

Short Talk

(SHT065)

Who has entered the kingdom of God?

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SHORT TALK: “WHO HAS ENTERED THE KINGDOM OF GOD?”

- Aim of Short talk:** To challenge people with the truth that the person who has entered the kingdom of God shows it by their actions. It is not the person who looks good or who speaks a good line!
- Use of Short talk:** This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.
- Main themes:** Obedience, repentance
- Biblical references:** Matthew 21:23-32
- Lectionary:** Year A – Proper 21, CW Trinity 16
- Props:** You will need a white surplice, a tatty old jacket and a very smart jacket.
- Preparation:** Choose and brief three people (A, B and C) beforehand. You could type up the words for A, B, and C to read when you ask them to tell you a bit about their lives.

Who would like to be a detective today?

- Come and join me (*Receive a couple of children*)
- Would the three people who are helping me come forward now too? (*Your briefed 3 people come and stand by you*)

The mystery we need to solve today is to find out which of these 3 people has entered the kingdom of God.

- They all claim to have entered God’s kingdom, but actually only one of them has.
- I wonder if you will be able to work it out.

So let me introduce you to A

- A is a retired teacher and is now a Lay Preacher so let’s give them a white surplice to wear. (*A puts on surplice*)

Let me introduce you to B

- B has a very low paid job cleaning the local train station and lives in a tiny bed-sit. Let’s give them a tatty old jacket to wear. (*B puts on tatty jacket*)

Let me introduce you to C

- C works in the city and is a Director of a very important company, so let’s give them a smart jacket to wear. (*C puts on smart jacket*)

So detective(s) – which one of these people do you think has entered the kingdom of God?

- Is it A, B or C? (*Receive answers*)

It isn't possible to tell which person has entered the kingdom of God from the clothes that they wear,

- or even from the job that they do is it?

The problem is that many of us do that.

- We look at people and make judgements about them according to what they wear or do,
- and we can very often be wrong.

So if it isn't possible to work out who has entered the kingdom of God by looking at someone, what about listening to their words?

A.....do you love God?

- *(A answers) Yes of course I do.*

B.....do you love God?

- *(B answers) Yes I do too.*

C.....do you love God?

- *(C answers) Yes I do.*

So detective(s) – which one of these people do you think has entered the kingdom of God?

- Is it A, B or C? *(Receive answers)*

It isn't always possible to tell which person has entered the kingdom of God from the words that they speak.

- Sometimes people will say all sorts of things to impress others.
- They may not even believe what they are saying, but know that they are the right words to say.

So if it isn't always possible to tell who has entered the kingdom of God by looking at someone or by listening to their words, what about looking at their actions, and how they live their lives?

- That would be a good thing to do wouldn't it?

A.....Tell me a little about your life and how you live it.

- *(A answers, reading from a card if they want to)*

I live a good life, not like my next door neighbour who lazes around all day and then has loud all night parties. I spend most of each day in my garden; growing fruit and vegetables for local shows. I have won loads of prizes and am quite a celebrity in the area. When I am not gardening, then you will find me shopping for the latest gadget that I need. I occasionally preach in my local church but when I am not on the rota then I will go fishing as my wife and I love to eat freshly caught fish.

B..... Tell me a little about your life and how you live it.

- *(B answers, reading from a card if they want to)*

Many years ago I did something wrong that I am very sorry about. As an ex-prisoner it is hard to get a good job. It has been really tough recently as my job pays so little and I can only just manage to pay the rent but I thank the Lord for His provision. When I clean the train station, I clean it the very best I can as if I am cleaning it for the Lord. On Friday nights I go and help out with the soup kitchen for the homeless as I felt that the Lord called me to do this.....it is wonderful to be able to show love in such a practical way.

C..... Tell me a little about your life and how you live it.

- *(C answers, reading from a card if they want to)*

I have a very important job in the city with lots of people reporting to me. Yes it pays well so I can enjoy some of the nicer things in life, like a yacht in the med and a swimming pool in my three homes. I have to hide some of my money you know, in offshore accounts otherwise the tax man would be constantly after me. Am I honest? Now there's a good question. Is anyone honest these days? Oh and I go to church every week.....the Vicar has just asked me to be a churchwarden.

So detective(s) – which one of these people do you think has entered the kingdom of God?

- Is it A, B or C? *(Receive answers)*

I think that you have guessed right.

- B has entered the kingdom of God.

A person who has entered the kingdom of God is someone who has had a change of heart,

- and who has turned away (or repented) from living a self-centred life to living a Jesus centred life.

Sometimes people can **look** as if they belong in the kingdom of God,

- or even **sound** like they are part of the kingdom of God,
- but unless they are **living** a Jesus centred life, then they may not yet have entered the kingdom of God.

The question today is: "Have you entered the kingdom of God?" *(Send everyone back to their seats)*