

Childlike Faith

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Bible Text: Luke 18:15-17

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Well, we continue in the Gospel of Luke. We're in Luke 18 this morning. If you're visiting with us, we're going straight through the Gospel of Luke and we've come to a section, Luke 18:15-17, a very familiar passage and a powerful passage. The context is the Lord is teaching and he has repeatedly been refuting, rebuking, exposing the great error of the day in the religious establishment of the day. The scribes and the Pharisees, the religious leaders and rulers of the Jews had taught doctrines that were unbiblical and unsound. Now, they use the Bible but they put a twist and a spin on things and they had developed a system of legalism whereby they held themselves as elitists and they were full of pride and swelled up and felt like they were mature, adult, spiritual men that should be honored and esteemed and the people to varying degrees fell in line with that concept. They had nothing else to look to but what these men were teaching so Jesus like a Gatlin machine gun just firing, firing, firing away, dismantling, unraveling and exposing the error of the day both in the religious authorities and in the common people and teaching them the truth of what it really means to be saved and really know God. And he does that so powerfully and beautifully in this text as we look at Luke 18, beginning in verse 15,

15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. 16 But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

Receive me. I have nothing. I need everything. Receive me. I have nothing. I need everything. If a one year old little baby boy or girl was reaching up for their mom and if they could articulate what they mean, that's what they'd be saying: receive me, I bring nothing and I need everything. Childlike faith.

Major Whittle, actually his name was Daniel Webster Whittle, he was a major in the Civil War. He fought for the Union forces. He later just became known as Major Whittle because he was a man's man; other men respected him; very honored for his service in the country. During the battle in the Civil War, he lost his arm and he was in a prisoner of war hospital recuperating and just in boredom, he found a New Testament and began to

read the New Testament. He was very intrigued and drawn in by the claims of Jesus Christ. He wasn't ready to give his life to Christ but he was moved by it. One morning he was woken before daylight and an orderly in the prison hospital said, "There's a man across the hall, a young boy actually and he's dying, but he has requested for someone to come and pray with him and would you please go and pray with him?" Well, Major Whittle said, "No, I don't do that." And the orderly said, "Well, I've watched you. You've been reading your Bible. I thought you were a Christian." He said, "Well no." Major Whittle sat there a little bit longer and thought, "Well, you know, maybe I can give some comfort to him." So he went to the boy's bedside and he penned these words. He recorded what happened, he said, "I dropped on my knees and held of the boys hand in mine and in a few broken words I confessed my sins and I asked Christ to forgive me and I believe right there Christ did forgive me. Then I pleaded earnestly for the boy. He became quiet and pressed his hand as I prayed and pleaded God's promises for himself. When I arose from my knees, he was dead. A look of peace had come over his troubled face and I cannot but believe that God who used him to bring me to the Savior used me to lead him to trust in Christ's precious blood and find pardon." He said, "I hope to meet him in heaven."

He went to be an executive in a watchmaking company but that didn't last very long, about 10 years maybe and he went into full-time ministry work and he wrote a song and in this song he expressed the childlike faith that rose in his heart when he became a believer in Jesus Christ. He wrote the words,

"I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

"I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His word
Wrought peace within my heart.

"I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.

"I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noontide fair,
Nor if I walk the vale with Him,
Or meet Him in the air.

"But I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able

To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day."

A man's man. A major in the army. Arm gone from his duties in battle. Yet expressing a genuine, sincere, childlike faith. I don't know, as I said, he basically in that song says, "God, receive me. I bring nothing. I need everything."

Childlike faith. Let's look at it together in our text. Luke 18:15, notice I. Bringing the children to Jesus. This is one of those passages where you've got to be very careful and not build absolute doctrines on a narrative about what Jesus could and would do because Jesus is no longer here in Incarnate form. He is not walking the earth and touching people physically and literally. The people came to Jesus, this text tells us, verse 15, and it says, "they were bringing even their babies to Him." It means they were coming but they were bringing their babies too and we can't help but at least get an example here for all of us that all generations should come to Jesus Christ. Jesus is just not for the old folks who are getting ready to meet God face-to-face, all generations should be brought to Jesus Christ. Parents should come to Jesus and they should bring their children with them. You see, you should not just send your children to Jesus, you should bring your children with you to Jesus.

