

The Blessedness of a Childlike Spirit

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living with a childlike spirit, being grateful, and doing good works for God's glory.

Scripture: Psalm 103:2, Jeremiah 2:13, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 4:19, Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Childlike Faith", "Gratitude To God"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches about the blessedness of having a childlike spirit and a grateful heart towards God, emphasizing the importance of honoring and obeying God as a loving Father. He highlights the sin of ingratitude towards God and the need for genuine praise and adoration for His unfathomable love and mercy. Reade explores the grace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation, urging believers to praise God for His mercies and provision in every aspect of their lives.

Transcript

20. THE BLESSEDNESS OF A CHILDLIKE SPIRIT, AND A GRATEFUL HEART

"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."
Gal. 4:6

No language can adequately express the condescension and forbearance of God towards his rebellious creatures; "Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! This is what the Lord says: "The children I raised and cared for have turned against me. Even the animals--the donkey and the ox--know their owner and appreciate his care, but not my people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand." Oh, what a sinful nation they are! They are loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil and corrupt children who have turned away from the Lord. They have despised the Holy One of Israel, cutting themselves off from his help." "The Lord Almighty says to the priests: 'A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. I am your father and master, but where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have despised my name!'" "Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord." "Return you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." "If you will return, O Israel, says the Lord, return unto me."

The Almighty addresses us in the character of a tender Father, but of a father, slighted and disobeyed. What parent, who has experienced the ingratitude and disobedience of his children, piercing his heart with grief, can read, unmoved, these pathetic appeals? But, while his own soul has been bowed down with

sorrow by the conduct of his children, has he not been acting a similar part towards his heavenly Father? And may not the very trials which afflict him, be sent in judgment for his own rebellions against the Father of mercies? How often do we read our sin in our punishment.

Who, then, can fully estimate the blessedness of a childlike spirit? See a family, where the children honor and obey their parents, and where the parents love and watch over their children, and there you behold a lovely oasis, a green spot in this desert world. In such a family, where God is worshiped in spirit and in truth, where love, like a golden belt, binds each heart to the other, you have a little heaven upon earth. But look into a household, where the children resist the authority of the father, and despise the admonitions of the mother; where the brothers and sisters quarrel with each other, and kindle a daily fire of discord- and there, you have a picture of that place where each, hating the other, shall be miserable forever.

The world is ready to stamp with baseness an act of ingratitude towards an earthly benefactor, who may have shown us some occasional favor, or afforded us some seasonable relief; but, it passes over, as a venial fault, our forgetfulness of God. This is bad; but surely it is worse when those who make a profession of religion act as the world does. "My people have forgotten me days without number." "They have forgotten the Lord their God." "They have forgotten their resting-place."

The sin of ingratitude is unspeakably criminal when manifested towards the Almighty Father of mankind, by whom we were created, by whom we are preserved, and from whom we receive every blessing. Happy, indeed, are they who live in the spirit of adoption, and under the influence of grateful love. Blessed Lord, be pleased to give me a thankful heart to taste your gifts with joy. Enable me to trace every mercy to its proper source, even to your Covenant Love in Christ Jesus; to see your hand in all the changing events of life; and to acknowledge your goodness in the bestowment of my daily comforts. But above all, O eternal God, pour into my heart the spirit of praise and adoration for your unfathomable love in the redemption of the world.

Never can I sufficiently extol the grace of God the Father, in devising such a glorious plan of salvation as that revealed in the Gospel; for giving his Son, his Well-beloved, to sufferings, and to death! Oh! the length and breadth, the depth and height of this love, which passes knowledge!

Who can find words to magnify the grace of God the Son, in so freely leaving the bosom of his Father, descending from the heights of glory to the lowest depths of human misery, taking upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, becoming a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, fulfilling all righteousness for ruined sinners, dying the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God, and ascending up on high as the ever-glorified God-Man, there to appear in the presence of God for us, to intercede for us with the Father, and to perfect, by his living care, what his dying love began!

Where shall we begin our praises to God the Holy Spirit, by whom we are enabled to believe in Jesus, to love Jesus, and to bear his holy image; by whose quickening power we are raised from a death in sin to a life of righteousness; by whose almighty aid we are enabled to contend against our spiritual foes; and by whose refreshing, enlivening, comforting, and sanctifying grace, we are supported and animated under all our trials, and made to rejoice in hope of the glory of God?

