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Instructions and Promises of Jesus, the King, to the Members of His Kingdom on Earth

Matthew 18 and 19

This is **the fifth Decree or Sermon of Jesus**, the King, to all the members of His Kingdom on Earth:

1- Humility... become like little children.

Jesus repeats it twice, in Matt.18:1-6, and Matt.19:13-15.

Matthew 18:

- 1- *At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*
- 2- *He called a little child and had him stand among them.*
- 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.*
- 4- *Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*



The greatest in the kingdom of Jesus on earth is the one who humbles himself like a little child... not the one who knows all the Bible, nor the one with great authority or power in the Church, but the humblest one is the greatest one!... Humility, my brother, humility!

So much so, that *"unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"*... not even "enter" into His Kingdom!... Humility is a main factor to become a New Born Christian... without humility, we can not even be born again into the Kingdom of Jesus (Jn.3).

St. Augustine used to say: If you have any problem at home or at work, or within yourself, there are three important virtues to solve it: Humility, humility, humility!.

We have to be like the humble servant of the Lord, of Luk.1:48... every child always looks a little like his Mother, and we have to be like our Mother Mary... humble... servants of the Lord... for Mother Mary all her life was for Jesus, in Jesus, with Jesus, to Jesus... and this also should be our life: All for Christ, in Christ, with Christ, to Christ... for Mother Mary it was easy, because she always had Jesus with her... for us it also should be easy, because our neighbor is Jesus, whatever we do to our neighbor we are doing it to Jesus Himself, not just "for" Jesus, but "to" Jesus (Matt.25:31-46).

Mark 10 records it this way:

43- Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

44- and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

45- For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

I liked when John Paul II was elected Pope, his very first words were: "I am the servant of the servants"... probably the greatest evangelizer in the history of Christianity.

2- Eradicate Sin... especially the Sin of Scandal:

Jesus is so strong on this!, the sin of Scandal: *"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea".*

And as of ourselves? *"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire".*

Matthew 18:

6- But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7- "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!

8- If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

9- And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

10- "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven... The Son of Man came to save what was lost.

3- Forgiveness: (Matt.18:12-35):

Forgiveness is emphasized over and over in this Sermon... he who does not forgive, who keeps resentments, creates a hell around him, at home, at work, in his neighborhood... and, most specially, he creates the darkest hell in his own soul... forgiveness is the first fruit of love... if there is no forgiveness, there is no love at all.

And we have to forgive and... otherwise we could not even pray the Our Father, where we ask the Father to forgive us the same way we forgive others... if we don't forgive, we

are asking the Father not to forgive us, if we forgive but allow our minds to dwell on it, we are asking the Father to do the same to us!

1- This is how God forgives:

We have to forgive as God forgives:

This is how Jesus forgave Peter after his denials: He put him in charge of His Church!... that's how God forgives... He gave Peter the penance to do something great... feed my lambs, my sheep, the lambs and sheep of Jesus!... and He gave this order only to Peter in front of the other apostles. (Jn.21:15-20, Matt.16:18-19, 23).

Look at the Lost Sheep in Matthew 18:

12- "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?"

13- And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

14- In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

Jesus came to serve, to save the lost souls, you and me... and He is not only happy for the sheep who repents and comes to the house of the Father... the Father himself organized a party in Heaven to celebrate the repentance of the one lost person!(Luk.15:22-24)... and that's how we should forgive and forget... creating part of heaven around us, and most specially in our own hearts.

2- How many times do we have to forgive?

Seventy times seven, Jesus told Peter... always!... forgive your alcoholic or jealous spouse seventy times seven times!... always!... a million times!... the secret of a happy marriage is two persons who know how to forgive and forget... because even the just man falls 7 times a day, so, your spouse or neighbor is going to fall at least 7 times a day, to commit errors or faults 7 times a day, even if he or she is a just person (Prov.24:16).

Matthew 18:

21- Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22- Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times seven."