Acts 2:39 says, "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." Friend, we should assume that if God saved us, he intends to save our children. He intends to bring them into the covenant also. The promise is for you and your children. Isaiah 44:3, "For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants." God has always challenged us, even commanded us to think in terms of not just us but the next generation and the next generation, being brought to faithfulness to find their treasure and their joy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, can I say this again to you? I want to say it very clearly, I want to say it very emphatically and that is this: we do indeed emphatically reject all modern liberal or so-called progressive notions that children are to be encouraged to just follow whatever things come to their minds and hearts so that they might find out what's right for them. That is a lie straight out of the pits of hell. We must be deliberately, passionately, consistently intentional in making sure we are bringing our children and our children's children to Jesus Christ. Trust me, if you somehow fall into that notion that children must be free to discover and explore and now today they're telling us that we are even to let our children investigate and experiment with all the wanton sexual lust that might float across their fallen, depraved hearts that they might find out what they are, whether they are bisexual or homosexual or heterosexual or transgendered or whatever it may be, that is not true. Men are not basically good trying to find who they are. God is good, we are fallen and we must journey to him and bring our children with us. Be very thorough and committed and careful to make sure we are bringing our children to Christ and to God's truth revealed in his holy words. Did I make that clear enough?

We've got to remind ourselves and we're in somewhat of application here and the reason why I jumped into application here is because I can't enter in to what is going on when the Incarnate Son of God touches and blesses babies. He's not here doing that so we have to glean from Scripture, "Okay, how do we bring children to Jesus?" I'm not suggesting in any way that these babies brought to Jesus were somehow saved because these are very likely just little bitty infants. There is something of an actual blessing being bestowed because God Incarnate is there but that's not happening today, you understand. But we can take the principle and the truth and talk for a moment together about reaching the next generation for Christ and bringing the children to Jesus. Let me say to you that it is a team effort. God has ordained in his perfect wisdom that our children coming to faith in Christ is a team effort. Hillary Clinton says it takes a village to raise a child but Bible believing Christians know that it takes a biblically healthy church to raise a child, not just the village. That has its role but a church because we don't want our children to turn out like a lot of villages look. We want them to turn out like Christ wants them to turn out and the church is the place for that.

Reaching our children and bringing our children to Christ is a team effort. You see, fathers have their role and mothers have their role and siblings have their role one to another and pastors of the church have their role and brothers and sisters have their role and church members have their role and it's a team effort. Ted Tripp when he was here, he was exhorting us about trying to stay out of some of the extra biblical idolatries that have crept into some fellowships today about how to raise children right. There's a notion going around today that you can just stay at home and the father is the pastor anyway, he's the pastor of his home and he can just sort of pastor and shepherd his children in his own home, maybe 2, 3, 4 other families will join in and it will just be a home church and the father is the pastor and you can just do everything you need. Ted Tripp, very wise, very sound man who was with us here preaching said, "Listen, let me tell you something: your father is not your pastor and your home is not your church." He was not in any way negating the great value of parents disciplining their children and the home being a godly place of discipleship and instruction, of course that's true, but God has ordained you need pastors, moms and dads, to come alongside you and to oversee your shepherding while you're overseeing with the pastors your children being shepherded. You see, your children have a pastor just like you have a pastor. That's God's way. Now, pastors would never interfere and go in between parents and their children. We always respect the authority of the parents but it's a team effort together.

Now, I would like to say that I know some folks, we even had some people leave us some time ago and start a home church. I don't know if they're still meeting or not. As a matter of fact, we've had 4 small groups leave us in recent years and start churches in the Shoals area and I might add, none of them had the blessings of the elders of the church and there's reasons for that. It doesn't mean we think they are awful people, there are convictions that we have and biblical principles we have and clear biblical guidance on how these things should be done and it wasn't done right. But I'm just saying all that to say there is in my opinion for many who start these home churches as to why they're doing it, we can have some sympathy and why many of them do it is because they are so disillusioned with the out-and-out compromise they find in established churches and they

