

Receive the Kingdom of God like a Child

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Preacher: Rev Alasdair I Macleod

[0:00] Please turn back to our reading in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 18. I want to look at verses 15 to 17.

Try not to be as long as I've been on every other occasion. Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. When the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

But Jesus called them to him, saying, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

Now the simple message this evening from this passage of Scripture is that the child is important to God.

And the childlike are welcomed by God. These two things. In this section of Scripture, as so often in the Gospel stories, Jesus is turning people's assumptions and expectations upside down.

[1:29] You can see it in the previous story. The Pharisee and the tax collector. People would have expected the Pharisee to be the hero of that story.

And the tax collector to be the villain. But it's a tax collector who goes home justified. Or in the following story, the rich ruler.

Who had been so busy in keeping the commandments. People would have assumed that this person would receive nothing but praise from Jesus.

But he goes away sorrowing. You know the story. And I think in this passage too, there's little one in the middle. Jesus is turning people's assumptions upside down.

That children aren't that important. Certainly they're not that important spiritually. To many people in that culture.

[2:33] And just on the general point, it's very important for all of us. To remember that Jesus does that all the time. Still with us. We live in particular cultures.

We live in one culture here. Maybe there's more than one culture here. Nowadays. And people assume that so much of what they've grown up with.

Or what they read. Or what they see in the media. Or what they learn. Here, there, and everywhere. That these things are just true. And Jesus comes.

And he upsets our assumptions. About ourselves. And about what we thought. And what we think. And about all kinds of things around us.

That I don't have time to even begin. To suggest or to illustrate. But Jesus is subversive. The subversive Jesus of these stories.

[3:30] Is still the living subversive Jesus. Who wants to turn our assumptions upside down. Who turns lives upside down. Or maybe better.

The right way up. Because in the gospel. As always. People. Have to be changed. And changed from the inside out.

Chained dramatically. And sovereignly. By the Jesus. Who still. Turns things. Around. So let's come back to our.

Two headings. First of all. That Jesus. Welcomes children. In verses 15. And 16. And then.

That Jesus. Welcomes the childlike. From the middle of verse 16. And verse 17. Jesus. Welcomes. Children.

[4 : 26] Now you can see from. Verse 15. From the first half of that verse. That people were bringing. Infants. To.

Jesus. Perhaps a lot of them were. Were toddlers. Or more than that. In verse 16. It may be that Jesus is saying. Let the children come. Meaning. Let them. Run to me.

Themselves. And what we have here. Is a succession of folk. Parents. Bringing their children. One. After.

The other. Bringing them to Jesus. That he might. Touch them. It says. Now this is the exact. Opposite. Of.

Something that we see today. Very often with our modern. Politicians. Who like to be. Photographed. With people bringing. Babies up.

[5 : 21] To them. Young children. Photographed. With them. I better not illustrate it too. Exactly. Because of your politics.

For this country. Or maybe. I thought of the states. But then some of you might be related. To the Donald. So I don't want to offend. You either. But.

Always that's done. Isn't it. For the benefit of the politician. It's a photo opportunity. For him. Or for her. In their interests.

But Jesus. Here. It's the exact opposite. It's for the benefit. Of the children. For the eternal benefit. Of these children.

So these parents want Jesus. To touch their children. To lay. Hands on them. With a prayer. For their blessing. A kind of. Benediction. Over them.

[6 : 19] We're told by the. The scholars. That. This was a custom. At various times. Of the Jewish year. One. Favorite custom. Was. To bring.

Children. To the elders. On the evening. Of the day of atonement. For a special blessing. On. The child. From. The elders.

Some also wonder here. If some of these children. Were unwell. It might be. That some of them. Are receiving. A healing touch. But I don't think. That's the primary thing.

Here. It may be. That. In a world. Of infant mortality. That some of these. Parents. Wanted Jesus. To bless their children. With health.

Or a promise of health. We don't know. What the motivations. Were. But it's certainly. A lovely picture. Of. People. Bringing. Children.

[7 : 13] To Jesus. But it's an even. Lovelier picture. Isn't it? Of the kind of. Savior. That we have. It's the picture. Of a loving.

Accessible. Approachable. Savior. An affectionate. Savior. Who takes time. To bless. Children. And when parents.

