

Message for August 2, 2020

*“May my cry come before you, LORD;
give me understanding according to your word.”* --- Psalm 119:169

Does that sound familiar to you? How many times have you been in a situation where you said “Why me Lord? Why is this happening? I don’t understand!” Or, “Why do you want me to do this Lord? It doesn’t make sense. I don’t understand.” We’ve all been there, probably many times. But how does that lack of understanding affect you? Does it cause you to doubt God? Or paralyze you so that you don’t do anything until you get your questions answered?

There’s nothing wrong with seeking understanding. With it comes wisdom. But God is not always going to provide the answers we seek no matter how hard we cry out to Him. Sometimes He will, but in my experience most times He won’t. There are probably several reasons for this, but I would like to focus on just one of them. The following Scriptures hold a clue.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, *“Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 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.”* --- Matthew 18:1-3

Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”* --- Matthew 19:13-14

Jesus tells us that we must become as little children (meaning very young ones, not adolescents). They are the ones to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs. But what does it mean to become as a little child? In response to that question most would say that we must develop a child-like faith. True enough, but it goes somewhat deeper than that. First of all, there are two types of little children. One is the inquisitive type, always asking “Why?” when told something. Sound familiar? That’s just the way we are, always wanting an explanation before accepting

anything or acting in obedience. The other type of child simply believes and accepts what they’re told without questioning. They don’t need to fully understand before responding in a positive way. That’s true faith and that’s the very type of child the Lord is wanting to develop in us. We shouldn’t need an explanation when God is working in our lives. Did Abraham, the father of faith, question God when He told him to leave his homeland and go to another land that God would lead him to? He didn’t ask why or say “but I don’t understand”. He simply obeyed. How about Joshua when God told him to march Israel’s army around Jericho seven times and then shout at the city to make the walls fall down? Did Joshua say “That’s silly, what good will shouting do and why do I have to march around the city seven times? Won’t just once do as well?” Yet Joshua obeyed without questioning and he was victorious in the battle.

It’s often impossible to understand God’s ways or purposes, especially when He asks us to do something unusual, odd, or just different. But that’s where faith and trust come in. We need to grasp the truth that God knows what He’s doing and He uses methods that only He understands in His great wisdom. So let’s stop questioning Him or His methods and simply say “yes, Lord” whenever we recognize His hand in our lives and be obedient. Someday we’ll understand everything, but for now we just need to let God be God. He doesn’t need or seek our understanding, approval, or concurrence. He only seeks a willing heart and child-like faith to believe. I pray that each one of us will continue our spiritual growth into childhood. See you at the playground!

Love & blessings,
Pastor Joe

“A LITTLE CHILD WILL LEAD THEM”

Isaiah 11 prophesies hope for the world: wisdom, understanding, righteousness, justice, faithfulness, peace. In the words “a little child will lead them” (v. 6), Christians hear a foretelling of God’s coming to earth as the child Jesus. Today, children — Jesus’ examples of fitness for God’s kingdom (Mark 10:14) — often lead in showing love.

At age 11, avid baker Michael Platt opened a pastry shop in Maryland to benefit homeless people; for desserts sold, he gives an equal number to shelter residents. Eric Schubert, 18, of New Jersey, uses his genealogy research skills to help strangers — more than 1,000 so far — find long-lost family. In Pennsylvania, Neijae Graham-Henries became a certified barber at age 7 to give free haircuts to kids who couldn’t afford them. (Stories shared on GoodNewsNetwork.org.)

May these children inspire us to use our passions and skills for good, in the name of the Christ-child, who grew up and taught us to serve others in love.

BE AS A LITTLE CHILD

On this night before Christmas, a little baby teaches us to become as little children. The smug person will never change until he becomes like a child. The defeated person will never change until he becomes, in his mind and heart, like a little child. And when the cynical person is ready to say, "I have no strength in myself. I no longer need to be this way," then the miracle happens, and something wonderful takes place.

-Norman Vincent Peale from his sermon,
"The Night Before Christmas"

HE'S GOT THE IDEA

During a children's sermon, the pastor asked the children what "Amen" means. A little boy raised his hand and said, "It means, 'Tha-tha-tha-that's all, folks!'"



“The Little Church That Could”

“Believing is Seeing”