wrath of God will come upon that person one day.**

So much for "God only tolerates me."

Matthew 18:7-14 KJV

(7) Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! (8) Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. (9) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. (10) Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. (11) For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. (12) How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? (13) And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. (14) Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

He is so concerned and loving for his children that anything that would offend you is something He tells you to cut off from your life.

- He does not want to lose you.
- You are ROYAL FAMILY.
- You are HIS CHILD.

Why feel TAXED by such unworthy feelings and such low esteem of yourself?

- YOU ARE ROYAL FAMILY!

He would leave every one else in the sheepfold to go out and find you if you were the only one who left.

- And when you return he has more joy for you than all the rest who never left.

And you think you sin and never know it?!

- Imagine living a life where we are told TO NOT SIN, and yet we do not even know when we DO sin.
- And furthermore, some teach that WE CANNOT HELP BUT SIN every day.
- How on Earth can we feel faith and confidence when we are told to NOT SIN, but also told WE CANNOT HELP BUT SIN, and in fact do not know when we do sin?

That is a far cry from the Bible.

Hebrews 10:17-19 KJV

(17) And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (18) Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. (19) **Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,**

Confidence is far from the TAXED feeling people have who do not know the truth.

Psalms 66:18 KJV

(18) **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:**

How can you even pray if you know Jesus does not hear your prayers if you sin, when you believe you do not even know if you sinned, and you believe you have to sin every day?

You will know when you sin if you have a real relationship with Jesus!

- He lives in you to let you know!
- He loves you and wants to protect you from sin.

If we cannot stop sinning why do we read:

1 John 2:1 KJV

(1) **My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**

Romans 6:1-2 KJV

(1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

These scriptures would not exist if we could not stop sinning.

Some people think of the question how long can they go without sin as though it was "How long can you hold your breath?"

- They think that way because they were taught that way.
- It's their mindsets!
- And it is false.

And whether or not something you were taught is false, you will still act on it if it was told to you and you believed it.

Imagine someone telling you that your father died.

- You would react and feel grieved and weep and so on.
- What if that person lied to you?
- It would not matter.
- You still react because you believe it.

It's the same way with false teaching.

- If you are told you HAVE TO SIN EVERYDAY BECAUSE YOU CANNOT RESIST IT, then you will react to that and expect to sin and see it actually happen.
- You react to what you are told, if it is true or not.
- And it is FALSE that you HAVE TO SIN.

Problems ARE IN OUR MINDS.

Romans 8:5 KJV

(5) For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but

they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

Whatever you MIND will be what you act upon.

But if you believe you MUST SIN then you will start doing it since you accepted that idea.

- PAY NO MIND TO SIN.

Isaiah 26:3 KJV

(3) Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

You do not get closer to God by good deeds.

- You are PUT IN CHRIST WHEN YOU ARE SAVED, and you are as close as Jesus is to God!

Righteousness is not something you work for, but something you SUBMIT TO.

Romans 10:3 KJV

(3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

We are sons of GOD!

1 John 3:1 KJV

(1) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

It's the way you think.

And if you think you must sin and think of yourself as filthy, you will not care when you do sin.

- You sin and do not know it anyway, so why worry when you know you do?
- Yours still a sinner.
- WRONG.

Imagine this:

- Which person will be more careful to get cleaned up when dirt hits them?
- The man in a clean white suit,...
- Or the man in filthy overalls?

If you THINK of yourself as filthy, you will LET YOURSELF GO.

- But if you think of yourself as GOD'S SON and WEARING WHITE LINEN RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS, you will rid yourself of it right away and repent!

You are His child, and YOU ARE FREE FROM THAT TAX!!!