
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
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I. SERMON RECAP

When the disciples asked Jesus who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, they expected a lesson on power, position, and privilege. Instead, Jesus called a little child to stand among them and delivered one of His most counter-cultural teachings: unless we change and become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven. This profound moment challenges us to examine what we've lost in our pursuit of adulthood: the innocence, teachability, humility, and wonder that characterize a child's heart.

We live in a world obsessed with determining who's the GOAT (greatest of all time) in every arena. Yet Jesus redirects our attention to the qualities we often dismiss as weakness: vulnerability, simplicity, and a willingness to approach life with open hands and hearts. The passage from Matthew 18:1-6 invites us to consider whether we've become too sophisticated, too jaded, too hurried to experience the abundant life Christ promises. Some of us were robbed of our childhood through abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and this message offers hope that it's not too late to recover what was lost.

The kingdom of heaven operates on different principles than our world; it values the lowly position, the teachable spirit, the one who shares freely and loves without calculation. As we reflect on this teaching, we're challenged to ask ourselves: Are we taking life too seriously? Have we lost the capacity for joy, playfulness, and wonder? And most importantly, are we willing to twist our perspective, to convert our hearts, and to pursue a childlike faith that takes Jesus at His word without argument or hesitation?

Chapters

Chapter 1: Who Is the Greatest?

We explore the disciples' question about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven and Jesus' surprising response by calling a little child to Him.

Chapter 2: Unless You Change and Become Like Children

We examine Jesus' profound statement that unless we change and become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Chapter 3: Rediscovering Childhood Wonder

We consider how children share, play, discover, and experience life with wonder, and how we can reclaim these qualities in our adult lives.

Chapter 4: Welcoming the Child, Welcoming Christ

We learn that welcoming a child in Jesus' name is welcoming Jesus Himself, and that causing children to stumble brings severe consequences.

Chapter 5: Going Low to Rise High

We are challenged to go low in humility like a child rather than seeking greatness, understanding that true authority and influence come from childlike servanthood.

II. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points:

- The disciples' question about who is greatest reveals a misunderstanding of kingdom values
- Jesus calls a little child to demonstrate the essence of greatness in God's kingdom
- Children embody qualities essential to kingdom life: innocence, teachability, humility, vulnerability, and submission to authority
- Unless we "turn" (repent/convert) and "become" like little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven
- Many people have been robbed of their childhood through abuse, neglect, or trauma
- Christ offers restoration of childlike joy, wonder, and innocence even in adulthood
- Childlike faith means taking Jesus at His word without argument or skepticism
- Going "low" in humility is the path to true influence and spiritual authority
- Causing a child to stumble carries severe consequences. It would be better to drown with a millstone
- Living with childlike qualities includes sharing, caring, playing, laughing, being affectionate, and maintaining curiosity
- Authority must be earned through humility and childlike service, not just positional power
- The abundant life Jesus promises includes recovering youthful joy and simplicity

Key Scripture References

Matthew 18:1-6 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 16:15-16 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 17 The Transfiguration

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Other Scriptural References

Alluded To/Implied

Matthew 11:11 - Jesus says John the Baptist was the greatest

Romans 12:2 "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"

Matthew 23:12 / Luke 14:11 / Luke 18:14 "God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble"
(general principle stated)

James 4:6 / 1 Peter 5:5 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"

Matthew 25:21, 23 - "Be faithful in few things, and God will give you charge over many"
(paraphrased)

1 Corinthians 8:1 "Knowledge puffs up"

Related Verses Supporting Main Themes:

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus blesses the children and says the kingdom belongs to such as these

Luke 18:15-17 A similar account of receiving the kingdom like a little child

Psalms 131:1-2 Quieting the soul like a weaned child

Matthew 19:14 "Let the little children come to me"

1 Corinthians 13:11 Though contrasting, discusses childishness vs. maturity

Philippians 2:3-8 Humility and taking the lowly position of Christ

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Becoming Like a Little Child

Day 1: The Greatness of Humility

Question: In what areas of your life are you still competing for greatness rather than embracing humility?

Reading: Matthew 18:1-6

Devotional: When the disciples asked Jesus who was greatest in the kingdom, they expected a discussion about power and position. Instead, Jesus called a child forward. In that moment, He redefined greatness entirely. True greatness isn't found in accomplishments or status; it's discovered in humility, teachability, and dependence on God. Children naturally embody these qualities: they trust easily, learn constantly, and approach life with a sense of wonder. As adults, we've often lost this posture, replacing it with self-sufficiency and pride.