think, "Well, the best thing for me to do is just stay away from all of them." I'm sorry, that's not an option even though there are many weak and failing churches. Do you know churches in our area, I've talked to them in the last couple of weeks, churches in our area are grappling with whether or not they're going to accept homosexuality. These are Baptist churches. Baptist churches. We're not wrestling with that here, nor adulterers, nor fornicators, nor drunkards, nor liars. Any of that if you're unrepentant, we don't wrestle with whether or not we're going to accept that. We have grace and compassion and long suffering for anybody who is struggling with sin, amen? I'm one of those. But a willful, intentional, "This is what I am. Accept me." Sorry, if it violates Scripture, we love you, we'll work with you, we'll care for you, we'll pray for you and we'll do everything we can but if you do not commit yourself to be a repentant and work toward becoming pure in that area, then we don't wrestle with that here, we deal with it here.

So I do have sympathy that folks are finding such great compromise in established Baptist and evangelical churches that they say, "I've got to protect my family," and so really they go too far and they do something like a home church where they say, "Well, I'm the pastor since I'm the dad and this is all we need." I'm sorry, it's not all you need. Scriptures don't allow that. I want to tell you what I want: I want every one and everybody I can to co-labor with me to reach my children and my children's children for the sake of Christ and with the Gospel.

Another strong and clear reason why we need to make sure our children and our children's children are raised in the most biblically healthy church we can get them in: for the glory of God. When parents lead and teach and disciple their children, trying to lead them to Christ, and when they are utilizing God's means and God's means is a partnering effort with the church's pastors and the church family, then you can know, you can have a peace in your heart. If I'm exhausting God's means which is me as mom and dad disciplining and guiding and praying and my church family joining me and we're under the authority and the leadership of our pastors, then we are indeed bringing our children to Christ.

Now, just as a side note, when Jesus is sitting here and they're bringing these little babies and he tells them, "Don't hinder these little babies. I want these little babies coming to me," the pedo-baptizers, those who would baptize little baby infants, have taken this text, given it 4 legs and run off with it. This is not a text supporting infant baptism. Infant baptism is nowhere taught in the Scripture as bringing your children to Christ. It's just not there. Now, I love my brothers and sisters who believe that doctrine and there are some great brothers and sisters who hold to that doctrine but I'm not a pedo-baptizer because the Bible doesn't teach it and we need not take texts and try to squeeze them into the mold of our custom. That's not what this text is teaching.

But the text does say that they were bringing those babies to Jesus, verse 15 again, "so that He would touch them." Now, we do know that the Bible speaks of a laying on of hands and, again, there is a great, great difference. There is an infinite difference between the Incarnate Son of God laying hands on someone and you and I laying hands on someone. But there is a principle involved in both. When we lay our hands on someone

maybe in praying for them or ordaining them to ministry, it's simply a way of us acknowledging that we agree with them. We're one with them. We're joining with them to entreat God on their behalf. If they are sick, for example, we lay hands to say, "God, we're one with them. This is our sister. This is our brother. We're asking you together to bless and work and heal if you would see fit to do so."

So it's coming in agreement with them before our God but it's also an agreement with heaven. When there's a man being ordained to the ministry, we have observed them and based on the very clear and thorough teachings of Scripture, we have discerned that they are indeed called of God and so when we lay hands on them we're saying, "Father, we're not bestowing anything. We're agreeing with you, the one who has called them and you have made the evidence clear in their lives that you have called them." So we pray laying on hands in agreement with heaven that this is one you have call. You see, we ordain nothing. Are you hearing me? You say, "Well, he was ordained." My question is: did God ordain him or some dead Baptist church ordain him?

All we do is agree with God and that's why here at Grace Life, we've never had a big deal formal laying on of hands ceremony because Scripture doesn't really give that. As a matter of fact, if you never have a ceremony it would be fine biblically speaking. We've done it and we've not done it because we don't want to emphasize some formal service as being some such special thing. I'm telling you: all the elders can lay their hands on someone all they want and we can bestow nothing. We can only say we have discerned what the Bible teaches and we have discerned this brother, this sister or whatever, has been set apart for this ministry and this task. By the way, I want to add this in: the church is terribly weak in this area because we are proud and we're independent spirited which is sin and that is there is not nearly the respect for the authority of the elders in the church in making these decisions that there ought to be. There's not nearly the respect. It's almost like everybody, every Tom, Dick or Harry can say, "Well, God told me so, now you've got to fall in line." No, if God told you, he'll tell the church. And that process of time between when you think God told you and the church and the elders agree is good for you. That's usually the humbling, training, maturing, character building season so that you can be effective when you do get out there and not make messes of God's work. I yielded to the Gospel ministry, it was 8 years before I became a senior pastor and I still wasn't very ready and you just had to put up with it. But there's a reason for these things.

