

A Childlike Faith

Matthew 18:3

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

Hebrews 5:13-14

13 For **every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness**: for he is a **babe**.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Have you ever met somebody who is an adult, but acts like a child?

- If you haven't, just go to a kid's baseball game and watch.
- Sooner or later you will be sure to witness it.
- A mom or dad jumping out of the stands to argue or fight with the coaches or umps....or sometimes other parents.
- It happens quite often.

I have witnessed it many times, but do you know what is worse? I have felt like jumping out of the stands many times myself.

Sometimes I feel like acting like a child, but I do my best to hold it in.

Most of us equate adults who act like children as being immature, but that is not always the case.

Children actually have a lot of qualities that are admirable!

- Generally speaking children are happy.
 - Children are funny.
 - Children are honest.
 - Children are loving.
 - Children are trusting.
 - Children enjoy the moment.

I think it would benefit adults to act like kids in certain areas of their life.

Let me give you an example;

I have a brother in law who is an adult, but sometimes acts like a kid.

- This brother in law loves Walt Disney World.
- He loves Walt Disney Characters.
- Tigger...that is...T I double G Uhrr....is his favorite.
- He wears Tigger socks, Winnie the Pooh ties and Eeyore jammies.
- We just went to Disney with him and had a great time.
- In fact it wouldn't be Disney without him.
 - This Brother in law, knows how to have fun.
 - He knows how to enjoy the moment.

- But at the same time, he knows when to pull it back and be an adult.
- He makes responsible decisions.
- He holds a very high corporate position at a national bank.
- He travels all over the country dealing with very important clients.

I wonder sometimes how he pulls it off? Dealing with his high pressure position and demanding clients.

But he pulls it off by being balanced in his life. He knows when to act like a kid, and when to act like an adult.

I would call him a childlike adult!

I want to speak to you tonight about being a childlike adult in your walk with God.

I read two texts to you tonight.

The first text I read to you is from Jesus;

Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The second text I read to you is from Paul.

He said; "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

- Jesus was saying, "unless you turn from your sins and become like a little child you will never get into Heaven."
 - In other words, become a child.
- Paul was saying, " children don't know how to do what is right, they must grow up and become more mature in their understanding of the Christian walk."
 - In other words, become an adult.

These scriptures seem to contradict one another, don't they?

In fact there are many other verses that tell us to be like a little child, and there are many more verses that tell us to grow up and become mature.

- Two different ideas about following Christ.
- Two different approaches in our walk with God.

But why are they so different?

Could one be right and the other wrong?

Could the Bible be contradicting itself?

No, the Bible is not contradicting itself, it is right on both accounts.

Let me explain;

When we come to Christ, we are to come as a **little** child.

Not a child, but a **little** child.

- Not a ten year old.
- Not a teenager.
 - But a child who is just old enough to walk and talk.
 - A child who is just old enough to actually go to Jesus.
 - Maybe somebody like Jackson or Leyton or Regan.

In this text, Jesus was teaching people how to approach Him.

Think of how your children approach you.

- They know that if they ask for something, you will give it to them.
 - If they are hungry, they know you will feed them.
 - If they have an owie, they know you will get a band aid and fix their owie.
 - If they are tired, they know you will put them to sleep.
 - If they are afraid, they know you will comfort them.

They come to you with 100 percent confidence that you will take care of every need they have, they don't even think twice about it.

- Doubt doesn't ever come into their minds.
- It is all faith.
- Childlike faith.

This is how Jesus said we must approach Him.

- We approach Him with childlike faith.
- We approach Him with love.
- We approach Him with trust.

If we don't approach Him in this manner, we will never make it into heaven.

- We must come to Jesus knowing that He will take care of every need we have.
- We come to Him knowing that He has our best interests at heart.

- We come to Him knowing that He will comfort us, feed us and heal us.

We shouldn't even think twice about it. It is as good as done.

I love the Scripture where Jesus stated;

Matt 7:7-11

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Luke records it almost exactly the same way except for the final verse;

Luke 11:13

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

If we are asking for good things. Jesus will give them to us. He is bound by His Word.

- If you need healing tonight, Jesus will heal you.
- If you need the Holy Ghost, Jesus will fill you.
- If you need deliverance, Jesus will deliver you.

So when it comes to faith and when it comes to our prayer life, we need to come to God as a child.

Don't ever lose that child like awe and wonder and trust in God.

It is sad time in my life because my children are no longer little children.

They are losing that awe and childlike wonder they had for dad.

- I used to be their hero.
- I used to be the greatest.
- I was faster than a speeding bullet, stronger than Sumo wrestler and smarter than a Harvard Grad.
- I was their superhero.
- But then they found out the truth.
- Now, they are losing that childlike awe and wonder they had for dad.....and oh it is a sad, sad time for me!

Don't you feel sorry for pastor?

Jesus, speaking to the adults of his day, was saying, "this is how you must approach Me."

- We ought to think of God as our Super Hero.
- We need to have a childlike awe and wonder of how Great God is.
- We need to believe that He can do anything.

