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“Like a Child, We Come”

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

SPECIAL MUSIC: “I am a Child of God”

Bethel Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otmBLQJ7IUQ>



LIKE A CHILD

God looked deep into the eyes
Of the child before his feet,
A child of eighty years
Full of hope and full of fears
And yet, still not complete.
The scars from strife
And the wrinkles of life
Each earned
Pain endured
And yet,
Who's entire life
Was still only a blink of God's eye,
As we examine
Each turning of the page
And the advance of age.
God sees only the child.
How strange it must be
For God to count the
Passing of years,
Joys and fears
In our lives.
But as our Creator
He must have known
As we have grown
How difficult it must be,
That as trustees

Of his creation
To acknowledge the desire to flee
The ravages and scandalous
Waves of time in motion..
He watches us
From birth to death
As we take our last breath
God blinks.
As we flee
Our mortal vessels
And wrestle
Our way into eternity,
Still as children.
As wise as we are.
God sets the bar
Higher and higher still
And then gives us free will
Hoping that we can still
Rise to his bosom
As he gathers his arms
Around us,
Forever his children,
Forever his greatest love,
No matter how short we fall.
And then the question comes
As we succumb
To the awesome nature
Of our Creator

**Staring deep into our soul,
Do we have the courage
And humility
To look deep into his eyes
As well?
Heavenly Father,
Let me seek truth within your eyes
Push back the stars and cloudy skies
Your glory magnified
Revealing the love that gratifies
My soul.**

What an amazing creation our bodies are. From babies we grow into children, from children into teenagers, from teenagers into young adults, from young adults into middle aged adults, then older adults and seniors. As we grow older, our bodies grow and change respectively. I admit to waking up in the morning with a few more pains in places where I never knew I had places. But I also admit that I have a hard time remembering what was happening around me when I was three or four years old. But I do have fuzzy memories of being five and the adventures that I had.

One crazy fact about human anatomy that many people have a difficult time accepting, is that there is one organ in the body that never grows any bigger from the day we are born to the day we die. Our eyes. I find that fascinating. The eyes are truly the windows of the soul, and they tell the story of our lives. Everything from the pains to the joys, the sorrows to the jublations, the guilt to the revelation and repentance, and the loneliness to the sense of belonging. It's all visible when we look into someone's eyes. It is all visible when they look into our eyes.

When we are children, we get excited when an adult looks us in the eyes, when they notice us, when they see us. It makes us feel bigger, encouraged to take on the world. But later in life, we often don't want people to look us into our eyes because we are afraid of what they might find there. We want to keep our pain hidden. We believe that it is nobody else's business what they might find there in our eyes. I've been to places where people avoid any hint of eye contact. But my dad taught me when I was growing up, that if you shake a person's hand,

it is important to make eye contact. It is an exceptional way to acknowledge the other person. When you do that, you make yourself just a little vulnerable and by doing so it allows the other person to begin to drop their mask. It is much more difficult to be deceitful if someone is looking you in the eye.

But children, children have not learned the art of hiding behind a mask. You can look into their eyes and see exactly what is going on. They haven't learned to close the blinds on their emotions and feelings yet. You can see when they are hurt and in pain. You can also see when they are overflowing with love and joy. They are transparent. Even in their mischief there is an innocence. When they push the boundaries, it is often in full view and without remorse.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Don't you know that Jesus was surrounded by people with hidden agendas. Even Jesus' disciples were constantly bickering, backbiting, trying to curry favor with their teacher and Lord. And while they schemed about who was loved and who was only tolerated, who was worthy and who was not, who was a favorite and who was not, Jesus knew. They tried to hide it. They struggled with humility just like the rest of us. Each one wanted to be more special than the next. "I love Jesus more than you!" "Oh no you don't, I love him more!" "Well, I love him most!" Just like little children in the back of a car arguing and irritating each other on a long vacation.

And they honestly believe that because they are adults, that they can hide all that nonsense from him, when the truth is really pretty obvious. Not one of them wants to appear transparent, but Jesus can see right through the shenanigans. Adults, me included, can be so childish without realizing it.

But here is an important observation, while Jesus can see through our mask, can see what echoes in our eyes, that is totally different than us revealing ourselves to him. We can spend a lifetime trying to drop our mask and look into the eyes of Jesus.

Looking into people's eyes is a form of non-verbal communication. So much can be said by just looking into someone's eyes and allowing them to look into ours. There are times when words are unnecessary, maybe even counterproductive to communication.