Jesus told us the reason for this behavior with the **parable of the unmerciful servant**, comparing how much God forgives us daily, in comparison of the little things we have to forgive to our neighbors:

Matthew 18:

23- "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants."

24- *As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents (millions of dollars) was brought to him.*

25- *Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

26- *"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'*

27- *The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

28- *"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (a few dollars). He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.*

29- *"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'*

30- *"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.*

31- *When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.*

32- *"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.*

33- *Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'*

34- *In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*

35- *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."*

The Unpardonable Sin (Matt.12:31-32):

There is one sin that can not be forgiven, the unpardonable sin: It is the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is the sin of impentence.

Mathew 12:

24- *But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."*

31- *And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.*

32- *Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Recorded also in Mk.3:22-30, Lk.11:14-26, 12:8-10.

It is the sin of attributing to a bad spirit a work that is manifestly good... to see the goodness of the works of Jesus or His Church, and attribute it to the devil... The sin of infidelity and impenitence, of stubbornness, the one of Hebrews 6:4-6:

Hebrews 6:

4- *It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the*

*heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,
5- who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,
6- if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are
crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

It is the sin of Judas who could not even imagine that Jesus could and wanted to pardon him, he did not had faith in the power and mercy of his friend Jesus!... exactly the opposite attitude of Peter, who trusted Jesus and had faith in Him, and with just a sorrowful look at his friend Jesus showed his fidelity and penance and repentance, and obtained his full pardon at once.

Do you have faith in Jesus? Do you trust in his power and mercy? Then you are not guilty of this sin... and those who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. The sin against the Holy Spirit is the sin of impenitence – in other words, unwillingness to ask for forgiveness. If one will not repent and ask for forgiveness, they cannot be forgiven.

4- The Method of Forgiveness in the Church:

Matthew 18:

15- "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.

16- But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that `every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

17- If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18- "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19- "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

20- For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

This method is clear... and here, Jesus gives to the Church the same power he gave to Peter alone in Matt.16:19, *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"....* and the Catholic Church has been exercising this power in the Ecumenical Councils for the last 2000 years, to approve a doctrine or to declare it heretic, always under the authority of the Pope, the successor of Peter.

It is a power of "infallibility", because if whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, it means that whatever you bind is the truth, infallible, inspired by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible, the Word of God.

And another glorious promise: *"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where*

two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."... Yes, Jesus is specially present in the Congregation of the Church, and even when only two Christians meet...

The presence of God is like the Sun:

1- He is all over... if the Sun were not in your basement, it will be frozen like the North Pole, even worse!.

2- But when two Christians meet, there God is present, but now like the Sun in a hot day in the Caribbean.

3- And in the Eucharist, God is present as if we were in the heart of the Sun!, alleluia!.

5- Marriage... and Divorce: (Matt.19):

A- Marriage:

Here Jesus instituted **the Sacrament of Marriage**, with the same words of Genesis 2:24, only adding, *"So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

Matthew 19:

4- *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator `made them male and female,' (Gen.1:27)*

5- *and said, `For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' (Gen.2:24) ?*

6- *So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

The Plan of God for Marriage is glorious, "two persons in one flesh"!... almost like God!: Three persons and only one God!... and to be more like God, in Marriage should be three persons in one flesh: The husband, the wife, and Jesus... and then, your home will be like "a little piece of heaven on earth"!... what a beautiful plan of God for Marriage!...

... The main problem is, as we know, that many marriages are "like a little piece of hell on earth", and the reason is that the three persons are the husband, the wife, and Satan... if you are in sin, in your heart is Satan, and don't complain if your home is like hell!...

... To fix your marriage, you can have all the help you can get from friends, psychologists, sociologists, but the prime solution is to get Jesus in the heart of the husband and the wife... and yes, you can be sure your home will be a piece of heaven on earth... with problems?... yes!... but each problem will turn into manure to fertilize the garden of your marriage, where will grow the most beautiful flowers of joy and love and peace that nothing and no one can take away (Rom.8)... yes, a piece of heaven on earth!.

