

Later on 2day I will conduct a short thanksgiving service for a little baby boy. The family does not attend any church, and I think it would be fair to say that God is not really part of their lives but they do want to thank God for their baby. They want some sense of God's blessing being upon him.

SO I will go along this afternoon and will be thrilled to take that little one in my arms, and pray a blessing upon him in the name of Jesus.

Thrilled to be a Stand In for Jesus...because in Mark 10:13-16 we find Him doing exactly that.

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.”

Jesus put such a value upon children and in so doing He was unique in His age. Children were not valued in that society at all. Until they could work and earn a living they were considered an encumbrance. If a baby was not wanted it was abandoned to the elements; often collected by people who would preserve the life for their own future gain—to sell as slaves, train as gladiators, exploit as prostitutes.

The old song: Jesus loves the little children, is not just a lovely sweet saying. **He valued children and revealed the high value that the Father places on them too**

Mark 9:36-37 says:

“He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, He said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

A little later He said in 9:42

“And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.”

Now from the words “believe in me” and the context we recognize that little ones is wider than just children. It also refers to new Christians beginning their walk with the Lord

But proper regard for children is still a large part of it, and we do not share the Lord's heart if we do not value them as he does

I have been to churches where children are considered more of a nuisance than precious. Where parents of infants are made to feel uncomfortable. Children are frowned at... Young people discouraged.

Praise God we value children here. Both within and without. But we can always do more

**Pray more: Give more: Be involved more: Support more
To care for a child—to reach out to them in love::Is to please God**

But there is one thing that pleases God more than children

**And that's when a person comes to God as a little child desiring to
enter His Kingdom.**

When Jesus placed that child in their midst.... He was using him as physical illustration of what God values in us. It's not our wealth or position. Its not our intelligence or abilities. Its not our standing in society or how we look

**But its our coming to Him with total honesty and total dependency
With simple trust and childlike faith
Not having the answers. But being aware of our needs**

The context of this passage is an argument that the disciples were having. Jesus had asked them what they were arguing about and they had kept quite because they were arguing about who was the greatest.

THEN He took the child and said—This is what it's all about.

God is not interested in how great you are

But how willing you are to admit that you are a child crying out to him to be your Father

Think back for a moment, if you are a believer,

to that time when you asked Jesus to become your Saviour and Lord.

Were you thinking then of your greatness ?

Were your thoughts of future position and power ?

Lord I come to You with Nothing: Needing from You everything

The Old Hymn: Rock of Ages

***Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me Saviour, or I die.***

That's what God wants from us. The corresponding passage in Matt 18:2-4 says

“Jesus called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

That word change—Converted.....Means to turn.....accepting the need to begin again.

And that what Being Born Again is all about.

Starting again as a child. Willing to live one's life from now on under the direction of the Father. To please Him...Rely upon Him.....Grow into the person He wants us to be by the power of His Spirit

As a Xtian is that child like trust....Dependence.. Still at the forefront of your life
Or do you have to admit that you have become self-pleasing rather than God pleasing
Self dependent rather than God dependent

Peter writes in 1Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety upon Him because He cares for you

Is that what God is saying to you to day?

He values the child in you The Humble, dependent, trusting child
Do you need to restore that relationship with Him?

Or maybe you have never had that relationship with God

Never come to Him in utter desperation.....
Never come as a child----ready to total depend upon Him

(I heard.....think I might just squeeze in.....)

Up to now you may have been thinking.....But surely I can do it

God will only accepts you when you come as a child.....

Come acknowledging that you can do nothing.....
simply believing that God has done everything.

