

Coach House Church BEACONS

FAITH LIKE A CHILD

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I was reminded of something Jesus said in Luke last week. I've been looking after the kids in the day with Jamie and their mum being at work. Eli would come out with some random sentences but one thing that he said stuck with me. It was "You know Bekah, I love God". He has such a pure faith, as does Noah and hearing them pray is a great joy. They often pray at bedtime that "Everyone in heaven is safe and that God has had a good day." They care about others and have an unreserved faith in God.

In Luke 18:15-17 it says "Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

In this passage the parents were probably bringing their children so that Jesus could touch the children and bless them. This was something that priests of the day used to do and the parents recognised that Jesus was a great spiritual leader and wanted their children to be blessed by Him.

In Jesus day children were regarded as unimportant. They were pushed aside by society and were seen as insignificant to anyone other than their parents. They weren't pandered to by adults. But, just like lots of society, Jesus turns this on its head. He calls them to himself and wants to honour them.

The disciples weren't too keen on the children coming to Jesus. They didn't want Jesus' work to be interrupted by these unimportant members of society. They saw Jesus' work with adults as the principal objective and were more focussed on the

teaching and healing that He was doing. But Jesus rebuked them for not understanding that the children were vital.

We should think like that today. In church it is really important that we invest in our children's work. We need to make sure that the children aren't hindered from coming to Jesus, but we understand that Jesus wants to teach the children and meet with them too.

The bible says in other places that we should be mature in our faith. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me." So we should have faith like a child but reason like an adult.

So how should our faith be like a child?

Just before this passage in Luke, Jesus has just told a parable. This is about a pharisee and the tax collector. The tax collector was humble and understood that he sinned and was repentant. The pharisee was proud and thought he was better than everyone else. He was confident in his own righteousness. Therefore, the pharisee was rebuked by Jesus and the tax collector was vindicated. This turned the thoughts of the day on their head. In those days pharisees were seen as the most righteous and tax collectors some of the least righteous. So the fact that Jesus was saying that the tax collector would be the one that was justified would have been utterly shocking.

So first of all we should be humble. If we look at the context of this passage, Jesus has just compared someone proud to someone humble that wants to turn from his sin. This is how children are. They don't have an inflated sense of self. They just come as they are. They haven't had the life experience to think that they can save themselves or provide everything they need. They are well aware that they require their parents to supply everything for them. We need to understand that we can't do anything to save ourselves, we can't earn our righteousness or do anything except accept it.

This brings me to the second way our faith should be like a child. We should be willing to accept the gifts God gives us. When a parent gives a child a present the child is willing to take it. They don't think they need to earn it or think that there's a catch. We need to know that when God gives us gifts, He gives them freely and without a catch. We need to stop trying to earn anything from God because we

can't. Just like a child is not able to earn money to pay rent or contribute to the household, but has to accept their parents giving them a place to live and food, we can't do anything to earn God's gifts or goodness to us.

Lastly, we need to accept forgiveness freely. We need to know that we haven't done anything too bad or too recently for God to forgive us. All Jesus needs is for us to be humble and call on Him to forgive us and it is done. We can be assured that we are forgiven and we are justified through His sacrifice. Children are great at this. They quickly move on from wrongdoing, not forgetting that it was wrong but living as if they have been justified and forgiven because they have. They fall down, but quickly pick themselves up again and keep playing.

To conclude, the important things to remember from this passage are that we are to accept children and be like them. We need to work with children and not ignore them as they are important to Jesus, but also be humble, willing to accept gifts and understanding we are forgiven. We need to have an adult relationship with God and an adult understanding of the reasoning for our faith and our sin, but like a child, we should come to Jesus openly and willingly and trust Him to provide for us.



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