Today, ask yourself: Am I approaching God with the humble heart of a child, or am I too sophisticated in my faith? Greatness in God's kingdom begins when we go low, surrendering our need to be right, important, or in control. Let humility become your pathway to true spiritual influence.

Day 2: The Gift of Childlike Faith

Question: What specific childlike qualities do you think you've lost as an adult, and how might you reclaim them?

Reading: Mark 10:13-16

Devotional: Jesus did not just tolerate children. He welcomed them and declared that the kingdom belongs to those who receive as they do. Childlike faith means taking God at His word without endless analysis or doubt. It's believing prayer works, trusting Scripture is true, and expecting God to move. Somewhere in adulthood, many of us traded simple faith for complicated theology. We've become skeptical, cautious, and hesitant. But Jesus invites us back to that place of unquestioning trust.

What would change in your life if you believed God's promises with the confidence of a child believing their parent? Today, identify one area where you've been overthinking instead of simply trusting. Bring that to God with childlike faith, saying, "I take You at Your word. Let's do this together."

Day 3: Recovering Lost Innocence

Question: How can the church help adults recover the innocence and joy they never experienced as children?

Reading: Psalm 23:1-6

Devotional: Some of us were robbed of childhood through abuse, neglect, or circumstances that forced us to grow up too quickly. The innocence, safety, and wonder that should have marked those years were stolen. But God is a restoring Father. Through Christ, He offers to rebuild what was taken, giving you in adulthood what you never experienced as a child. The Good Shepherd leads you beside still waters and restores your soul. This restoration isn't about returning to an age; it's about reclaiming a spirit. A spirit of joy, playfulness, curiosity, and trust. God wants to heal the places where childhood was lost and replace them with His presence.

Today, ask God to show you what childlike quality He wants to restore in your heart. Is it wonder? Safety? Joy? Trust? Let Him begin that healing work.

Day 4: Protecting the Little Ones

Question: How does this warning apply to the way we influence children today, whether through our actions, words, or the culture we create?

Reading: Matthew 18:6-10

Devotional: Jesus spoke with fierce intensity about those who cause children to stumble. His words reveal how seriously God takes the protection of innocence and the nurturing of faith in the vulnerable. This applies not only to physical children but to anyone young in faith or tender in spirit. We have a responsibility to create environments where childlike faith can flourish in our homes, churches, and communities.

Are you cultivating spaces where innocence is protected, where questions are welcomed, where joy is celebrated? Or are you contributing to cynicism, discouragement, or spiritual harm? Today, consider how you influence those around you, especially the young or vulnerable. Commit to being someone who guards and nurtures childlike faith rather than crushing it. Your example may be the millstone or the blessing in someone's spiritual journey.

Day 5: Living with Childlike Joy

Question: How can you incorporate more joy, play, and curiosity into your daily routine this week?

Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Devotional: "Rejoice in the Lord always," Paul writes, not sometimes, not when circumstances permit, but always. This kind of joy isn't manufactured; it flows from a childlike trust in God's goodness. Children laugh easily, play freely, and find wonder in simple things. As adults, we've allowed life's burdens to squeeze out this joy. We've become too serious, too worried, too controlled. But abundant life in Christ includes reclaiming that childlike spirit.

What would it look like for you to laugh more, play more, and approach life with greater lightness? This doesn't mean ignoring responsibility—it means refusing to let responsibility steal your joy. Today, do something playful. Reconnect with a hobby you loved. Spend time with children and observe their freedom. Ask God to restore the joy that's been buried under adult anxieties. Repeat the sounding joy.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Small Group Guide: "The Greatest in the Kingdom"

Based on Matthew 18:1-6

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker

Share a favorite childhood memory. What made it special? What feelings or qualities from that time do you miss today?

Key Scripture

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 18:3-4

Discussion

Understanding the Text

What surprised you most about Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about who is greatest? Why do you think He chose a child as His example instead of simply pointing to Himself?

Pastor Gary mentioned several childlike qualities Jesus values. Which of these stood out to you most?

Innocence

Teachability

Humility

Vulnerability

Submission to authority

What does Jesus mean by "unless you change and become like little children"? How is this different from being childish?

