

I Don't Wanna Grow Up: I've got a childlike faith

5/30/21

Intro of myself:

Good morning everyone. I'm Josh, the Family Pastor here at FBFirst. If you came this morning because you heard that we have an amazing pastor and you just need to hear him preach...you're welcome, here I am! But no seriously, we do have an incredible pastor who is a great preacher in Zach Terry. When I first met Zach three years ago, it was his preaching and vision that convinced me I needed to come serve with this guy. Three years later, I can tell you the biggest benefit I've gained has little to do with what he does on Sunday morning and it has everything to do with how he lives his life throughout the week. He is a friend and a mentor and it means the world to me that he has trusted me with this platform. So as I say each time I'm given the chance to preach, if you like what you hear this morning, our student ministry meets on Wednesdays at 6pm. Send your students or sign up to volunteer. We need as many as we can get. And if you don't like what you hear, you'll just have to come back next week!

When Pastor Zach asked me to speak, I asked him if he wanted me to stay in Exodus, to stay with what he has been speaking on. He said no, give 'em something fresh. As I was praying and discerning what that fresh thing would be, God actually gave me an entire series and today is part one of that series. There's good and bad to this. The good is that next time Pastor Zach asks, I won't need to ask him for a topic. The bad is, I have no idea when that next time will be, so yeah, this should be fun. Let's go!

Pray

Intro to series:

I love being a dad! Being a dad is the most exciting thing in the world! You never know what a day is going to hold! It didn't take me long to learn some special things about being a dad.

1. You get to be the fun guy.
2. You get to be the bandaid guy
3. You get to be the permission guy
4. However You also are sometimes the bonehead guy that doesn't always think everything through. Guilty!

My two middle kids, Gideon and Boaz, both had birthdays this week. That's a miracle in itself! No seriously, it is! 7 years ago they were 3 and 2 years old respectively. **Tell story of them jumping out of 2nd story window!**

There is just something special about the faith of a child! To a kid, parents are all knowing and invincible, even though we know we're just trying not to mess it up!

Jesus knew this and that is why he says salvation requires a childlike faith and this type of faith is also required to please the Father in Heaven! Pull out your Bibles or electronic devices and turn, swipe, click over to [Matthew 18:1-4](#)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2** And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them **3** and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The Bible tells us that adults should teach children. But it also tells us that there are some things we can learn from kids as well. Perhaps Jesus was thinking back when he was a child and his parents found him learning and also teaching in the Temple?

The disciples have been arguing and Jesus redirects them and says instead of arguing, you should be learning. Instead of thinking you are the greatest, you should be worried about humbling yourself. Instead of boasting about how far you've come, you should be trying to get back to where you started.

The disciples had been learning from Jesus and had been taking their faith so seriously, that they wanted to know who was doing it best. Who was God most impressed with? If we're not careful, this becomes us as well. Our faith becomes so serious and rigid that we forget the simplicity of which we first received it. It is the one who comes with the faith of a child who is greatest in God's Kingdom.

God wants us to have a childlike faith, not a childish faith.
A childish faith is immature, but a childlike faith is innocent and pure

And that's our first point today...

1. **A childlike faith is trusting.**

Kids will believe most anything.

When I served in Ohio, we would put on an Easter egg hunt for the kids and one year we decided to incorporate the Easter bunny. Since the real Easter bunny was busy that weekend, I had one of my buddies rent a costume and dress up to fill the role. The Easter Bunny would do the countdown for the egg hunt and then let the kids go as they scurried around to get as much candy as possible. Then afterwards the Easter Bunny would read a story about the real reason for Easter and share how he hides hollow eggs each year to remind everyone that Jesus has risen and his tomb is empty. Well there was a mom who wasn't very happy with the Easter Bunny because she had told her child that EB was tiny and that is how he was able to sneak around the yard

without being seen. She insisted that my friend take his mask off to show he was a fake while continuing to be surrounded by hundreds of children. I saw this whole thing unfolding, but I couldn't stop it. It was like slow motion trying to get to my friend, but before I could the head was off and the kids were speechless! Actually scratch that, they were screaming! Half of them were mad that this was a fake EB and the rest thought someone had just decapitated their beloved bunny! Even the mom's own son was horrified, but mostly because my buddy was dripping sweat from being in the costume all day!

Kids are trusting. They will believe just about anything just because their parents have told them to believe it. God wants us to come to him just like that!

Many of these children hanging around Jesus were there to be healed. They had heard that there is a man who can do miracles and they trusted he would do it for them! Some had heard there was a man who could give them food and they trusted he would feed them as well!