The Sunday School used to sing that song called, "Jesus is my Super Hero."

I think the adults need to sing that every once in a while to give us a little better perspective of who God is!

- You need to come to God knowing that He is able and willing to do anything you need Him to do.
- The only limit to His power is in your ability to believe Him for it.

Can I get a witness?

But when it comes to our understanding of Scripture, when it comes to decisions and responsibility, the Bible says that we need to grow up and mature.

In our text, Paul said that children do not know how to live right or make right choices.

- Children do great in the area of faith and trust.
- But when it comes to doing right or wrong, they are not so great.
- When it comes to responsibility, they don't do as well.

Ask your kids not to eat all the whole package of candy in one day and what do they do? They eat the whole package in one sitting, and then they eat another package.

Tell your kids not to shoot each other with the BB guns and what do they do, they shoot each other with the BB guns, then they shoot the neighbors kid too.

Tell your kids not to play with fire, but not only do they play with fire, but they set your things on fire.

If you leave your child on their own for too long they will make a decision that will endanger their life.

- So it is obvious that when Jesus, "said come to me as little children", He was not referring to a child's sense of responsibility.
 - But there comes a time in every body's walk with God to lay aside childlike behavior and make some responsible decisions.

Paul stated;

1 Cor 14:20

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

We are called to be men (mature) in our understanding and in our decision making.

This doesn't happen overnight, but it is a continual process.

- We must continue to increase our knowledge of Scripture.
 - This is why it is important to be a part of a Bible Study.
 - When we increase our knowledge of Scripture, we can make better decisions about our life.
- This helps us to increase in our character.
- This helps us to grow in Christ.

What Paul was saying was;

- When you first come to God, you will make a lot of immature spiritual decisions. That is to be expected because you are a babe in Christ.
- But four or five years later, if you are still making those same decisions it is a sign that you have not matured in your understanding of God's Word and His plan for your life.

Some of the people that Paul won to the Lord were in this exact situation.

- They had repented.
- They had been baptized in Jesus Name.
- They had received the Holy Ghost.

A few years later, Paul returned to teach them some deeper things of God, but they couldn't understand him because they had not progressed as they should have.

They were at the same point as they were when Paul had left them years earlier.

What would you do if you noticed that your child was not developing as they should?

You wouldn't even wait a few years, but you would take them to a specialist immediately.

I believe that is how God feels about us sometimes. When we don't grow as we should, it really concerns Him.

Paul felt the same way.

Listen to what Paul said to them, this pretty harsh, but true;

Heb 5:11- 6:3 NLT

11 There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen.
12 You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.
13 For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right.
14 Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.
6:1 So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.
2 You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
3 And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

So here we are.

On one hand Jesus instructed us to remain a child, but on the other hand, Paul instructed us to become adults.

It sounds contradictory, but it is not.
These texts complement one another.

Rather than follow one and ignore the other, we should add them together.

The Bible states;

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We can't just pick and choose what Scripture works for us and what Scripture doesn't work.

But we must use all Scripture together.

The Bible says, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

- For the purpose of this lesson we could say, "as you grow in spiritual maturity, never decrease in your faith."
- As you become more mature in your spiritual decision making, it is still important to come to God with that childlike awe and wonder and trust.

I would equate this with being a **childlike adult**.

Look at the person next to you and say, "I am a childlike adult."

We must increase both in our faith and in our spiritual maturity.

It makes sense that we will increase in faith and maturity at the same time, but you will be challenged to do so.

Often as you grow in Christ, you will mistake necessary trials and tests for God forsaking you.

That is what happened to the disciples of Christ.

All of the disciples, except perhaps, doubting Thomas, had childlike faith.

- They performed great miracles.
- Peter walked on water.
- John healed the lame man.
- Together, with Jesus, they fed the five thousand.

But when it was necessary for Jesus to go to the Cross, their faith failed them.

- They thought Jesus had forsaken them.
- They lost that child like feeling of awe and wonder that Jesus could do anything they asked Him to.

When their faith was gone, they gave up and quit.

- If Jesus had not come back to Galilee after He resurrected, they would never have made it.

The disciples were only three years into their walk with Christ, and they were not yet mature enough in their understanding of God to know that God was testing them.

- This was a necessary trial.
- They had to go through it.

As you grow in Christ, there will be some necessary tests and trials. You must learn that God is allowing things to happen so that you can continue to develop into a mature Christian.

During these times, your faith will be tested.

Paul called this the trial of our faith.

1 Peter 1:7

7 That **the trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

It is easy to have faith and serve God when everything is going just fine.

But when the tests and trial come, I want to encourage you to keep believing in God as if you are a little child.

Don't ever lose that sense of awe and wonder you have for God.

God will bring you through every test and every trial.
Keep believing.
Keep holding on.

But keep growing in Christ at the same time!

- Keep attending Bible Study.
- Keep reading the Word.
- Keep praying.

Become a childlike adult.