Personal Reflection

Pastor Gary asked, "Are you taking your life too seriously?" How would you honestly answer that question? What areas of your life have lost their sense of wonder or joy?

The sermon mentioned that some people were "robbed of their childhood." Without sharing inappropriate details, how might childhood wounds affect someone's ability to embrace childlike faith as an adult?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current "childlikeness" in these areas:

Curiosity and wonder about God

Willingness to learn and be corrected

Joy and playfulness in daily life

Trust in God's word without over-analyzing

Ability to forgive quickly

Going Deeper

Pastor Gary said, "Adults seek greatness first... A child just happens to be called upon and comes to stand next to Him." What's the difference between pursuing greatness and simply being faithful where God has placed you?

Jesus warns strongly against causing "little ones" to stumble (verse 6). In what ways might we unintentionally cause others, especially children, to stumble in their faith journey?

The sermon mentioned that Jesus is "safe" and approachable. Have you experienced Jesus this way? What might prevent someone from seeing Him as safe?

"It's not too late to be a little kid." What would it look like for you to reclaim or discover childlike joy in your current season of life?

Key Takeaways

From the Sermon:

Greatness in God's kingdom is measured differently than in the world; it's about humility, not status

Childlikeness includes innocence, teachability, humility, vulnerability, curiosity, and trust

Conversion involves two parts:

Turning to God (repentance)

Becoming (transformation/sanctification)

Jesus embodies childlike qualities and calls us to reflect them

Authority is earned through going low, not claimed through position

The abundant life includes reclaiming joy, wonder, and simplicity

Warning:

Causing others (especially children) to stumble spiritually is one of the gravest offenses in Scripture.

Practical Applications

This Week, I Will... Choose 1-2 actions to focus on:

Slow Down

Practice being fully present in one daily activity without rushing

Observe something in nature with childlike wonder

Put away your phone during a meal and truly engage with others

Learn Like a Child

Approach Bible reading with fresh curiosity, asking "What is God showing me?" rather than "What do I already know?"

Ask someone to teach you something new

Admit when you don't know something instead of pretending

Play and Laugh

Schedule time for an activity you genuinely enjoy (not productivity-focused)

Spend time with children and observe how they approach life

Share a meal with friends focused on laughter and connection

Practice Humility

Identify one area where you're seeking recognition and consciously "go low"

Serve someone without telling anyone about it

Ask for forgiveness from someone you've wronged

Trust Simply

Choose one promise from Scripture and believe it like a child—without over-analyzing

Pray about a concern and leave it with God instead of trying to control the outcome

Share your faith naturally with someone, trusting God with the results

Restore Wonder

Revisit a hobby or activity you loved as a child

Create space for spontaneity in your schedule

Practice gratitude by noticing small joys throughout your day

Reflection Questions for the Week

What aspect of childhood did I lose that God wants to restore in me?

Where am I seeking to be "the greatest" instead of becoming like a child?

How can I create more space for joy, wonder, and playfulness in my life?

Who in my life needs me to be more childlike (less serious, more fun, more present)?

What would it look like to take Jesus at His word this week without arguing or over-thinking?

Prayer Focus

Pray for one another:

For healing from childhood wounds that prevent childlike faith

For humility to embrace lowliness rather than seeking greatness

For restoration of joy, wonder, and simplicity in daily life

For wisdom in nurturing childlike faith in the next generation

For the protection of children from those who would cause them to stumble

Closing Prayer:

For Next Week

Read Matthew 18:7-20 in preparation for your next gathering

Share with the group one way you practiced childlikeness this week

Bring a childhood photo to share (optional fun activity)

Leader Notes

Be sensitive to those who had difficult childhoods—focus on what God can restore, not what was lost

Keep the tone light and encouraging; this message should bring freedom, not guilt

Consider bringing simple snacks or doing a fun icebreaker activity to model childlike enjoyment

If appropriate, watch a short video of children playing or laughing to illustrate the sermon's point

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is the expectation that water will be restored to the church this week. If that is not the case, there will be alternative bathroom options again.

Pastor Joel continues with part 3 of his critical conversations class this Wednesday.

The youth leave for Whisper Mountain this Friday and return Sunday; it's not too late to sign up!

Consider participating in Operation Christmas Child and the ongoing Coat Drive this month.

- The deadline to have your operations Christmas boxes filled and returned is November 23rd.

Music and Mistletoe takes place again this year. It's going to be on the 12th of December.