You want to know what childlike faith looks like? I encourage you to watch a child who has a strong family at home, specifically a strong healthy relationship with their father. Those kids know how to bring their requests to their father. They come boldly and confidently. And they'll come whenever. When my kids were younger, there was no such thing as personal space. It was I'm your kid, I need something, and you're the one I trust will get it for me. "Hey dad, I need a piece of gum, rubber band, a book of matches, a paperclip, and a some fingernail polish remover." "What for?" "Don't worry, you'll see!" That's the trust of a child. They don't think "Well maybe that's too big or too small for dad" They don't think "Dad is too busy for my requests" They don't wonder "Have I behaved well enough to deserve some of my father's time?" No they just go for it and trust Dad will be there. It's like a kid who can't swim jumping into the deepend, because their father is there and says "I'll catch you"

2. A childlike faith is available.

Why did Jesus refer to the children? Couldn't he have talked about a mountain or a tree or a mustard seed? I mean he had used all of those before right? He used the children as an example because they were there...they were available! We also should be available to God when he wants to use us.

A couple weeks ago, I was putting the finishing touches on a tree house to make it "Mom legal" It had already passed the dad and Kid approval stages, but did not yet have the mom seal of safety yet. There was a board I was trying to attach, but needed either an extra set of hands or another 18 inches of arm length. Since I'm not Inspector Gadget, I called to Sheena to help me, but she was busy. Like mom busy, doing dishes, laundry, dinner, changing a diaper, and possibly even waxing her Jeep. I was gonna have to take a number and get in line...the back of the line. Then Jayda came over. She was available. Kids are always available.

When was the last time you texted a friend to meet you for lunch and they were already booked? When was the last time you went to pick your 8 year old up from school early and they said, "Hold up, I've gotta finish History class!" Never!!! Kids are available and ready and our faith should be as well.

I'm reminded of the faith of a young Samuel who Theologians believe was only 11 yrs old and was already serving in the temple when the Lord called to him three times. When God called the third time, Samuel responded "Speak Lord, for your servant hears!"

Why did God call Samuel? Eli, the priest, had adult sons who were also in the temple and should have been the ones to carry out God's commands. Why didn't God call them? Because their faith wasn't available. They were too busy using their position and power to leverage their own desires. God called to Samuel, because he was humble and available. He had a childlike faith.

Kids are trusting, but their also available!

Finally we see that...

3. A childlike faith is willing to be awkward.

Kids can be awkward to start with. They say crazy stuff, do crazy stuff, smell like crazy stuff, and for the most part embrace the fact that their awkward. It's not until Middle School that most kids start to realize their awkwardness and try and hide it.

Jesus brought these kids up in front of a crowd of religious leaders. The men who would soon become the lead elders of the early church and would lead thousands to salvation. These kids weren't looking to be used as an example. They just wanted some bread, or perhaps to be healed of some ailment. Instead Jesus set them in front of everyone and said they were the example that anyone who truly wanted to please God would need to follow. Talk about awkward!

In that day and age, kids were the lowliest of the low. They were truly meant to be seen not heard. They got all hand me down clothes, were the last to eat, the last to bathe, the last at everything. As pastor has mentioned in previous weeks, the mortality rate among children was high. Now this is a little further along the time line, but conditions were still not great. Children did not get medicine, most did not get proper nutrition, and their living conditions were the worst of the household. We also know that Jesus was often surrounded by the sick and the needy so it is very likely that these kids were from the lower class. Yet here was Jesus, lifting them up and saying these things about them.

They were willing to be awkward. Faith in our lives is often awkward.

We are called to speak up when the truth isn't popular. (Queen Esther)

We are called to give when mathematically, it doesn't make sense. (Widow in the temple who gave her last two coins)

We are told to lead when we feel as though we aren't worthy (Moses)

We are called to worship, even if we're the only one (Elijah)

We are called to have integrity, even if the Boss will never find out (Joseph)

We are called to be faithful, even when we are betrayed (Hosea)

We are called to sacrifice, even when we don't want to (Abraham and Jesus)

If our faith is going to please our father, we must be willing to be awkward. We must be willing to be like a child.

When Jesus made this proclamation, He knew there was something unique, something special about the faith of a child. A childlike faith is trusting, available, and yes sometimes awkward, but it is also generous. If I had time to make a fourth point, that would be it.

