



38: **Childlike Faith** (Mt 19:13-26)

Jesus expects His followers to have a child-like faith, but this is far from a child-ish faith. Today we discover how to become like little children to enter the Kingdom of God.

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teachingnotes

A Child As Our Example

Matthew 18:3 (NIV) And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you **change** and **become like little children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

That sounds pretty serious, huh?

Seeking Jesus Finding Roadblock

Matthew 19:13-15 (NIV) Then **people brought little children to Jesus** for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Parents saw value in bringing their **children** to have **Jesus pray for them**. This was not unusual since respected rabbis were asked to pray over children in this way. A tradition developed where parents would bring their children to the elders or scribes for a prayer of blessing on *Yom Kippur* - the *Day of Atonement*.¹

But these parents seeking the touch & prayer of Jesus for their little ones, were **rebuked** by **the disciples** of Jesus. The disciples should have known better. They already heard Jesus talk about the value of children. **The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these**. *What's Jesus mean by that?* Throughout the ministry of Jesus He is pointing to the value of people who aren't considered valuable: tax collectors, the sick, people with sinful pasts....**and children**. **NONE** of these come into the Kingdom because they are **INNOCENT**.

Luke 18:17 (NIV) Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child **will never enter it.**"

No one enters the kingdom because they're holy, but *because they're humble*...because they have **CHILDLIKE FAITH**.

BIG TRUTH: Childlike Faith = Trusting Jesus instead of Yourself

It's NOT a child's **INNOCENCE** that we are to model, but a child's **DEPENDENCE** & **TRUST**.

And without that **Childlike Faith**...we **will never enter...the kingdom of God**.

☀ **Eduard Schweizer**, Professor of New Testament at the University of Zurich

"They have nothing to show for themselves. They cannot count on any achievements of their own—their hands are empty like those of a beggar."

☀ **Kent Hughes** *"A little child is free from the pride of knowledge. He has no learning, no degrees to pile up before the cross."*

☀ **Martin Luther** *"Christ has made the children our teachers."*

ChildLIKE faith is NOT a ChildISH Faith. Examine the evidence to determine if the story of Jesus is worthy of your life, just like the people of the 1st century were doing. *Jesus didn't ask people to believe without weighing the evidence. He invited them to consider His teaching and examine His miracles. Jesus wasn't calling people to a **childISH faith** - a willful ignorance of the facts. Instead, Jesus called them to a **childLIKE faith...Trusting Jesus instead of Yourself**.*

¹ Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 14–28, vol. 33B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1995), 553.

How Can I KNOW I Have Eternal Life?

Matthew 19:16-17a (NIV) Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, **what good thing must I do to get eternal life?**" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only **One** who is **good**."

Although Jesus had just taught that people only enter the kingdom *like a child* - simple trust - unearned & undeserved, this man wanted to know what he needed to **DO** to gain **eternal life**.

In asking Jesus **what good thing he must do**, it is implied that Jesus is **good and can correctly answer the question**. Both **Mark & Luke**, referring to this same conversation, say the man said something further...

Mark 10:17-18 (NIV) As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "**Good teacher,**" he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call **me good?**" Jesus answered. "**No one is good—except God alone.**"

Luke 18:18-19 (NIV) A certain ruler asked him, "**Good teacher,** what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call **me good?**" Jesus answered. "**No one is good—except God alone.**"

Jesus challenges the ruler with a question: "**Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.**" The man is forced to pause and consider what Jesus has just said. **IS Jesus good?** Of COURSE! The Scripture clearly states Jesus had NO SIN! (John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 3:5)

✓ Consider this logic: "**If only God is good, and Jesus is good, then Jesus is God.**"

Eternal Life by Keeping the Commandments?

Matthew 19:17b-20 (NIV)

If you want to **enter life**, keep the commandments."

"Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, " 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "**What do I still lack?**"

It is strange that Jesus answers this man by mentioning some of the 10 commandments. Hadn't Jesus just made it clear that people don't enter the kingdom because of their *innocence* but because of their **dependence** - their **childlike trust in Jesus?** Further, this man thinks he's pretty good but Jesus just clarified that **no one is good except God alone**.

- Of the 10 commandments from Ex. 20, the first 4 deal with how one loves God
- while the next 6 are focused on how one must **love your neighbor as yourself** (Lev 19:18).
 - Of interest, Jesus mentions 5 of the 6 related to loving people, but leaves 1 out: 'Do not covet your neighbors house, wife, servants, animals, or [stuff]'. (Ex. 20:17)

Why didn't Jesus mentioned the 4 commands related to loving God? Maybe it's because that is the answer to the question, "**What do I still lack?**".

