

Child-like faith.– Sunday 5th July, 2015

“¹³ And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.” ¹⁶ And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them. Mark 10:13-16

Beloved in The Lord,

Jesus said that in order for us to enter the Kingdom of God we must receive it like a child. What does this statement really mean? What is faith like a child or child-like faith? I would define it as simply trusting upon God, relying upon His Word in all matters and in all things. Child-like faith trusts in everything that God says, and believes it to be true. Up to a certain age, a child basically believes everything it is told by its parents, and trusts in the correctness of the information. At the same time, a child is always asking and wanting to learn more.

This is how we should approach God our Heavenly Father and His Word the Bible. We need to trust and rely upon His Word, believing that every Word is true, but at the same time we should be seeking to learn and to understand. We should be seeking to have deeper knowledge and understanding of God and His ways all the time.

Personally I like the phrase: “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.” I believe that every Word in the Bible is Truth. Everything that is described as happening happened. Child like faith says that if God has said it, then that is how it is. At the same time, I am continually seeking to go deeper and deeper into God’s Word and to gain more knowledge and understanding of His ways.

Peter writes in the introduction of his second letter:

***“Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. “(2.Pet.1:1-2)***

The Word translated knowledge is “epignosis” which means full knowledge and an accurate understanding. (The word diagnosis is related to this word). We should always be striving to have this kind of knowledge. We gain an accurate and full understanding of God, when we diligently study His Word.

In order for a child to grow physically strong it needs good nutrition, good exercise and good rest. In order for us to grow spiritually, we need good food (God’s Word); we need to exercise our faith and we need to rest in God. We get all of this in God’s Word, when we read and obey it. Peter ends his second letter with an exhortation:

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. “(2.Pet.3:18).

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important that we resolve to do this. The Church today is so weak in so many places because many Christians never grow. They remain babies in the faith and they desire only milk. This is not good and not what God has in mind for us. He wants us to have child-like faith (trusting in Him); but He wants us to grow into mature sons and daughters who serve Him effectively, and fulfill His commands. The author of the letter to the Hebrews was not happy with the lack of growth amongst his readers:

“¹¹ Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”
(Hebrews 5:11-14)

You see, where they should have matured and been able to go deeper in the things of God, they were still babies and only able to handle milk. You see our faith life should be like our physical life. We should be growing. A baby begins with milk, but as he develops he gets more solid food, and when fully mature, he feeds on good wholesome food, that keeps him healthy and strong.

It should be, that after a period of time, say six months, we can look back at our life and say, yes I have grown in my faith and understanding of God. If this is the case we are on the right track.

The most important thing is that we resolve to grow. We should never be satisfied with the level of faith and understanding that we have. We should be continually seeking to grow. The Bible is an endless source of truth. We can never fathom all of its depths in this life time. We will never reach a point when we can say I know it all, I understand it all, there is nothing more in it for me. The Latvians have a saying that says you live your life ever learning. That is true. Every new day comes with new challenges and new things and everyday provides us with an opportunity to grow in God. We should be ever drawing nearer to Him and walking closer with Him.

The Christian life is not religious activity, the observance of rituals, but a Father – son relationship. Through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to be born again from above. When we believe in Jesus for salvation we become children of God. John writes: ***“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*** (John 1:12-13)

Through Christ we become children of God. God is our Father, and He is a loving Father, He is a good Father. His thoughts toward us are good and He is love. He has a good plan for our life. When we trust in Him completely, then we are in the safest and best Hands we could ever be in. We have a Father who knows all things, who is all – powerful and who is always here. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. We have a Father who loves us so

very much. So great is His love for us that He shed the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus, in order to redeem us from sin and eternal death.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

God has so loved each one of us. How do we respond to His love? The proper way is as a child who has received a wonderful and precious gift – with joy, with gratitude, with excitement. With a simple trust and joy.

Knowing that we have a Father who loves us so much, should motivate us to please Him in all things. Our goal in life should be to see His will fulfilled in and through us. Our goal should be His glory in all things. We have a Father who is so good and who loves us so much. When we are in Him, when we live in childlike trust and faith, then we understand that He has given us this life in order to honor Him, and not to please ourselves. Paul writes:

“those who are in the flesh cannot please God”⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” (Romans 8:8-17)

So then we see that God gives us His Holy Spirit, who enables us to live as God’s children. Childlike faith trusts and relies upon the Holy Spirit and not upon its own abilities and knowledge.

Solomon wisely wrote:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.” (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Trust in the Lord God your Father with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding and you will receive much blessing here and in eternity.

May our prayer be: Teach me to trust in You Lord and to lean upon You, as a child trusts in His Father. I lean upon You in all things and pray that You grant me to believe as a child believes.

Amen

Pastor Colvin MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.