

The Red Thread
Tying Sunday Scripture to Everyday Life

RECEIVING AS A LITTLE CHILD

It is important that we let children be children – for they are our teachers about the kingdom of God. Our society tends to push children into adult activities when they are barely out of diapers. It is important that we let children grow into adults in their own time so that they can cease being childish while remaining childlike.

Genesis 2:18-24 tells of God creating human relationship. The first human was able to receive God's gift of a partner in a child like open, expectant and joyful way: "this is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." This gift was not earned. The human did not participate in its creation as God caused the human to sleep during the creative process. Being able to leave father and mother to join with another in a life time commitment means growing naturally into adulthood while never losing the capacity for child like wonder and acceptance of God's gifts.

Psalms 8 proclaims that proper praise for God comes "out of the mouths of infants and children." Every Sunday we see child like worship that is free expression and acceptance of God's love. Hebrews 1: 1-4; 2:5-12 reminds us that God first spoke to his people through chosen prophets – adults whom God's people did not listen to. He then spoke to us through a Son – who came as an infant to dwell among us. This child was "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being." This child grew into adulthood remaining child like in his loving and serving and giving.

Mark 10:2-16 tells of Jesus placing children at the center of his attention. Our culture tends to place children at the center in an unhealthy way. They are given too much of the wrong attention and the family becomes totally centered on their wants and needs and activities. Children then remain childish and self-centered as they grow. In this text Jesus places children at the center of the text because they were considered insignificant and they were powerless. They were examples of the people Jesus came to save: those at the margins who are dependent on others and able to receive and share easily and freely. Jesus defined being child like as living together with new values of mutuality, vulnerability and interdependence.

Yesterday, I experienced an example of this child like quality in one of our youngest members, Alyssa. She came to me boldly while I was greeting people after the service. Alyssa gently but persistently pulled on my robe to get my attention. I bent down to her and she whispered in my ear "pway for my dog." Big brother Ethan was there to interpret her words for me. The family lost their dog this past week to illness. Alyssa and Ethan know that God is in charge – especially during the difficult and painful times of life. "Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." Let us put away childishness but never cease being child-like.

Pastor Marilyn