

Childlike Faith

Key Verse: “*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*”
—**Luke 18:17**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 18:15-17

THE APOSTLES HEARD

Jesus’ teachings about the kingdom, and naturally started to think about the great hopes which were set before them. Jesus would soon be Israel’s king, and they would be in honored positions as his associates. They had even debated as to the stations they would occupy, and who among them would be the greatest. (Luke 9:46) Jesus desired to instruct his disciples that it was not their own greatness that was to be considered, but God’s favor toward them. They were to have the spirit of appreciation of God’s work of grace in one another, considering each other as representatives of Jesus and of his Father in heaven.

When children were brought to Jesus in order to receive his blessing, the disciples, feeling that the Lord’s time was too valuable to be thus used, rebuked the parents. (Luke 18:15) Jesus, however, directed that the children should be allowed to come to him. “Suffer [permit] little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”—vs. 16

Jesus then spoke the words of our Key Verse. With this statement, he took an opportunity of teaching his disciples another important lesson. Some of them had begun to feel too certain that they would be members of

the ruling kingdom class. They had not yet learned that crucial tests would be given to those who desired to be accounted worthy to sit with the Redeemer in his Messianic throne of glory, and to participate with him in blessing all the families of the earth.

The Scriptures testify: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—Rev. 3:21; I Pet. 1:7

The lesson Jesus desired to impress upon his followers is that they would not enter into the kingdom unless they are childlike, teachable, and trustful. Children who have been well instructed are obedient and fully trust in their parent's wisdom and care for them. Likewise, all who become children of God must reach this same condition of heart. On another occasion, the disciples asked Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The Master called a little child to them, and said, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 18:1-4

As followers of Jesus, we are not to be children in the sense of understanding or character development. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Be not children in understanding: . . . but in understanding be men." (I Cor. 14:20) That is, we must receive the message of the kingdom with humility and simplicity, as children, but then grow in obedience to maturity in Christ.

Those now being called to sit with Christ in his throne in due time must be "subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (I Pet. 5:5) "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—Prov. 3:5,6 ■