

Let the Children Speak

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, conversion, and trusting in Christ to receive the gospel and be saved.

Duration: 30:12

Scripture: Matthew 18:1

Topics: "Childlike Faith", "Humility in Christ"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the importance of humility and childlike faith in his sermon 'Let the Children Speak.' He reflects on Jesus' teaching that one must become like a little child to enter the kingdom of heaven, highlighting the simplicity, humility, and trust that children naturally possess. Brandon encourages both children and adults to examine their own faith and conversion, stressing that true conversion comes from acknowledging one's sin and trusting in Christ's love and sacrifice. He shares personal anecdotes and biblical examples to illustrate how childlike faith can lead to a genuine relationship with God.

Transcript

Tonight the subject will be, subject of course to the leading of the spirit, let the children speak. Trust that this might be a help to all the boys and girls and to the adults. We turn immediately to the scriptures to Matthew 18 and we read from verse 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them and said, truly I say unto you except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believing me it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences for it must needs be that offences come. But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee cut them off and cast them from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life haught or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee.

It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven.

For the son of man is come to save that which was lost. And the lord will bless to us the reading of his word. This may surprise you but the disciples were having an argument and it wasn't a very good argument.

They were arguing who was going to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And I'm afraid they're still arguing about that particular point at the moment. Who's got the greatest army? Who's got the greatest air force? Who has the greatest navy? And even in the realm of sport there was a man that used to go around the world saying that he was the greatest.

Well they were arguing about the greatest. And whilst they were arguing the lord Jesus saw a little wayward child. It must have been an orphan child.

And he called that child and put him in the center. And this is what he said to those aspiring disciples. Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And if I may take the liberty of an elastic paraphrase he was saying this. Don't talk about the greatest. You will never get into the kingdom of heaven until you are converted.

Now that's pathetic. It came from the king of the kingdom and we must submit to it. And therefore let's ask ourselves the question.

Not do I go to church good though that might be. Or do I live a respectable life and that's a good thing to do. But ask this one question.

Am I really converted? Have I been divinely changed by God? If you have you will enter. If not there's no admittance. It would be a terrible thing to have unconverted people who are in the kingdom of God.

But then comes this problem and many people have put this to me and they say. But how do you get converted? By becoming as a little child. Isn't that lovely? One of the greatest thinkers that we've had in the past century was a man called C.S. Lewis.

And he had terrible difficulty in turning from infidelity to Christianity. And after a long struggle he was in a little sidecar to his brother's motorbike sidecar going to the London Zoo. And quietly in that sidecar he trusted the Lord Jesus.

And this is what he wrote. I trusted the Lord as a little child and I was surprised by joy. Surprised by joy.

Now what we're going to do just for a few moments is to take our eyes off those disciples and look at that child and we're going to learn three lessons. And the first is the simplicity of that child. One of the things I love when I go into a school and speak to the assembly is to look at a crowd of children's faces.

There may be 400 or 500 of them. Especially infant and junior children. And there you see beaming from their faces the lovely smile of simplicity.

And it's one of the most beautiful things we shall ever see in life. Another thing I love to hear and that is a child's prayer. Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child.

Pity my simplicity. With our own family we didn't teach them said prayers. We tried to teach the children extemporary prayers.

And it was lovely sometimes to hear their prayers. I would pray, my wife would pray, the scriptures would be read and then the boys would pray. And on one occasion I was actually cleaning my shoes in our little kitchen that was then the landing of a stairway.

And I was in a bending position and I suppose he had been reading the charge of the life brigade. And unfortunately he saw his mother's hat pin on the mantelpiece. And before long I knew I was having an injection.

I left the ground and came down and there he was, little rascal, convulsed on the carpet. And I was crushed. So when we came to prayer time I said to Andrew, now Andrew it's your turn to pray.

And I think you ought to say sorry to God for what you did to your father. He says alright daddy. And guess what he prayed.

Thank you for letting me stick that pin in daddy. But I am sorry Lord. I am sorry.

Now that's a child's prayer, transparent but marked by simplicity. Now the gospel is just like that. There's something about the gospel that's so profound that the greatest thinker of all will never promise this.

But when it comes to a matter of receiving the gospel it's so simple that a child can receive it. There are three facts concerning the gospel. There's the hard words, there's the love words, and then lastly the life words.

Now those hard words are difficult. God never tells a lie. When I read the Bible, especially the Old Testament and especially the Roman epistle, especially those past three chapters, when I read them I read of God's truth hard words.

And my word, they're not easy. God looks at the whole race and he comes to a conclusion. And this is what he says.

When I consider culture with culture, when I consider civilization with civilization, when I consider empire with empire, kingdom with kingdom, when I consider community with community, an individual with individual, there's no difference. No difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Who can deny that? We all know by the hard rub of life that we sin and we break one of those commandments. And the very best of us have broken those commandments, the ten commandments, over and over again. And therefore God's accusation is right.

