

Faith

Like a Child

by Pastor David Flowers



Matthew 11:20, 25-26 NIV

²⁰ Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent...

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

The Context of Matthew 11:20-30

- Jesus has been preaching and performing miracles in the cities around the north shore of the Sea of Galilee
- The crowd wasn't taking advantage of the opportunity to respond in faith; they refused to repent of their own ideas
- The region surrounding Capernaum thought too highly of itself; even as "God's people" they were hard-hearted
- Jesus pronounces judgment against the people for their "educated" yet stubborn refusal to accept the obvious
- Jesus says the Father reveals his wisdom to those who become like "little children"—the only way to find him

Matthew 11:25-26 MSG

²⁵⁻²⁶ Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: “Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You’ve concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that’s the way you like to work.”

“Jesus sliced through all that [thinking that only the “wise” and educated are qualified to make proper judgments] with a stroke. No, he declared: you just need to be a little child. Jesus had come to know his Father the way a son does: not by studying books about him, but by living in his presence, listening for his voice, and learning from him as an apprentice does from a master, by watching and imitating.

And he was now discovering that the wise and learned were getting nowhere, and that the “little people” —the poor, the sinners, the tax-collectors, ordinary folk—were discovering more of God, simply by following him, Jesus, than the learned specialists who declared that what he was doing didn’t fit with their complicated theories.”

N. T. Wright, *Matthew for Everyone* (pg. 136)

Matthew 18:1-5 NIV

¹ At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

² He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³ And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.



Luke 2:41-45 NIV

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.

⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

Luke 2:46-48 NIV

⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

Luke 2:49-52 NIV

⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Kingdom Qualities in Children

Why Jesus Requires Child-Like Faith

1. Children are meek and humble (dependent)
2. Children are teachable and moldable
3. Children are inquisitive and open-minded
4. Children are in a rapid state of growth
5. Children are pure in heart and mind
6. Children are imaginative, but still think concretely
7. Children are full of energy and enthusiasm

Faith Like a Child—Portrait of a Disciple

- Disciples of Jesus are humble, teachable, and moldable; they're not “know-it-alls” but learners of the Lord's way
- Disciples listen and ask questions, seeking to understand; their posture is open, inquisitive, and amicable
- Disciples are always growing as they learn to flesh out and imitate what Christ has done, and follow where he leads
- Disciples aren't afraid to imagine God doing the impossible; they envision great things and then act them out
- Disciples are filled with wonder and faith, trusting Jesus for everything; they're enthusiastic & eager for things to come

1 John 3:1-3 NLT

¹ See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.

² Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. ³ And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org