Exodus 20:2-3 (LSB) "I am **Yahweh your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before **Me**."

Jesus takes this man to the fork in the road to demonstrate *THIS IS exactly what he is missing*. He is not giving YAWHEH - the One True God - 1st place in his life, but has allowed other 'gods' to have 1st place. Jesus brings him to the place where he must choose to follow Yahweh OR keep following other gods.

Matthew 19:21 (LSB) Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be **complete** [vs lack in Mt 19:20], go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have **treasure in heaven**; and come, **follow Me.**"

Jesus shares what will make this man **complete** (better translation than "*perfect*" - used by NIV) in **what he still lacks** (Mt 19:20). Jesus commands him to remove what has taken 1st place in his life - *wealth* - and **follow Him**. This man could be a living example of the man selling all that he has to buy the field because of the treasure hidden in that field - eternal life (Mt 13:44)!

✗ The command to **sell** all we have and **give to the poor** is not a command that Jesus gives every believer.

✓ But Jesus DOES call every one of us to remove anyone or anything that has first place in our lives - and **follow Him**.

This is **Childlike Faith = Trusting Jesus instead of Yourself**

Matthew 19:22 (NIV) When the young man heard this, **he went away sad**, because he had great wealth.

Rather than preaching to this man about his covetousness & idolatry, Jesus asked him to do something that a covetous person would never do: "**Give it away and follow me.**" *WHY did he decline that invitation?* **Because he had great wealth** - he had allowed another god to sit on the throne of his heart.

② **Who/What occupies the throne of YOUR heart?** Is there something in your soul that is still lacking the completeness of KNOWING you are forgiven, free, and a child of the King? Is there *something else* or *someone else that occupies the throne of your heart*?

🕒 If so, *THAT is what Jesus would command you to remove from first place and follow Him!*

Matthew 19:23-26 (NIV) Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to **enter the kingdom of heaven**. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible**."

Traditional Judaism saw wealth and social position as evidence of God's blessing (e.g. Abraham, Solomon), so it was inconceivable that wealth was a BARRIER to the kingdom. 'If the rich God has blessed can't be saved' - they reason - 'then how can the normal people be saved?' No one, in their own effort can be saved. It's **impossible** for people to be made right with God on their own. **But with God all things are possible**. The first followers of Jesus will soon see the price that will be paid to save all kinds of people - the rich, the poor, and everyone in between.

Childlike Faith = Trusting Jesus instead of Yourself

Have you trusted Jesus like that....or is there *SOMETHING* or *SOMEONE* that is keeping you from following Him?

🌟 **Kent Hughes** about **Billy Graham**:

*"If Billy Graham enters the kingdom, it will not be because he has personally preached to more people than any man in history. It will not be because he has remained impeccable in his finances when so many have failed. It will not be because he has been a faithful husband. It will not be because, despite his fame, he has remained a humble, self-effacing, kind man. When Billy Graham enters the kingdom, it will be because he came to Christ as a helpless child. It will be because of God's undeserved kindness toward Billy's helplessness."*²

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Rob & Rebecca Leatherberry** (229-232-1087), or **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What's the difference between **Child-like faith** and **Child-ish faith**? How might an 80 year old who has been a follower of Jesus for 40 years still live out a Child-like faith?
2. **Read Matthew 18:3, 19:13-14, & Luke 18:17 & John 20:30-31**. As should be obvious, Child-like Faith is NOT a blind-faith, but a step of trust based on evidence. Share one of the convincing reasons you choose to trust Jesus with a Child-like Faith.
3. **Read Luke 18:19-20**. How might you be prepared for someone who uses this passage to show that Jesus was NOT God? **Read John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21, Heb. 4:15, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 3:5** and answer this: "Was Jesus GOOD?"
4. **Read Matthew 19:21-24**. Why is it difficult for wealthy people to follow Jesus? (Remember that some of God's most faithful servants were wealthy.) What's the difference between how Abraham & this rich young ruler used their riches?
5. *What might Jesus ask YOU to give away, turn from, or remove from the throne of your heart?* In other words - **BE HONEST** - what competes for 1st place in your life?
6. What challenged or encouraged you *most* from today's teaching & what does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
7. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.

² Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 200.