

2026-07-19: 2nd Sunday of Abib - Become As Little Children

Background

The disciples came and asked the Lord "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" and the Lord brought a little child and said "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

It is a BOLD statement! "UNLESS you are converted and become as little children, you will BY NO MEANS enter the kingdom of heaven."

What can this mean?

Actually, it's ironic that we do the opposite! When we are little children, we want to grow up! We don't want to be children anymore! And then when we grow up a little we are upset if someone "treats me like a child!" And then when we have children, we try and hand them off to the grandparents every chance we get! Or we want to go on a trip without the children! And all this time, they have the keys to the kingdom of heaven

So what does the Lord mean to be converted and become as little children? What characteristics of children is He talking about?

"We must recall into the simplicity of children the vices of the body and mind. He has called children all who believe through the faith of listening. For children follow their father, love their mother, do not know how to wish ill on their neighbor, show no concern for wealth, are not proud, do not hate, do not lie, believe what has been said, and hold what they hear as truth. And when we assume this habit and will in all the emotions, we are shown the passageway to the heavens. We must therefore return to the simplicity of children, because with it we shall embrace the beauty of the Lord's humility." (St Hilary of Poitiers)

"Just as this child whose example I show you does not persist in anger, does not long remember injury suffered, is not enamored inordinately by the sight of a beautiful woman, does not think one thing and say another, so you too, unless you have similar innocence and purity of mind, will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven." (St Jerome)

1 - Purity & Innocence

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3-4)

- Children are pure - they are shocked by sin.
- They have not normalized evil
 - If they hear a bad word, they are shocked and say "that's a bad word"
 - They, themselves, would NEVER say a bad word
 - We have become used to it in our workplace, our schools, the entertainment we watch, etc.
 - They are honest, would never tell a lie
- Free from vices
 - Pride, jealousy, rivalry, self-glory
 - Don't compare themselves with others
- The Lord is calling us to obtain the purity of children
 - Purity of thoughts
 - Purity of words
 - Purity of heart

2 - Humility

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5)

- A child knows that he needs help
 - He reaches for his father's hand
 - He asks questions
 - He depends on others
- An adult thinks he can do everything by himself
- Follows his father and mother
 - Believes what has been said to him
 - Holds what he has been taught as truth
- Faith begins this way - by trusting our Heavenly Father and obeying Him. After obedience comes faith.
 - Sometimes we think that obedience comes after faith. Not so with a child.
- The Lord is calling us to obtain the humility of children and to realize that we can do NOTHING without Him

3 - Simplicity

“If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.” (Matthew 6:22)

- A child is simple
 - if you give a child a cardboard box, he can play for hours

- If you give an adult a cardboard box, he will spend 8 hours trying to figure out why you gave it to him
- **NOTE:** Here I want to take a sidenote and caution you, because you might be saying "my kids are not innocent, humble or simple!" Unfortunately, in our modern day, our children are losing themselves in devices and screens... Videos that can take away their innocence; access to information that takes away their humility, and imbalances in the brain that take away their simplicity. Take away screens from your children (phones, tablets, computers, TVs) and replace them with playing outside, family time, board games, thinking games and pretend-play. You will be amazed how quickly they rediscover their imagination, creativity and happiness
- For example, if someone who is needy asks for alms, you will find the mom and dad overanalyzing "well what will he use it for? What can we do? I have a \$20 bill I can't break it?" but the child is so simple - "Mommy, Daddy, can we give him something?"
- The Simplicity of children
- They just rejoice! They just enjoy their time! They make the best of it! They smile a lot
 - I was talking with some parents recently and they were sharing something their young children were doing. Every night when it's bed time, the children don't want to go to sleep. So what do they do? They say "we have to pray" and then spend one hour praying! Thank you God for the couch, thank you God for the door, thank you God for the chair and the four legs of the chair and the cushion that's on it... and they are looking around the room trying to find anything else to say thank you God for. And finally when they can't, they start in all the details of their day. Thank you God for my teacher and when she said to me this and that, and when mommy picked me up from school, and when daddy came home... and when they can't find anything else, they conclude... Through the Intercessions of St Mary... Archangel Michael... Archangel Gabriel... Archangel Raphael... Archangel Suriel, and they name every angel and every martyr and every saint they can think of. Simple! Simplicity! Just so they don't go to bed!
 - How many of us would rather go to bed than to pray 5 minutes?
 - We lost our simplicity
 - Instead, we might spend one hour gossiping with a friend. Or one hour replaying an argument in my head and thinking of all the things I SHOULD have said. Or one hour trying to figure out why someone texted me and the text ended with a period.
- The Lord wants us to obtain the simplicity of a child

4 - Courage

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)

"Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32)

- A child is courageous and fearless
 - To go pick up a lizard or a snake...
 - Climbing a tree

- Even in their speech, they are courageous to speak the truth. A child doesn't care who he's talking to - if it's his friend, or his parents, or Abouna or the President - they will speak the truth
- Children are not afraid to spread and preach their faith
 - Many of our elementary children have taught their friends at school about Christ dying on the Cross, about Fasting, about praying, about being a deacon, etc.
- Adults are afraid of "political correctness" and "ramifications"
- The Lord wants us to obtain the courage of a child

Conclusion

When we grew up, we lost something. And we aren't the first ones! Even in the time of Christ, 2000 years ago, growing up meant we lost something. The Lord is calling us to regain it. To become like children again, in every aspect of my life.

1. Purity – Relationship with Myself (my senses and my thoughts)
2. Humility – Relationship with God
3. Simplicity – Relationship with Others
4. Courage – Relationship with the World

May the Lord grant to us to be like little children, that we may enter with them into the Kingdom of Heaven.

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