These mercies, O my soul, demand your loudest praise, for, like their Author, they are immutable and eternal; "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you." "Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, and shall never be confounded world without end." "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every

morning; great is your faithfulness." Well might Jeremiah say, "The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him."

Are we groaning under a deep conviction of our wretchedness; and do we see ourselves to be nothing but sin and pollution? Let us praise God, who has opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, even the precious blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin.

Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Let us bless God for this spiritual appetite, remembering that in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare; that Jesus is the bread of life; that in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that we are invited to receive out of his fullness and grace for grace.

Are we lamenting our spiritual nakedness, and afraid to appear before God? Let us rejoice that God has provided a garment for us, even the goodly clothing of our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose righteousness the Church is clothed, and by whose graces she is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Are we laboring under inward corruptions and indwelling sin? Let us praise God for those rich promises of his word, which tell us that his grace is sufficient for us; that we shall not be tempted above that we are able to bear; that if we draw near to God, he will draw near to us; that if we seek him, he will be found by us; that sin shall not have dominion over us; that he will bruise Satan under our feet shortly; and that he will make us more than conquerors through Him who has loved us, and given Himself for us.

O my soul, bless the Lord for these abounding mercies. Cease not to praise his holy name. Let every day, as it increases your obligations, stimulate your gratitude and love. But yet remember, that mere verbal religion is unavailing in the sight of Him who demands the heart. Lord give me grace to glorify you in my body and in my spirit which are yours; that, while I offer unto you the sacrifice of praise continually, I may not forget "to do good, and to give," since with such sacrifices you are well pleased, when presented to you on that altar which alone sanctifies the gift- the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not forget, O my soul, "to do good." Compassionate precept, little understood, and less practiced. The worldly professor of religion may perform many benevolent actions; so also do those who deny the Divinity of Christ; but a work, though beneficial to others, will be unacceptable to God, if done without regard to his will and his glory. The afflicted may be bountifully relieved, even by an infidel or an atheist, acting on the mere impulse of natural sympathy; but, can such an act be acceptable to God? Surely not. How strong is the language of the Almighty to the rebellious house of Israel; "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burned offerings, I will not accept them."

How gracious are the words of Christ to those who do good for his name's sake; "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward." But, to those who give alms from ostentation or self-righteousness, no blessing is imparted; "When you give a gift to someone in need, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do--blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I assure you, they have received all the reward they will ever get." "All their works they do for to be seen of men." The quantity cannot supersede the quality of our actions, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profits me nothing."

A work, to be really and scripturally good, must proceed from a right principle, be done by a right rule, and be directed to a right end. The ROOT of all acceptable obedience is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing pleasing unto God; but by virtue of our union with him through faith, we receive grace from above, and are made fruitful in every good work. The RULE by which our actions are to be regulated is, not the traditions of men, but the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, which alone are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Jesus Christ. The END to which all our doings must be directed, is the glory of God, and the present and eternal welfare of our fellow-creatures.

We must seek in all things to promote the honor and praise of Him who has called us with a holy calling, by employing our talents in his service, laying out ourselves for usefulness, relieving the needy, and comforting the disconsolate, strengthening the weak, and confirming the strong, admonishing the wavering, and reproofing the profane in a spirit of Christian meekness and love, that the kingdom of the Redeemer may be extended, through the divine blessing on our labors, by the suppression of vice, and the promotion of true religion and virtue.

"Lord of all power and might, the Author and Giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How blessed is he who warmly feels

The witness of a Savior's love;

To whom the Spirit, Christ, reveals,

And draws his heart to joys above.

With child-like love, and holy fear,

He lowly bends before the throne;

He views his Heavenly Father near,

And pleads the merit of his Son.

In grateful strains, he pours his heart

To Him who died his soul to save;

He knows that he will ne'er depart,

Nor leave him in the silent grave.

By faith he views Redemption's hour,

When Christ, descending from above,

Shall raise him by his mighty power,

And fill his soul with endless love.

Oh! may this blessedness be mine

This child-like spirit now be given;
Then shall the praise be ever thine,
My Savior in the highest heaven.

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