

## CLOSE, BUT STILL NOT THERE

Mark 12:28-34

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** "...Are we there yet?..." Children often ask their parents when they have been riding in the car and obviously they are not there yet. The same question can be asked concerning one's relationship with the Lord. Many are close, but still are not where they need to be with the Lord Jesus. Their souls still have not been saved and they are still separated from God. "Close" may count in some sports and games, but when dealing with one's soul, "close" is still the same as not being there at all. Jesus had a man come to Him asking spiritual questions and when the conversation was over, Jesus said, *"...Thou art not far from the kingdom of God..."* Close, but still not there.

### I. IT IS NOT EASY TO ESTIMATE HOW CLOSE ONE IS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. People live in a material, physical world and in a spiritual world.
  - It is easy for one to think that he/she is closer to the kingdom of God than he/she actually is.
  - There also are many who think that they are far away from the kingdom of God than they really are.
2. No one should try to imagine, guess, estimate how close or far away one is from the kingdom of God, or anyone else, everyone should want to know EXACTLY where they stand in God's sight.

### II. JESUS KNEW EXACTLY WHERE EVERYONE STOOD IN GOD'S EYES

1. When Jesus told the scribe *"...thou art not far from the kingdom of God"* He knew the scribe inside and out, everything about him.
2. There are some things about the scribe that indicated he was near the kingdom of God.
  - These indications can be carried into today's time as well as then.

### III. INDICATIONS (SIGNS) THAT THE SCRIBE WAS NOT FAR AWAY FROM GOD'S KINGDOM

1. The scribe was a Jew, brought up in the Jewish faith and had studied God's Word all his life and was friendly toward Jesus and His disciples.
  - Countless today have been raised in a Christian home by loving Christian parents and have heard/read God's Word, prayed, attend worship services, active in their Church.
  - However if a person, no matter the religious background and activity, has never deliberately, voluntarily accepted Jesus as his/her personal Savior, he/she is near the kingdom of God but still not there yet.
2. The scribe was attracted to Jesus and had respect and admiration for Him.
  - He had listened to Jesus' words and had become interested in what He heard Jesus say.
  - He had heard the accusations others made against Jesus but didn't agree with what they were saying.
  - He felt he was in the presence of somebody very special.
  - Admiring Jesus does not make one a Christian but does bring one closer to the kingdom of God.
  - If one truly admires Jesus, then he/she is not far from the kingdom of God but still on the wrong side of the gate.
    - This is the situation of countless who think they are there but are not.

3. The scribe was mentally, intellectually convinced that Jesus was right.
  - He had to admit that he agreed with Jesus and what Jesus said was the truth.
  - He didn't challenge Jesus as did others.
  - He welcomed what Jesus was teaching when he said, "*...Well master, thou hast spoken truth...*"
  - He gave Jesus' words intellectual acceptance, believing what Jesus said, thus he was close.
  - A respect for the teaching of the Lord has been shown through the centuries, many generations and often quote something Jesus said to prove something they believe.
  - Books have been printed about the teachings of Jesus and how to apply His teachings to everyday life and business.
  - However, it takes more than intellect to make a Christian because FAITH is deeper than intellect.
  - When a person does come back to the words of Jesus, then that person is not far from the kingdom of God.
  
4. The scribe was deeply stirred by Jesus' answer, showing that he was near the kingdom of God.
  - He was deeply impressed with Jesus both emotionally and intellectually.
    - Often those who heard Jesus were moved, impressed by what He said.
      - Some moved to sympathy, some moved to anger, but most were moved in some way.
  - What the scribe did and thought about Jesus was dangerous because of the opposition to Jesus by so many of the Jews, yet in public he admitted that Jesus was right.
  - His feelings had been touched and was indeed ready for action and a decision and Jesus knowing this said, "*...Thou art not far from the kingdom of God...*"
  - True it is not feelings that save but FAITH but feelings can lead to faith in the Lord Jesus
  - Trusting one's feelings when God's Word says to trust the Lord Jesus Christ is incorrect and does not bring one into the kingdom of God.
  - It takes more than emotion, more than intellect to enter the kingdom of God, but both can help bring one completely into God's kingdom.

## CONCLUSION:

1. Did the scribe ever fully trust the Lord Jesus to be his Savior? The scripture does not reveal it but Jesus said that the man was not far away.
2. Countless are where the scribe was - close but still not there.
3. A single step is what is needed to bring one completely into the kingdom of God and if that single step is refused, then one shall never enter the kingdom of God.
4. Whenever one says "**I am yours my Lord, all of me, I surrender all to you...**" what a difference that will make in his/her life and what a difference throughout all eternity for when those words are uttered from one's heart, deliberately, voluntarily he/she enters the kingdom of God.
5. Have you ever uttered those words? If not, why not right now?