

Chapter One – Faith

Faith Like A Teenager

(excerpted from “Rain Down NOW, Lord!”)

We have three different, identical accounts of Jesus' clear statement that you WILL NOT enter into the kingdom of God unless you receive it like a little child.

Matt. 18:3 *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Mark 10:15 *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

Luke 18:17 *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*

IF the Word of God is true and right, THEN this is a pretty darn critical point and you might want to really, really be sure that you are getting this right!

So, how are you doing on this point? Do you have faith like a child? Perhaps a parable will help.

FaithLikeAChild sits in the back of the minivan and looks out the window and goes, “Whee!” FaithLikeAChild doesn't know how the engine works or where gasoline comes from and does not worry about whether the minivan has side air bags. FaithLikeAChild just knows that Dad is driving and we're going to Grandma's house and we're stopping at McDonald's on the way! FaithLikeAChild doesn't know how to navigate the route and doesn't care. FaithLikeAChild would never even consider trying to drive – it never even occurred to FaithLikeAChild that Dad wasn't fully capable of getting the job done all by himself. FaithLikeAChild just peacefully dozes off and enjoys the ride, even if it's bumpy. Nothing to worry about, because Dad knows what He's doing. FaithLikeAChild chatters with Dad and hangs on his every word because FaithLikeAChild adores Dad. Dad is his provider, rescuer, leader and generally his real life superhero. Regardless of any physical or logical evidence to the contrary, FaithLikeAChild is just sure that his Dad can beat up your Dad.

If you want to see another picture of FaithLikeAChild, try this:

Mark 4: 37-40 – *And a furious storm of wind arose, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that it was already becoming filled. But He [Jesus] was in the stern of the boat, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, Master, do You not care that we are perishing? And He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush now! Be still! And the wind ceased and there was immediately a great calm. He said to them, Why are you so timid and fearful? How is it that you have no faith?*

FaithLikeAChild was the other name of that kid with a slingshot that said this to a monster named Goliath:

1 Sam. 17:26, 37, 46, 48

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. “This day the Lord will hand you over to me and I'll strike you down and cut off your head.” Then as the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him.

And lots like him – Abraham, Noah, Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Gideon, Samson, Peter, Stephen and many more throughout history. FaithLikeAChild speaks boldly and fearlessly and RUNS QUICKLY to the battle line to meet the enemy. FaithLikeAChild doesn't worry about fancy armor or battle strategy, FaithLikeAChild knows that God can use anything and so he goes against the giants in the strength that he has - even a slingshot and five stones. FaithLikeAChild is supremely offensive to others because he is the most like Jesus. People think he is arrogant, foolish, senseless, suicidal, childish, short-sighted, capricious, unpredictable and generally impossible to deal with. He doesn't conform to the “world” at all. As soon as Goliath saw David, he despised him (I Sam. 17:42). David's brothers burned with anger towards him (I Sam. 17:28). Saul hated him (I Sam. 18:8-11 and elsewhere). There is no end of trouble when you start accepting the Kingdom of God like a little child! And no end to the reward.

But sadly, FaithLikeATEenager is far more common. FaithLikeATEenager doesn't want to sit in the back of the minivan, he just got his license and he wants to drive himself. FaithLikeATEenager pesters Dad to get into the passenger seat. FaithLikeATEenager doesn't want to go to McDonald's because it isn't healthy and he can't believe that Dad is unaware of the ecological and economic and human justice damage that a fascist global conglomerate like that is doing to the world. Dad is just not as well-informed as FaithLikeATEenager. In fact, sometimes FaithLikeATEenager wonders how Dad ever got along without him. FaithLikeATEenager doesn't particularly want to go to Grandma's house, but is just sure that he knows a quicker way to get there. FaithLikeATEenager doesn't doze off and enjoy the ride. FaithLikeATEenager turns the music up really loud, makes a call on his cell phone, drinks his organic, fair trade, wheat germ smoothie, drives too fast and tries hard to ignore Dad as much as possible. FaithLikeATEenager is just sure that he has all the answers and his way is best. In fact, he would really like it if Dad would just shut up and leave him alone. He is his own superhero.

FaithLikeAChild knows that he is completely safe because Dad is in control. FaithLikeATEenager thinks he is indestructible because he is really smart and cool. Which one do you think Dad would rather hang out with?

Why does it seem like God is moving in greater ways in Africa and India and China? Maybe because there are more people there named FaithLikeAChild. Why do we have tens of thousands of denominations in America and endless conferences and programs and books and superstar leaders that seem to have all the answers? Maybe because we are the capital of FaithLikeATEenager. In fact, we're the main producer and exporter worldwide. We're building fatter and fatter pipelines so we can pump all of our own special flavors of it into every country on the planet.

Are there any seminaries in America that offer a “Faith Like A Child” degree? And yet, isn't that what is required to enter the kingdom of heaven? Is the Word of God true or not?

Who were the experts in “Faith Like A Teenager” in Jesus' time? The Pharisees and the Sadducees. The religious leaders are always the ones that think they're all grown up and that they know best. Go read Matthew 23 and see how Jesus felt about them. He's pretty clear about how He feels about FaithLikeATEenager. You better hope you're not one of them. I hope you're not teaching people to drive themselves around! I hope you're not trying to get them to figure out what THEY can do for God!

How about this?

Matthew 7:21-23 – “Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'”

If this is really true, then we might want to be listening to Dad more and obeying Him and not going our own way. Many will think that they are just fine – until they are told to their face that their new name is “FaithLikeATeenager” and they are a goat and that it has all been in vain. Despite their miracles and their “anointing” and the works they did in His Name.

God is raising up the true warriors. Those who will not question or doubt. Those who will go, no matter who says they are nuts. God is raising up an army of children with nothing holding them down. Children who will fearlessly wade into the battle with a slingshot (and an army of angels). They will kill the Goliaths (and the status quo) without mercy or pity. They will obey fully because the Lamb is their head. They will not argue theology or doctrine or curriculum or programs. They will just listen to the voice of God and obey. And they will bring a flame-thrower to all the structures and systems of FaithLikeATeenager. Nothing will be able to stand before them – because God is on their side.

Just in case you're sitting on the fence about this when they come, consider this:

Matthew 18:3-6 – And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Or maybe this one:

Luke 9:46-48 – An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all —he is the greatest."

Just stop for a minute and look around and see if you or your congregation or denomination are arguing with anybody else about who is the greatest. See if you are letting God direct your paths or you are leaning on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5-6 is pretty clear. All means ALL. None of your own understanding is acceptable. None of you directing your own paths is OK. Doing so means that you are not trusting the Lord your God with ALL your heart. And it means that your new name is FaithLikeATeenager and God is going to write it on your forehead. The first being to earn that name was Lucifer. If God writes that on your forehead – then, congratulations, you just got the mark of the beast.

If that's your name, even a little bit, then you might want to say you're sorry and beg the Lord to scrub it off your forehead and ask Him daily to kill anything in you that is more than about six years old – give or take.

Being a grown-up is not going to get this job done. We need more little kids with faith and five rocks.

Lord God, if I'm acting like that, please forgive me! I don't want to drive! Please, Father, I'm sorry for telling You that I know best. Please kick me into the backseat – or lock me in the trunk. Whatever you have to do, but please would You take over? I'm really sorry. I love You, Dad. I'm sorry for ignoring and insulting You and putting You in a box. I don't even know how badly I did it and how much damage it did, but please show me so I can repent all the way. Teach me how big You are so I won't ever do it again. I love You, Lord, and I trust You. Please take over ALL of my life now. You know best. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.