

# CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

## Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twentieth Sunday After Trinity

-FRIDAY-

*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* – Matthew 18:1.

What we would say in answer to this question might be wrong. Let us see what answer the Savior gave to this question. He said: *"If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all"* (Mark 9:35). What does His answer teach us? It teaches us three things: **1.** It is right for a Christian to desire to be first in the kingdom of God, that is, to wish to do more for the kingdom of God than any other Christian, and also earnestly to attempt this. **2.** In doing this, such a Christian must consider himself nothing but a poor sinner, which indeed he is, and deeply deplore that he has done so little, but esteem every other Christian *"better than [himself]"* (Philippians 2:3-4). **3.** In doing this, he again must serve all others and make himself their servant, for in the kingdom of God service is what is wanted and needed. Whom, therefore, does our Lord call the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Him who uses his best endeavors to amount to something in the kingdom of God, but at the same time esteems himself less than others, and serves others with the greatest humility. The Savior further answered the above question by setting a little child in the midst of His disciples and saying: *"Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted [continued conversion, continued turning with a contrite heart from sin to the free grace of God in Christ for the forgiveness of such sin] and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 18:3-4). Jesus, two chapters later, in Matthew 20, once again touched on the subject of true Christian greatness when He said to the twelve: *"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [your servant], and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto [to be served], but to minister [to serve] and to give His life a ransom for many"* (vv. 27-28)

**PRAYER** – Lord Jesus, keep me, one of Thy dear children, more and more humble toward Thee and toward others, ever remembering Thy humility in serving me and the whole world of sinners, to give me everlasting freedom from Thy holy wrath and from the curse of the Law, by being made a curse for me, in my place, so that, as a result of Thy substitutionary obedience and sacrifice, my sins are not held against me and I am righteous in Thy sight. Keep me one of Thy believing sheep now and until the end of my life in this world. Amen.

Scripture Reading for Friday: Romans 6:18-23 Theme this week: Sanctification