I'm not talking about generosity with your money, I'll let the senior pastor preach on that :)

I'm talking about being generous with your time and your heart. Scripture says that God loves a cheerful giver. The attitude of cheerfulness has nothing to do with the gift, but everything to do with the giver. The heart.

Conclusion:

Have you ever taken a kid to Disney for the first time?

By the way, always take a kid to Disney! It's the best! We adults just spoil it. We start complaining about the prices, the heat, the food, the other parents...

But to kids...

It's a whole new world (don't you dare close your eyes)

A hundred thousand things to see (they hold their breath, and it gets better)

They're like a shooting star, They've come so far

They can't go back to how they used to be

It's a whole new world

With new horizons to pursue

They'll chase them anywhere (even in Epcot)

There's time to spare

They just want to share this whole new world with you

There is something in the heart of a child that is very innocent and beautiful. It is a sense of WONDER!!! I remember taking my kids to the Magic Kingdom for the first time two years ago. They just couldn't contain themselves! It was all Sheena and I could do to keep up with them.

Now imagine if you had the chance to take a group of children to Disney for the first time. Kids that never could have gone unless you stepped up and said, I'll take 'em! Imagine as they get off the monorail and go through those turnbuckles. They come through those shiny gates and one says...

Look there's Mickey! And Pluto! And Minnie! Another shouts Let's ride Space Mountain! Now the Tea Cups! It's a Small World! Goofy and Donald! Look I see the castle and all the princesses! Don't the princesses look beautiful! I want to be a princess someday!

Friends I know without a doubt that if we had the opportunity this week to do this and all we needed were some willing chaperones to make it happen, we would be lined up out the door to sign up. Why? Because we all remember what it was like to be a child and have that sense of WONDER and we want to give it to others! Perhaps even recapture some of it for ourselves along the way!

BRING IN PADS!

Now what if I told you we had a similar opportunity. Only instead of introducing them to the Princesses in the Magic Kingdom...

You were going to introduce them to the Prince of Peace in God's Kingdom!

Each week you would get to walk them through the wonders of The One who reins on high! You would introduce them to real historical people like Abraham, Joseph, and King David. You would walk with them along the journey as Paul plants churches and escapes death multiple times. You sit and explain to them why we call the day Jesus died, Good Friday, even though it was the darkest day in history. You share with them how if God can bring victory out of that dark day, then he can handle all of our dark days if we would just trust him. You would get to be with them when they decide to give Jesus their heart and follow him. One day when they stand in that baptismal, you would be the one their eyes are searching for to make sure you knew that they finally made it. They were a real princess, but not like one in the fairy tales. They had a real castle built by their father, the King of Kings and Lord of lords!

And then there is that day. The day they get to see the kingdom with their own eyes. They step through those shiny gates and their childlike faith becomes sight! Can you imagine??? Look there's Peter! And James and John! And look the guy who wrote Hebrews...don't ask me his name. Check out all the mansions! And the streets of Gold! Hey, I can walk on water too! And look...there he is, the one with the scars, the one who hung in my place, rejected by Heaven and Earth. The one I learned about in Sunday school. It's Jesus and his arms are still spread wide open, just waiting for me to run in!

Friends, the Magic Kingdom is make believe, but this opportunity is here before us and it is real. Having a childlike faith is not just about being like a child. But it is also loving the children and teaching them and leading them. Jesus knew there was power in the faith of a child. In fact, Jesus says it is the most powerful faith.

So how's your faith? Is it trusting? Is it available? Is it Awkward? Is it generous? Is it a childlike faith?

What's your next step? We all have one. To hear the Word of God preached and leave unchanged is to leave in disobedience.

Perhaps your here and for the first time this whole Christian/Bible/Jesus/Church thing is making sense. You realize there is more to life than what you see and your ready to take your faith from searching to believing. In just a moment I'm going to pray and there will be pastors waiting down front. Come grab one and just tell them you need Jesus, they'll take it from there.

Perhaps your a family or a single person has been hanging around this church for a while and you are ready to take your attendance from something that you do to a part of who you are. You're ready to join a church family that not only preaches the word, but encourages you to live it out each and every week. Would you come?

Maybe you've got all your church boxes checked and you're feeling pretty good about yourself. Perhaps you need to check your faith, just like Jesus challenged those disciples who felt like they had it all put together.

Perhaps your next step is getting involved with helping to lead these young ones. In case you haven't noticed, our kids and student ministries are just blowing up and we need more faithful servants to come alongside these children and help lead them in the right direction.

Whatever your next step, when I pray, you respond...