So here Jesus is laying his hands on these babies and he is, indeed, bestowing a blessing on them, something we cannot do. Now, here again, I can't help but see an application is and that's by bringing these babies to Jesus, these people are saying, "We're exposing our children to as much truth as we possibly can." We have learned at Grace Life Church that it is absolutely wrong to give children the minimal amount of truth and just get them to go through a motion and then called them unsaved. No, we want them to have the greatest amount of Gospel truth possible and that somewhere along the way God will save them.

The vacation Bible school decisions, boy, I want to be careful here because I'm very grateful for the moms and the dads and the pastors who do vacation Bible school and try

to get children to learn the things of God but vacation Bible school decision services where there is a half thimble full of Bible truth and getting the smallest children, some as young as 3 and 4 to claim they've come to Christ and do you know the majority of Baptist members are saved in that age range, in that time of their lives are supposedly saved? Is it any wonder that we have 6 or 7 million southern Baptists in church on Sunday when we've got 16 million on our rolls. Amen.

We don't want to give people just a minimal, tiny amount of truth. No, we want to bring them to Jesus and he is truth. He is the embodiment of truth. Give them all the truth we can because God has ordained that his Spirit will use the truth to convince them and convict them of sin and of their need of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Well, the disciples begin to rebuke them. They are bringing their babies to Jesus. He's doing what only he could do; he's actually bestowing a blessing on them by touching them. I can't tell you what that means. The text does not tell me but that's what's going on. Then verse 15 says, "but when the disciples saw it, they began to rebuke them." They thought this was a distraction. Jesus is about important stuff and they keep bringing these babies for him to hold. Just some thoughts here, some balancing of all this going on here. Once again, this was the Incarnate Son of God, he actually could do something to bless them. If you bring your babies to me, I like babies, I may hold them, I may play with them but I can't do anything more than you can do spiritually speaking. Don't think that. I'm not a priest. There are no human priests that can help your baby get closer to God, period. Jesus could and we can't.

So at least in this setting, the disciples were off-base because Jesus could literally bestow a blessing nobody else could. Also, we need to remind ourselves that this blessing of babies was not Jesus' primary ministry. He didn't go set up office in every town he went to and instructed the disciples, "Now, go get all the babies and bring them here." It wasn't his primary ministry. There were times when it would not be appropriate to bring little children to Jesus and he may, indeed, have turned them away at some time if they had been brought at those particular times. But remember, when Jesus turned somebody away, it's always to the end that he might help them best in the long run and, of course, the truth of that is that over and over and over and over and over again we see Christ not healing some people he could heal, not raising some dead he could raise, not showing compassion when he could have shown compassion. Why? Because he was about his Father's business of heading to a cross and he couldn't be distracted from that. In fact, going to the cross he can save their souls for eternity, not just make them feel better for the next week or the next day if he miraculously fed them.

So when Jesus turned away certain people, it was so that he might meet a greater need of theirs just down the road. So it's very probable that in many settings it would have been right for the disciples, of course, with the right spirit and I don't know what their spirit was here. It was likely that they were kind of haughty and arrogant. "Hey, we are with Jesus. We're his bodyguards and you guys are out of line bringing these babies." But there could have been settings where they would have been right to have done that. When Jesus is preaching and teaching and doing those valuable training sessions with the

disciples, it would not have been a time when he could have stopped and cared for babies. He was training men who would take over the leadership of his church after his death, burial and resurrection. When he was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, he was in a holy place doing holy work, that wouldn't have been an appropriate time. So there would be times when Jesus would not be receiving babies and I say all that because you just don't know the pastors that I've met through the years who go to every children's event. They are responsible for the nursery in the church. They must oversee and run all the vacation Bible school. Every children's activity. Every children's day camp. Every children's extended camp. Everything, the pastor has to be there and has to be in the middle and if he doesn't, some very pious and biblically sound "church members" will say, "Well, you don't love children like Jesus does," which is a total perversion and out of balance with the biblical text.