Then God looks right into the heart of man and as it were he has a kind of a tape recorder that's very sensitive and he records all our thought life. And do you know what he says? The mind of man is at enmity with God. And none of us, including your preacher, would like our thought life exposed.

Then God goes right down into us and he looks at our motives that come right from the heart and God says, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And then very wisely God puts a judgment on that kind of nature and he says the wages of sin is death and I'm so glad he does that. Ladies and gentlemen and boys and girls, it would be a tragedy if God allowed sin in heaven.

And when God builds the new heaven and the new earth it would be a tragedy if he allowed sin to enter into that new creation because we would see all again what has been perpetrated in this world. Therefore God separates sin from himself. Now this is the flash point.

If we die in our sin we are lost forever and that's what haunts me as a preacher. You know sometimes at night I get up about two o'clock in the morning and I walk around the bedroom praying and I can't help it. And I think of the millions of people who are separated from God and they don't know it.

And that's why we've had this mission. First of all that you might hear the hard words and then he comes in with his love words. God knows the very worst about us and he is the only one that does that but he loves us.

And he loves us so much that his son came into this world and went to a Roman gibbet and on that Roman gibbet bore the whole sin of the world. You know we have a lovely story that took place in London called Blind Jimmy. And he was a boy that another boy led to school.

And there were two lads and they were very very disobedient and they were told to go and get the cane and the book. And mind you you had it. I remember having the cane on both hands and I can almost feel it now and that must be donkey's years ago.

And you got a blister on that hand and a blister on that hand and I can assure the young people you never did it again. Well these two boys were going to have the cane. And the master said to the class what shall I give them? And Blind Jimmy put up his hands he said let them off.

No he said they must be punished because they've broken the rules of the school. What punishment shall I give them? He says if you can't let them off I'll bear it sir. And that boy came out in his awkward way and put his hands out and he received four cuts on that hand.

Four cuts on that hand for those disobedient boys. That was love. But I'll tell you something more.

Our creator the one that made the world the one that holds our life in the palm of his hands and he is the only one that can snap the silver thread. He came down with a body took that body to the cross and bore our sins in his own body on the tree because he loved us. No wonder the scripture says these remarkable words here in his love.

Not that we love God but that God loved us and sent his son to be a mercy for our sins. And the last thing about the gospel is this it's life's word. Let me do it with these glasses.

We have a body and the body is like the inside of my case dirty with sin all of us. Sin has made us all unclean. You could not possibly put the Holy Spirit who is life everlasting life in a dirty life.

So God first of all has to give us a cleansing and a forgiveness that's why Christ died. And when we're ready to receive the Lord Jesus just like my spectacles come right into the glass the Holy Spirit comes right into our lives and hallelujah we're born of God. And that's the greatest experience anyone can have and that's what God wants to do tonight.

You say very simple but very real and all simple things are real and all real things are basically simple. But the next thing I found about children is this I love their humility. I suppose you're like me you can't bear proud people.

You know sometimes when I see someone walking into church and they come in so beautifully dressed and you can really almost hear them say do you like this costume? Do you know we used to have a lady in London and every time she had a new rig out every six weeks she had it she was fabulously wealthy. She would even be late and then she would come right down and march almost to the front like a manequin. And all JM Shaw who was a bachelor just gave out a hymn when she was walking down and guess what it was? Look ye saints the sight is glorious.

So you can imagine us boys having a little bit of a smile can't you? No I don't think any of us like proud people. We love people that are real. That's one thing I like about the Australians they're not sophisticated.

They're people of the earth and they're factual. And you know dear friends that's what I love about children marked by humility. I once stayed with the nephew of that great Dr Bernardo and they had four children and there was one little mite she was only three and a half and we had no children and I said to Mrs Bernardo would you mind if I took that child out for a little walk? I was having a children's mission and I wanted to buy some prizes.

Now I always deal with warwats the millionaire people. Do you have them here warwats? Oh I see. Well she had never been in warwats in her life.

So I was buying all these prizes and toys because you got them cheap in warwats and then I forgot her and she wasn't there. Now can you imagine the dilemma I was in? And I went all over warwats and couldn't find her. So I started to go around again.

I had spoken to the manager and then eventually I found her up a corner speaking to the filthiest, dirtiest, greasiest, ugliest tramp I've ever seen. And she was looking up into his face as though he were Father Christmas. Loved him and she said to me going home all the way, wasn't he a lovely man? Now she's 35.

A very sophisticated lady with a family and I think there may be a slight difference but can you see there's a natural humility in boys and girls. Ladies and gentlemen can I share this with you. There's one thing that I have noticed from a platform that really opposes the gospel and that's pride.

Now when I tell people that we've all sinned, we know we've all sinned but some people you will see their feathers coming up say oh but I'm left a decent life. What does that matter? We've still sinned. Then when I say the statement again I look out and I find some people dropping their heads and they say this oh but I go to the gospel hall or I go to the church and you see they're putting up the feathers of religion.

What does that matter? We've all sinned and would you believe it I have noticed sometimes when I speak on the fact that sin is the number one killer in the world. I see some people dropping their heads and saying oh that's a Christian neurosis. They're intellectuals and you see they show their intellectual feathers.