So, I ask you, what does Jesus see when he looks into our eyes? Are we afraid of what he will find there? There is nothing there that Jesus doesn't already know. We should never be ashamed to let Jesus look into our souls. He can't clean us up and wash us out if we won't let him in. This is nothing new.

There is a beautiful passage of scripture in Isaiah 64:6-9

6 All of us are dirty with sin.

All the right things we have done are like filthy pieces of cloth.

All of us are like dead leaves.

Like the wind our sins have carried us away.

7 No one worships you.

No one even asks you to help us.

So you have turned away from us.

And we are destroyed because of our sins.

8 But Lord, you are our father.

We are like clay, and you are the potter.

Your hands made us all.

9 Lord, don't continue to be angry with us.

Don't remember our sins forever.

Please, look at us

because we are your people.

What a quandary we have as human beings, creations of our all-powerful God. We know the ugliness that lies within us. We want God to take it away. But we don't want God to see how ugly that ugliness really is. We don't want to let God to know that we realize we are naked, so we put on fig leaves hoping that he won't notice. Call it camouflage. Can't we see that God knows that we know we are naked. We can't hide it, so why even try? Because our own pride gets in the way. We believe that God will reject us when he looks into our souls and sees all the grime and dirt that clings to the walls of our hearts.

But the truth is, when Jesus looks into our eyes, he isn't looking with condemnation. It is with love, grace, and mercy. He cleans out our hearts and souls with grace and compassion..

Most of us have been caregivers at sometime in our lives. Being a caregiver can be uncomfortable. There are things that have to be taken care of that we would otherwise find extremely difficult. Bathing, dressing, and feeding a loved one in crisis is hard. But we do it. We do it out of love. We are able to take care of the other person because we care about them. And there is not a single one of us that would want to be on the receiving end of that caregiving. It can be embarrassing and requires a great deal of humility to allow someone to care for us. That is because when we reach adulthood we are more cognizant of how helpless we can be and embarrassed by our circumstances. Nothing will go farther towards making us humble than a life altering major illness, tragic accident, or even the onset of old age. It takes a great deal of humility and courage to admit to ourselves that we need help with everyday things.

At the same time, babies and young children don't seem to have that problem. Being cared for is just a part of life. That's what moms, dads, and grandparents are for. Is that, perhaps, what Christ is referring to when he says to us:

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Have you ever considered that maybe, just maybe, when Jesus looks into our souls? Does he see the little children that we are? Somewhat dirty for playing in mud puddles. Somewhat weary from allowing life to remove some of the child in us, allowing it to make us less dependent on our Savior.

Do you remember this story from John 13:4-9?

4 So during the meal Jesus stood up and took off his outer clothing.

Taking a towel, he wrapped it around his waist.

5 Then he poured water into a bowl and began to wash the followers' feet.

He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered, "You don't understand what I am doing now. But you will understand later."

8 Peter said, "No! You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "If I don't wash your feet, then you are not one of my people."

9 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, after you wash my feet, wash my hands and my head, too!"

Aren't we so like Peter. We don't understand what Christ is trying to do for us. "Don't do it! Don't come near me! I am filthy! I cannot and will not let you wash my dirty feet. Not going to happen, Lord. That's the job of a servant, not

the Son of God. Give me the rag and the bowl of water and I will wash them myself. But you, Jesus, will never wash my feet.”

“But, Peter, if you want to be a part of my kingdom, if you want to be my brother, if you want to see the value God has placed on your soul, if you want to walk with me, you will allow me to do this. For I, Jesus, am a servant to humankind.”

How badly do we want Jesus in our lives, to be a part of who we are? How badly do we want to be redeemed? Are we willing to let God enter our souls and make us clean? Or are we going to keep him at arm’s length because we are just too embarrassed to let him come close and do something so menial as to wash our feet? Can we understand that God sees the child in us? Jesus was beaten, bled, died on a cross, was buried, and rose again just for the opportunity to be able to wash our feet. Of course we are not worthy in our own eyes, just like Peter. But Peter had to come to Christ as a child in order to be cleansed. Can we not see that we have to do the same? We have to allow Christ to serve us, even if everything in our minds tell us that doing this is completely opposite to what we are thinking.

I know it might seem trivial and unimportant, but this week I want us all to take a look at the inner child in us that God sees when he looks into our eyes. He isn’t afraid of the mud and grime in our souls. He brings his bucket and brush to clean all that mess up and help us sparkle like the children he needs us to be. We are never too young or too old for the grace of God. We are simply his children, and he wants us to come to him as children. As a matter of fact, that is the only

way we can approach the throne of God. Anything else is just our pride keeping us from his blessings.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

God bless you all!

AMEN

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