So these dear pastors, bless their hearts, are absolutely worn out when they first open their Bibles in the week to try to study to get a word from God for the people and what happens? Satan is thrilled. The people are so glad they've got a pastor that loves their babies like that but he's not preaching the truth of the word of God in spiritual power because you don't have the energy left to get it done. We've learned that lesson here. I thank God for you. I'm about to start my 35th year here and I'll be honest, I do get tired a little quicker than I used to but I do still have real passion about God, his truth and his word and there's a reason for that: because you have protected me for so many things that would have worn me out years ago. That's your wisdom because you're dependent upon God giving you a preacher to help sanctify your souls because that's his means. You don't have to have Jeff Noblit but you have to have a preacher to sanctify you and your family and help win your children to Christ. I don't know about you, but I would fight to make sure my pastor was free to preach to me God's word. Now, there have been years when we didn't have the staff and I did a little bit, as a matter of fact, the first about 15 to 20 years, I did go to every children's camp. I did oversee every BBS. That's just the way it was in those days and we didn't have much of a staff but as we got qualified men, we delegated that to others.

So, as we think about this, these babies are coming to Jesus, Jesus could actually bestow a blessing. To give the disciples a little slack in trying to hinder the babies from coming, there were probably many times when that would've been the right thing to do because Jesus had other things he had to be about. But also we know that this was an ideal teaching moment. Jesus is turning this into another time of sharpening rebuke and reproof, both for the Pharisees and for the people in general. So this has become something that is going to be a very interesting thing. You know, how would you like to be a disciple of Jesus in this day? How are you going to figure out what he's going to do next? You think you are trying to help him but they could have never predicted what he's going to do next. You see, he's not a tame lion. Can you imagine them strolling up to the temple with Jesus. They probably had seen him in some very sweet, kind, maybe not too long after this event, caring, sweet, compassionate, kissing babies, touching babies. The next thing you know he goes into the temple, takes a cat-o-nine tails and lashes men with it, turns their tables over and runs them out of the temple. I'm sure the disciples said, "What's next? We don't know what he's going to do next." That's why I love him. He's

not your Jesus, he's Jesus' Jesus. He's God. He does what is right and good and we just follow along and submit, amen?

So give these fellows some slack. They don't know what he's going to be and do next. They were trying to do right but he gets to correct them because he's teaching an important lesson here. Now notice number 2, II. not only bringing our children to Jesus, that truth jumps out here, but secondly, the lessons of childlike faith. The lessons of childlike faith. Look at verse 16, "Jesus called for them, saying, 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" In other words, Jesus is saying, "As far as models or examples on earth, these children are very good parallels. These children are good parables of what a real believer in me really looks like." It's a good picture of a kingdom citizen.

Think about it for a moment: how does a child, and I mean a little child, look to its mother? How does a little child look to its mother? Let me give you 2 thoughts here: 1. A little child looks to its mother in complete unknowing. Complete unknowing. They do not know how mommy is able to hold them in their arms. They don't understand strength or eating to gain strength or muscle strength. They don't know how that works. They don't know. They do not know how mommy feeds them. They do not know where their clothes come from. They do not know where the warm blankets come from. They don't know how the thermostat works in the nursery. And on and on. It's complete unknowing. A little baby doesn't reach up and say, "Now, before you grab me, do you understand the temperature in my nursery? Do you understand the kind of blankets I prefer?" No, they don't know anything about any of that. Complete unknowing.

Secondly, a little child looks to its mommy in complete trust. It looks at mommy with complete trust and, in effect, it reaches its arms up and says, "Receive me. I have nothing and I need everything." Amen? "Receive me, mommy, I have nothing. I can add nothing to you. I can't give you money, wisdom, work. I bring nothing but I need everything. I'm going to poop in my diapers in a minute and you'll even have to wipe my hiney. I bring nothing and I need everything." That's the way babies are. They are a pure parable of the way our hearts should be when we come to Christ in saving faith and to become a citizen of the kingdom of God. As a child looks to its parent in complete confidence and expectation that, "I'm going to reach my arms up to this mom, this dad, and I know I'm not going to be left to perish apart from them. I trust them." Complete unknowing. Complete trust.

