

How We Enter God's Kingdom
(Matthew 4:17)

Introduction:

1. As Jesus began His ministry He called upon people to get ready for God's kingdom that would soon be established.
2. This was an important message.
 - a. We learn from Matthew 3:1-2 that John preached it before Jesus.
 - b. According to Matthew 10:7, Jesus instructed the apostles to preach it as they fulfilled the limited commission.
3. In addition to calling upon people to repent, Jesus gave instructions that teach us "how we enter God's kingdom."
4. In our lesson we are examining 6 requirements that Jesus gave for entering the kingdom.

Discussion:

- I. **FIRST, WE MUST BE "POOR IN SPIRIT"** (Matthew 5:3)
 - A. David's statement in Psalm 51:17 helps us understand the Lord's requirement.
 - B. Requests like those David made in Psalm 19:12-14; 139:23-24 are indications that a person is poor in spirit.
 - C. The publican in the Lord's parable in Luke 18:9-14 was poor in spirit while the Pharisee was not.
- II. **SECOND, WE MUST "EXCEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES"** (Matthew 5:19-20)
 - A. The scribes and Pharisees disobeyed certain commands of God, and they taught others to do the same.
 - B. To enter the kingdom of heaven we must not follow their example.
- III. **THIRD, WE MUST DO THE FATHER'S WILL** (Matthew 7:21-23)
 - A. At the judgment many will be lost who will claim to have done great things in the Lord's name.
 - B. Jesus requires us to do His Father's will.
- IV. **FOURTH, WE MUST "BE CONVERTED AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN"** (Matthew 18:1-4)
 - A. The disciples wanted to know who was the greatest in the kingdom.
 - B. Before Jesus answered their question in vs.4 He told them how to enter the kingdom in vs.3.
- V. **FIFTH, WE MUST ELIMINATE THINGS THAT WILL CAUSE US TO STUMBLE** (Mark 9:43-48)
 - A. Jesus illustrated His point by referring to important parts of the body that we would not want to lose, including a hand, a foot, and an eye.
 - B. Anything that will cause us to stumble must be eliminated, even something as special as a hand, a foot, or an eye.
- VI. **SIXTH, WE MUST "BE BORN AGAIN"** (John 3:3-5)
 - A. Nicodemus thought that Jesus was talking about a second physical birth.
 - B. The Lord requires a spiritual rebirth for entering the kingdom.
 - C. The spiritual rebirth consists of being "*born of water and of the Spirit.*"

Conclusion:

1. According to Acts 2, God's kingdom became a reality on Pentecost.
2. Have you complied with the Lord's instructions for entering it?