

Come As A Child

The disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who gets the highest rank in God's kingdom?"

For an answer Jesus called over a child, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, "I'm telling you, once and for all, that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you're not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom. What's more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it's the same as receiving me.

"But if you give them a hard time, bullying or taking advantage of their simple trust, you'll soon wish you hadn't. You'd be better off dropped in the middle of the lake with a millstone around your neck. Doom to the world for giving these God-believing children a hard time! Hard times are inevitable, but you don't have to make it worse—and it's doomsday to you if you do". (Matthew 18:1-7, MSG)

Jesus said "start over as a child", simple, getting back to the basics of human need; some translations use the word "humble". There has been tons written and preached about what this means, what does it mean to become as a child? But for a further explanation, I want to go to another (somewhat parallel) excerpt not included in the Bible, from the Gospel of Thomas:

Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, "These nursing babies are like those who enter the (Father's) kingdom." (The Gospel of Thomas, v24)

Although this portion of Thomas does not record the same incident as Matthew, they do both develop the same theme; and in Thomas the analogy becomes even clearer. A newborn infant is totally dependent on its parents for everything it needs to sustain life. A newborn infant would not survive long without its parents. An infant's nourishment to grow literally comes from the mother. Jesus is saying that to enter the Kingdom, we must be totally dependent on God for everything we need to live and grow.

What do you hold back from depending on God completely for?

Returning to the text from Matthew, the disciples were asking who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. They were interested in power, influence, status, they wanted to know who would be greatest – they wanted to lead, not follow. Jesus’s answer was a child. The disciples wanted to boost their ego and pride; Jesus is looking for humility and trust. The disciples wanted to elevate their position; Jesus said you have to start over.

How can you start over with Jesus today? _____

A warning we need to take seriously...

Jesus goes on to say that if you cause one of these children harm, whether physically, emotionally, mentally; taking advantage of their trust, it is better to drown in a lake than face the fate that awaits. This is one of the harshest statements we ever find Jesus making. But, children are the future, they are the future of our world. If we do not envelop them with all the love possible, and instead teach them hate and fear, then we are destroying our own future – doomsday!

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.

Chorus:

Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to Me."

(Chorus)

Jesus loves me still today,
Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give
Light and love to all who live.

(Chorus)

Lyrics: v1, Anna B Warner, v2,3, David Rutherford McGuire

Music: William B Bradbury