You know, a child gladly lets itself be carried, caressed, blessed. Interesting, in Matthew 10:17 Jesus says, "Beware of men." Beware of men. The psalmist said all men are liars. Jesus basically says, "Now, the adult men of your community, there's no real picture there of what I want you to be like at all, but little babies, that's a little different. Little babies, now, they can give you some spiritual understanding if you'll watch how they function." So he says, "Don't be like the average man in your culture but learn from little babies."

Now, he says in verse 16, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Now listen: he didn't say the kingdom

of God belongs to these, he said to such as these. Now as a side note: I'm convinced in the balance of biblical truth that every child that's ever been born anywhere in the world that dies before the understanding of their sin and need of a Savior is God's elect. I believe every one of them is God's elect and Christ died for them specifically. That's one of the ways that I can understand that there will be people there around the throne of heaven from every people, tongue, tribe and nation. There are probably more babies in heaven than adults. Now, I do not know how the raw Arminian handles that question because the raw Arminian believes with all of their heart that God does his part but you have at least a little part and if you don't do your part, you don't get into heaven, period. Well, how is that little baby dying at the age of 2 going to do their part? But the doctrines of sovereign grace which are exhaustively taught in Scripture give us great, great, great hope that no, God saves his elect through the merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, and it has nothing to do with us whatsoever. Obviously, when you're older and can respond, you do respond in believing faith but God even gets the credit for all of that.

So Jesus says, "As you guys see these little babies, understand the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like this, those who come in simplicity, those who come in innocence, those who come in humility and those who come in trust." I always like to note when talking about this subject that we do need a childlike faith but he's not proposing a childish faith. Childlike faith is very different than a childish faith. I do believe in the balance of Scripture truth that when we get to heaven, there are going to be untold millions of folks there who were saved before the age of understanding of sin and their need of a Savior.

Well, verse 17, "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." Someone said there are 2 residences that God has. God has 2 residences: one is in heaven and one is in the hearts of the humble and the contrite. The best kind of example, humanly speaking in the physical realm, the best kind of picture of a humble, contrite heart is a little child's simplicity, unknowing trust in their mom and dad. Jesus said very simply, "If you do not receive the kingdom of God like a child, you're not in it at all." Once again, think about a child. A child is dependent. They are carried. They are fed. They are comforted by others. They are clothed by others. Little children are not covetous. A little bitty baby is as content in a mud hut or royal palace. It doesn't matter to them. You can put them in a royal robe or wrap them in an Indian's antelope hide, they don't care. I remember being in the bush of South Africa, you couldn't be more poor than those people were. They would strap those babies on their back and those babies just seemed happy as they could be. They probably didn't have one toy other than a stick and a rock. They didn't care.

That's the way babies are. They are teachable. They are proud to learn new things. Babies are not envious. The toddlers in our nursery this morning do not care one whit that the little boy sitting beside them has on designer clothing. Mom, that's about you, not about them. They don't care. It would probably do some of you some good to save that money and do something else with it. Not Scripture, just my sideline thought. Don't look too carefully at my grandchildren this morning.

Children are not malicious. Have you noticed that, they're not malicious. They can get in the worst fight, I mean, claw the eyes out and 5 minutes later they're loving and kissing and hugging again. It's just over. It's just done. They're not malicious. They're without premeditation. You know, children's sins are like a burst of passion, they just boom, get mad and do it. You don't find a child thinking, "Next Thursday at 2 o'clock, I'm going to attack." They don't scheme and premeditate. That's not, they learn that from their sin nature and from us but they're not generally like that. They are trusting. They look to their parents in complete trust. They don't understand how, why. They can't explain it, they just trust.

You know, little children and their moms and dads, there's just a great, great understanding and knowledge gap between the 2. Can you imagine a one-year-old baby and you trying to explain calculus to it? You could do 1,000 different things, 100,000 different things but just the gap of knowledge and understanding is just so wide but it's also true that in God's design, that they just trust without understanding any of it. They don't wait until they understand before they trust, they just know their parents will care for them and they will not perish and that's the way we should be to God.

