

**Sermon Outline**  
“Social Order in God’s Kingdom”  
Matthew 18:1-5

- I.** Structural Considerations
- a.** The Fourth (of 5) Major Discourse in Matthew  
Narrative: Genesis of Jesus – Chapters 1-4  
    Discourse – Chapters 5-7 (transition formula: 7:28)  
Narrative: Jesus’ deeds performed for Israel – Chapters 8-9  
    Discourse – Chapter 10 (transition formula: 11:1)  
Narrative: Israel’s negative response – Chapters 11-12  
    Discourse – Chapter 13 (transition formula: 13:53)  
**Narrative: Introducing the Church – Chapters 14-17 (13:53ff)**  
**Discourse – Chapter 18 (transition formula: 19:1)**  
Narrative: Moving toward the passion – Chapters 19-23  
    Discourse – Chapters 24-25 (transition formula: 26:1)  
Narrative: The passion and resurrection – Chapters 26-28
- b.** Introducing the Church (*my* assembly – *ekklesia* – 16:18)  
    Note: this word only occurs 3X in Matthew: 16:18; 18:17.
- c.** The emerging prominence of Peter  
    Walking on water – 14:28-33  
    Asking for an explanation (for the 12) – 15:15  
    Confessing Jesus & being blessed by him – 16:13-20  
    Taking initiative on the Mount – 17:1-6  
    Special interaction with Jesus on the tax – 17:24-27
- II.** The disciples’ question: “Which of us is the most important?”
- a.** Brought on by two factors:  
    The announced removal of Jesus from their midst  
        16:21; 17:22-23  
    The rising prominence of Peter (*see above*)
- b.** The reply of the discourse: “Become a ‘little one.’”  
    vv. 3-6; 10; 14; 32-33 (compare v. 24 with v. 28)  
    *Humility is the focus, but it is not the humility of the child.*
- c.** The example of the child v. 2  
    Not about “childlike humility,” but about status  
    The “little ones” of v. 6 provides transition from v. 5 to v. 10.  
    *Cf. John 13:33-35; I John 2:1, 12, 13, 28.*
- III.** Lessons from the text
- a.** Humility is necessary for entrance into God’s kingdom (*cf.* 5:3-5)
- b.** Humility is the road to greatness in God’s kingdom (*cf.* Lk 22:24)
- c.** To receive the humble is to receive Christ (*cf.* 19:13-15; 25:31-46)