B- Divorce:

Divorce is the termination of a marriage in civil law by court decree or judgment.

Jesus emphasized the fact that "**what God has joined together, let no one separate**" (Mt.19:6), because God intended marriage to be a permanent monogamy, one man and one woman together for life.

In the Old Testament a provision was made for divorce among the Israelites in Deut.24:1-4: It required "a bill of divorce" from a husband to give to the wife as proof that he was divorcing her. Jesus said that Moses allowed this because of the stubbornness of the people but it was never intended to be.

In the New Testament, there is also an exception: "except in the grounds of unchastity or illicit marriage". Some Bibles use the word or fornication", or "unless the marriage is unfaithful" for the passage in Matt.5:32 and 19:9. This is often misunderstood. Most Bible scholars agree that the word used was "porneia" which means "sexual unlawfulness" and most likely refers to a couple living together without being formally married or to attempt to marry someone who is a close blood relative, i.e., an incestuous union. So Jesus is saying that in cases where the marriage is not valid to begin with such as a brother and sister marrying each other or a marriage that's not really a marriage – whereby the couple is actually just living together, then divorce is allowed because these aren't even licit marriages anyway..

Jesus, when the scribes cited the permission granted in Deuteronomy 24, pointed out that this was not God's original intent, and divorce was permitted only because of "the hardness of your heart" , "... *Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the grounds of unchastity, and marries another woman commits adultery."* (Mt.19:8-9, Mk.10:2-12)...

When St. Paul was confronted by the Corinthians with the same Deut.24 provision, he answered that "to the married I give this ruling, which is not mine but the Lord's: a wife must not separate herself from her husband (if she does, she must either remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband), and the husband must not divorce his wife" (1Cor.7:10-11).

For a divorced person to be able to remarry in the Catholic Church while the former spouse is living would be to obtain an annulment from a Church tribunal. Such an action follows an examination of the former union and a declaration that it was not considered a valid, sacramental marriage. This declaration is the formal recognition that one or both parties were operating under such impediments that the graces proper to the establishment of the bond of marriage were not conferred, and no marriage was ever established.

Those who have divorced and remarried without Church approval should not receive Communion.

6- Christian Perfection: Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience:

Here Jesus talks also about the "Christian Perfection", with the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as one and a half million men and women are living today in the Church.

Poverty:

The story of the young man is well known in Matt.19:16-24, Mk.10, Lk.18)... On it, *"Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Matt.19:21)... sell all you have, all... give it to the poor... the five verbs of generosity: go... sell... give... have... come... If I give everything, I have nothing... wrong!... you will have a treasure in heaven!*

Religious priests and nuns have done just that, by the millions!... a Franciscan, a Carmelite, has nothing, absolutely no money of his own, neither in his pocket nor in the bank...

Chastity:

For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage (Or have made themselves eunuchs) because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (Matt.19:12).

The Pope, or any Catholic priest, could have a wife and have children but they have renounced marriage for the glory of God, to help you and me... and the one and half million persons who are doing just that today in the Catholic Church are a most glorious treasure in the Church of Christ.

Obedience:

The most glorious possession a person has is his or her will... and Jesus is talking also about selling and giving away that most intimate possession... and, again, millions have done just that in the history of the Catholic Church: By the vow of obedience, the most cherished one, they live an entire life obeying their superior in the Church.

A great Promise:

Peter was smart... He had just done that, he had left his home, and his boat, and his fishing business, and his family, and here he is following Jesus, without even knowing where...

... so he asked Jesus:

Matthew 19:

27- Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you. What then will there be for us?"

28- *Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

29- *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake **will receive a hundred times** as much and will inherit eternal life.*

A hundred times!

And it is true: Mother Teresa of Calcutta made vows of poverty, but she was always welcomed wherever she went - thousands of mansions around the world were open to her. If you give up a home you will receive 100... if you give up a smile, you will receive 100... if you give up a family, you will have 100, as many priests do, though they are not under their name, they will be received as one of the family at any time!...