Michael Faraday was an English physicist and chemist. He lived from 1791-1867. Faraday made several significant contributions in the field of chemistry. They are not talked about much because his greatest contribution was in electricity. He did no less than invent the first electric motor and laid the foundation for the invention of the electric transformer. By the way, without transformers, electricity is unusable. Can you even in your mind for a moment fathom how the totality of our lives are affected by an electric motor of some kind. I mean, to us that sounds like no big deal. Apple computers need electric motors. I mean, nothing, your car doesn't work without all kinds of little electrical motors doing stuff in there. And on and on we could go. We would not have air conditioning, heat or light if there were not transformers that govern the electricity so that it's usable. Michael Faraday invented that.

Faraday was a unique guy. He was born to a poor family and had only a most rudimentary education. He was very poor in mathematics even as an adult and he was a very poor speller which gives me some hope. But he had a brilliant mind. God just gave him a brilliant mind and he was an insatiable reader. He would get these books and teach himself and read and study and read and study. But Faraday was also a deeply committed Christian. There in London, instead of staying with the state church, he joined a little separatist church, a scorned group. Faraday's own testimony was that the state church was drifting away from Bible doctrine and Bible practice and he would have no part of that so he joined the little separatist group because he wanted to stay true to the word of God. You know, it's interesting that today in the scientific community, people seem to have a problem with a belief in God but Faraday didn't have one at all. As a matter of fact, quite from having a problem between his faith in science, he saw quite the contrary, he saw an essential connection. Faraday taught that God was of an infinite intelligence and he had given us a degree of intelligence and therefore we could be able with our limited intelligence to discover something of the way our great Creator made everything that he made and that's what drove him and that's what propelled him onward.

Faraday was the foremost celebrated scientist of his day but even today he's esteemed as the greatest experimental scientist in the history of science. All of British and international high society wanted Faraday to be in their company. Now, in the mid-19th century, if you were a discoverer or a scientist who had done something, you were a rock star. I mean, everybody wanted you in their group and their societies so they were bestowing on him all these honors. But do you know what? He declined almost every single honor and every single invitation to wine and dine with the great. The Queen twice tried to honor him with knighthood and he refused both times. He felt that such accolades were detrimental to his Christian faith and his sense of humility before a true and holy God. The last time he refused knighthood he said, "I have lived my life as a plain person and I shall die as a plain person."

As his health was declining later in life, biographers note that he was asked this question, "What are your speculations now?" Now, in this day, the word "speculation" would be like "theory." "What's your theory now about what comes next?" Faraday responded, "Speculations I have none. I am resting on certainties. I shall soon be with Christ and that is enough." And then biographers record that he quoted one of his favorite hymns, "For I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The foremost experimental scientist of the modern era, a rock star, one of the most brilliant men to walk the earth possibly. Everything we do today has been wonderfully impacted for good by him, yet when it comes to Jesus Christ, he had an unknowing, childlike faith.

"I know not how this wondrous grace,
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.

"But I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day."

Now, let me close with 2 quick words. This text where Jesus says, "There is a powerful lesson for you scribes and Pharisees. There is a powerful lesson for all of you people who think the kingdom of God is gained by learning from the theological schools in Jerusalem and esteeming yourself learned, unless you become like one of these little babies, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." An unknowing childlike trust. There is a warning in it and a welcome in that. There is a warning to you, sir, and to you, ma'am. Did you come to Jesus in your proud sophistication or did you come, "Receive me. I bring nothing and I need everything"? Receive me, I bring nothing and I need everything. If you come like that, you're welcomed in. If you bring anything of your pride, your works, your merit, your goodness, any trace of it, you are not welcome. There is a warning here. There is a warning here. Come, broken, humbled, needing all and you will be received.

But there is a welcome here. Whether you're Major Whittle, a mighty valiant soldier in the Union army who lost an arm in battle and a man's man, you're welcome if you come like a little child. Or Michael Faraday, one of the greatest scientists of all time, esteemed by all, who said, "I came to Christ not knowing much, just knowing that I needed everything from him." Amen.

Unless you come like a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Receive me. I bring nothing. I need everything. And all of God's people said, amen.

Let's stand together in prayer.