**“Like a Child”**

Last week: Casting out demon from a child – We have Authority over evil.

**Mark 9:30-37**

**30**They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, **31**because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” **32**But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

<pause>

**33**They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” **34**But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

**35**Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

**36**He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, **37**“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

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**42**“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.

**Mark 10:13-16**

**13**People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. **14**When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. **15**Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” **16**And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Jesus loved children, I do too.

Jesus was always very mindful and thoughtful of children and saw in them so many things that he wanted to impart in us.

Children are very special people.

Their perception of the world is in many ways pure and uncontaminated:

*[Think about when you were a child, what was a typical summer day like, compared to today?*

*Barefoot, carefree, stress/worry-free, each day was a new adventure…*

*We get to the beach… it takes me 15 minutes before I can relax, get the chair and blanket in the right spot, set-up an umbrella, place the cooler bag nearby, check the tide chart and the wind direction (for flies), etc.*

*Not kids, the literally RUN into the water. (To get there in 3 seconds instead of 10)*

*Once they get to it the jump in.*

*We slowly walk to the water and very tentatively “ease in” (if we go in at all anymore)*

*We spend the day trying to avoid sand,. they are rolling in it.]*

Children are amazing, I love to be around them…

Children are usually:

* Trusting, while we tend to be cynical
* Optimistic while we are often skeptical
* They naturally want to play, while we basically work and relax
* They openly express themselves in singing, dancing and art, we tend to shun or downplay these things as we get older these things and stick to more practical expressions.
* They have a sense of wonder that we tend to lose along the way;
* They remain hopeful of *what they will be when they grow-up*, Many adults have “grown up and given up”.
* They love animals, stories, games, pools, playgrounds, coloring, pretending and playing outside. We tend to lose appreciation for these things as years go by;
* *When they sing, they sing loud and enthusiastically regardless of how it sounds*
* *When you ask them what they want to be when they grow up, they have so much incredible optimism (a spaceman, a cowboy, a princess, the President)*

Jesus apparently loved these things about children and loved to spend time with them, even though the disciples tried to keep them away…

**Matt 18:2-4 “**He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. **3**And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4**Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

What did Jesus mean when he said; *“Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 18:4)*

Lowly position – *not* trying to be in charge, listening to the voice of the Father, being obedient and teachable.

**Children:**

In one sense;

They are adventurous, silly, playful, trusting and optimistic

In another sense;

Dependent, teachable, moldable, & subservient

Jesus does *not* want us to be gullible and immature, but he wants us to be teachable and submitted to His authority.

**Jesus knew he was about to turn over the authority of the church to these men, but he wanted them to remain humble and teachable like children, not stubborn and arrogant like jaded adults.**

**Reminds me of the last scene of the movie, “Charlie and Chocolate factory”, when Willy Wonka decides to GIVE the entire factory to Charlie:**

*“So, who can I trust to run the factory when I leave and take care of the Oompa Loompas for me? Not a grownup. A grownup would want to do everything his own way, not mine. That's why I decided a long time ago I had to find a child. A very honest, loving child to whom I can tell all my most precious candy making secrets.” (Willy Wonka)*

Why Did Jesus bring up the idea of being like children?

This is all in response to their argument about who is the greatest (among them)

**Mark 9:34 “**because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.”

Jesus had just told them that he was going to Jerusalem to die. They responded by positioning for power. They did not understand the details of the resurrection, all they knew was that change was coming and they wanted to be in a good place when it did.

In fact, a short while later James and John came to Jesus and asked for a favor;

**Mark 10:35-45** “**35**Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

**36**“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

**37**They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

**38**“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

**39**“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, **40**but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

**41**When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. **42**Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **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.”

***“The Kingdom of God is lead by;***

***Servanthood and Sacrifice,***

***Not Selfishness and Skepticism.”***

**John 15:13** “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends”

I came across a very touching Facebook post a while ago that really impacted me:

I’m not sure of the origin or even the validity of it, but it was said to be written by a doctor who recounted a story from his day:

*[Please show this graphic]*

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

“Greater love has no one than this”

This is what Jesus meant when He said “*whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”*

This is genuine unskeptical, unselfish childlike love.

This is the love that Jesus has for us.

This is what he meant by the passage we just read:

**Mark 10:45“**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.”

This is the love Jesus has for us, and the love we should have for Him and each other.

We are to love the Lord, as children love their father;

* Let’s be willing to sing our hearts out to our Father (in worship)
* Let’s listen closely to his stories and instructions (as we study his word)
* Let’s watch what he does and try to be just like him (as we live a life walking in His spirit)
* So even as we mature in Christ, let’s never lose our Childlike-ness,
* Let’s always remain open and teachable.
* Let’s always be optimistic, adventurous, hopeful and fun.

Just like children, we are learning and growing. God always has an amazing future in store for us, no matter how old we are.

And what we will be *when we grow up* is yet to fully be known.

What we DO know, is that if we are children of the Father…we will be like Him!

**1 John 3:1, 2 “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.**

**2Dear friends, now *we are children of God,* and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”**

You are never too old to be a child.

God loves you as His son or daughter and wants you to experience your life as a child of an ever-loving father.

Don’t grow up too soon.

* Yes, mature in the Lord,
* grow in wisdom and
* learn from years of experience,
* but never give up your identity as a “child of the father”.

He loves you. He will provide for you,

He will protect you.

And just like Jesus, you are his beloved child in whom he is well-pleased.

Song lyric:

“How deep the Father’s love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure,  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure.”

* Let’s remain Childlike in our faith, not childish in our ways.
* Let’s grow as mature men and women, even as we continue to learn new things everyday .
* Let’s be wise in the knowledge and experience of God’s wisdom, even as we remain “children of God through faith”

He is your heavenly Father and you are His sons and daughters,

no matter how old you are now, or ever will be.