Now friends you'll never find God like that. You see when people are going to be made right with God they have to get really honest with themselves about God. They have to acknowledge the fact that they have sinned.

They have to turn from their sins and therefore in a gospel meeting you will find that there's a tug of war. I still go to camp once a year and quite frankly you may think I'm too old in the tooth for this but I love the game. I still sometimes play a game of football.

Unfortunately I've had two hernias over it so I'm beginning to pack it up. But when I go into Devon there's one game that I really love. The Devon boys and girls especially the boys they're all a bit obese but very beefy.

I think it's the butter and the cream they live on. And I love to get about 15 of these boys on a piece of rope and another 15 on another piece of rope and we tie a big cloth in between and we drive some stakes in the ground and then we say now you ought to see them pulling. They pull until their veins stand out of their neck and some of their eyes are nearly popping out on their cheeks and they're holding and you'll see that handkerchief going that way, that way, that way, that way and then someone will just relax and the other side pulls the big cloth.

I've seen that over and over again in gospel meetings. I've seen the almighty God coming to a man or a woman or a boy and a girl and tugging on the rope of repentance saying now come on be honest confess your sin put your faith and trust in Christ and then you see the old devil pulling on the rope of pride say you're all right nothing wrong with you you go to church just go on the way you are and there's a terrific tug-of-war. In fact I've seen people bubbling with perspiration as the tug-of-war goes on.

Now friends can I say this to you from my heart don't allow the devil to win. I know this is jagged but he'll pull you straight into hell. Let God pull you to his son and he'll give you eternal life even now.

The last thing I've noticed about children and with this I'll close is their fidelity. I'm using that word to show trust. You never find a baby do you born with a nervous breakdown.

The moment a little baby is born you watch it they're specialists in trust. Isn't that so? And then you listen to some boys when they're talking about their dad. Oh my dad can do this and my dad can do that and I've actually heard the boys saying and we all said it no one can fight my dad.

You see they had a tremendous confidence in their father. I remember hearing a beautiful story of some botanists who were studying flowers and there down the cliff side on the coast of Scotland there was a very rare kind of flower that they couldn't get at. And they saw one of these Scottish lads and they called him over and in those days they offered him a pound if they would let him down on the rope and dig that plant up.

He says I wouldn't do it and then he said this I'll do it on one condition. He says what that what's that? He says my dad holds the rope. My dad holds the rope.

Every dad can fail there's only one person that can't fail that's the Lord Jesus. And there comes a moment when God begins to speak to you and he wants to bring in that conversion and you have to come and trust him. Now how does that happen? I want to relate a story of a student from Cambridge University that actually did that and it was a remarkable case of conversion.

When he came to the meetings for the first two or three nights he was sceptical and argued. Then somehow as he heard more of the gospel the truth of it really entered in and he started to swallow his intellectual pride. Then one night I preached on the cross of the Lord Jesus and quite frankly the Spirit of God must have come to him and inwardly gave him a revelation of the fact that Christ died for his sins and he was deeply moved so he didn't say anything.

Then the mission was for three weeks and the last week he was coming every night and we all knew he was getting closer and closer with many other students. Then one night I had a chat with him and I said

Keith you've been coming every night nearly for three weeks I appreciate that. Now tell me how are you getting on? Well he said when I first heard the message I was a little rebellious.

I said I know that. But I said have you accepted the fact that you are a personal sinner in the sight of God? He said yes. Now do you see that God cannot have you in heaven like that? Yes he said I've submitted to that fact.

I said splendid you're not far from the kingdom. Now can you see that God loved you so much that he died on the cross for your sins? And through that act God can forgive your sins and then secondly give you the Holy Spirit so you become a completely changed person. Yes he said I'm clear on that.

Now I said can you see the only way now in which you can be made right with God is not by works or religion they will come after your conversion but you must come and implicitly trust Christ to save you and I use the scripture believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. He said I see that clearly but I'm waiting I said what are you waiting for? He says I don't know. I'm just waiting for it to happen.

So I said can I help you please? Have you got this impression that you can go to bed on Friday night and then wake up Saturday morning saying oh it's all done? Well he said yes something like that. I said that will never happen and then I read this verse to him. As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

You have to personally receive Christ and this is what he said. Mr Brandon are you saying to me now I could kneel down there and ask the Lord Jesus to save me and come into my life and it would happen? I said yes. It would happen there? Yes.

I said it's as simple as this if you were drowning in water and I threw a life belt to you and you grabbed it you would be saved. I said and you trust Christ to save you it will happen. Well he walked backwards and forwards and I left him and then I came into the room and I saw the lad kneel down and I saw something lovely.

I didn't hear his prayer but I saw tears coursing down his face and he got up and he said this I trusted Christ to be my saviour and he was born again. You see he became as a little child and he trusted Christ. No wonder that young man is doing exploits for God.

There by that seat he trusted Christ. Wouldn't it be lovely if someone did that right now at this moment.

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