

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CHILDLIKE IN MY FAITH?

DATE: SUNDAY, 2ND OF MAY 2021 | JESUS: PART 5

TALK  
IT OVER

## MATTHEW 18:1-5

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

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

### NOTE TO LEADERS:

Reminder of our prayer & leaders meeting this evening (4th of May) at 18h00. The meeting will take place at the church building and will also be broadcast live to YouTube & Facebook.

## START TALKING

1. What new insight did you gain from Sunday's message?
2. What was your favourite childhood game?

## START SHARING

Read Matthew 18:3. Steve spoke about three ways we can learn from children: Humility, awe and wonder, learning. The opposite of these characteristics is pride, cynicism and jadedness, "know-it-all". Let's take them one at a time:

1. What does the word "humble" mean to you? How do you think we go about getting rid of pride and humbling ourselves?
2. Which aspect of God's creation has recently produced awe & wonder in you? How does one move from cynicism to 'awe & wonder' at what God has done?
3. When was the last time you learned something new or for the first time? Would you describe yourself as having a "posture of learning"? What does this look like in your life?
4. In which of these 3 areas do you have the most work to do? How are you going to go about changing?

## START PRAYING

Is there anyone in your group suffering from health issues? Pray as a group for the healing of those who are sick.

## START DOING

This week, set some time aside to consider these questions:

- Am I humble, do I trust God unconditionally,
- do I depend on God,
- and do I think of God as greater than me?

Ask God to show you the areas where you are not childlike in your faith. Commit to grow in those areas.

# SUMMARY

## OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, Steve shared a message on what it means to have childlike faith.

We begin our story in Matthew 18. The disciples ask of Jesus: *"Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* (V1)

It's possible that this question came off the back of Jesus taking 3 of the disciples up the mountain of transfiguration, or possibly because they didn't understand that His kingdom was not a literal physical kingdom. The thing that stands out from this question is the "greatness problem".

Jesus' had a profound way of answering the question: *He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.* (V2-5)

### 1. The 'greatness' problem:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, *"Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* Matthew 18:1

As humans, we have an inbuilt obsession with being the best/top dog/greatest. As the music band, The Script puts it in their song, Hall o Fame:  
Yeah, you can be the greatest, you can be the best  
You can be the King Kong bangin' on your chest  
You can beat the world, you can beat the war  
You can talk to God, go bangin' on his door

Standin' in the Hall of Fame (Yeah)  
And the world's gonna know your name (Yeah)  
'Cause you burn with the brightest flame (Yeah)  
And the world's gonna know your name (Yeah)  
And you'll be on the walls of the Hall of Fame

These lyrics are a great summary of the greatness problem!

### 2. The Master's solution: childlikeness

The Master's solution to the "greatness problem" is quite profound: childlikeness - not childishness (immaturity, selfishness or rebellion that children have).

Childlikeness means having:

#### a). Humility

This was Jesus' main point. He uses the word 'lowly'. Compared to adults, children aren't concerned with rank etc. they just get on with life.

FB Meyer, in his commentary on this text, said: God's best gifts are placed, not on a high shelf for us to reach up to, but on a low one to which we must stoop.

God isn't asking us to climb a ladder to get to Him but to get down on our knees (to humble ourselves). We all have a Father in heaven. In our relationship with Him, we need to realise that He is the Father, and we are His kids. He tells us repeatedly not to worry because He will take care of things.

Rick Warren said: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less."

#### b). Awe & Wonder

Children laugh quickly and are wowed easily. But it feels like as we grow older, we begin to get weighed down with worry and anxiety. If we are not careful, that can slowly turn into a certain kind of cynicism and hard-heartedness.

Paulo Coelho says it like this" Children are always looking at the world as if it was for the first time in their lives. So, we should always look to the world with the eyes of a child. I am not saying be naive; I am saying be innocent in the sense of discovering things.

Our ultimate sense of awe and wonder should not rest in creation but in the fact that we have a relationship with The Almighty Creator!

#### c). Learning

Childlikeness means having a posture of learning – about ourselves and the world.

Children naturally have a posture of learning. They ask a lot of questions and are usually not afraid to show ignorance on a matter. They are uninhibited by showing their ignorance in asking questions.

As we get older, we move from a posture of learning to a posture of "knowing it all", and that is not helpful. When was the last time you learned something for the first time? A posture of learning says we can learn from anyone - we can learn from older, wiser people, and we can learn from young people; we can learn from people of different cultures and economic backgrounds etc.

Jesus challenges each of us to become more childlike: *Unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* (v3). It's not optional! One of our values at CityHill is growing people change. If you're not changing, you're not growing, and if you're not growing, you're not learning.

Through these profound five verses, Jesus challenges us to be more childlike: have more humility, awe and wonder, and a posture of learning. The opposite to these are:

- Pride
- Cynicism & jadedness
- Know-it-all

The question to ask ourselves is: How should I change (become more childlike)?