Look at this. Jesus. They see somebody. They want to come close to. And they see someone. They want to bring their children. Close to. It's a wonderful picture.

Of the Lord. Isn't it? In the middle of such a busy. Packed. Ministry. That he wants. To take time. Over these parents. And over these children.

And that people. Recognize him. As this. Loving. Affectionate. Approachable. Contactable. Savior. Who will want.

[8 : 11] These children. And who will want. To touch them. And talk to them. And spend time. With them. But. The disciples.

Jesus. Inner circle. As we read on. In verse 15. You can see. That the disciples. Rebuke. These people. When the disciples.

Saw it. They. Rebuked them. It's. It's clearly verbal. From the language. They. They were telling. These people. To. To go away. They were saying.

To these. Mothers. And fathers. Get lost. We don't want you. Bothering. The master. Maybe. They're also.

Physical. Efforts. To stop them. To keep them away. It's as if. The disciples. See themselves. As. You know. The way that. Famous people.

[9 : 06] Have minders. And bodyguards. And. Maybe the disciples. Had this sort of. Self image. Now. That they were. The minders.

Of this. Master. And they were going to. Protect him. They were going to. Decide. When he needed. Protection. They were going to. Guard.

Access. To him. And make the decision. Who was worth. His. Time. Maybe they felt. He was too tired. And he's too busy. And you know. Dealing with children.

Well. Why bother. It's an unnecessary. Unimportant. Extra. Burden. On the Lord. I think it. To some extent. Does reveal. The disciples.

Exaggerated sense. Of their own. Importance. It quickly. Reminds us. Of. The story. In. Second. Kings.

[10 : 01] Chapter. Four. With. Elisha. And remember. His servant. And the story. Of the Shunammite woman. She comes. And throws herself. At the prophet's feet. And Gehazi.

Wants to drag her away. He tries. Physically. To get rid of this woman. And. It seems. That. The disciples. Might want. The same. I certainly think.

They thought. The children. Were less deserving. Of Jesus. Attention. Bit of a waste. Of his time. And it's interesting. That Mark. In his account. In Mark. Chapter 10.

Says that. Jesus. Was. Indignant. Jesus. Was. Angry. With. The disciples. For trying.

To keep. Parents. And children. Away. From him. He was. Angry. Because. He was. Interested. In these. Children. And in their. Spiritual.

[10 : 55] Welfare. And again. It reminds us. That. We should. Never. Be. Involved. In. Any. Way. In. Hindering. Access.

To. Jesus. There's. Probably. A sermon. In that. On its. Own. But. We should. Never. Be. In. In. Doubting. Any. Category. Of. People. Or. Barring.

Any. Category. Of. People. Never. In. Way. Guilty. Of. Keeping. Anyone. Back. From. Jesus. From. The. Gospel. From. The. Word. And. What. They. Need.

To. Hear. Jesus. Loved. Children. And. His. Disciples. Should. Have. Loved. Children. And. His. Disciples. Today. Should. Love.

Children. And. So. In. Verse. Sixteen. You. See. That. Jesus. Called. The. Children. To. Him. Let. The. Little. Children. Come.

[11 : 50] And. I. Know. It's. Imagination. But. In. My. Own. Imagination. Knowing. Kids. And. Knowing. What. Kids.

Would. Try. To. Do. These. Kids. Are. Being. Pushed. Back. By. The. Disciples. And. They. Want. To. Go. To. Jesus. And. Disciples. Won't. Let. Let. Them. Then. Jesus. Says. Stop.

That. Let. The. Children. Come. You. Can. Imagine. All. Of. These. Children. Running. To. Jesus. Trying. To. See. Who. Would. Be. The. First.

To. Get. On. His. Lap. And. I. Like. To. Imagine. The. Disciples. Faces. As. They. Saw. This. As. They. Saw. The. Failure. Of. Their. Strategy.

And. As. They. Saw. Themselves. In. A. Sense. Being. Defeated. By. These. Children. Who. Have. One. And. Who. Have. One. Access. To.

[12 : 44] Jesus. Jesus. Wants. Them. And. Notice. Jesus. Says. In. Verse. Sixteen. For. The. Kingdom. Of. God. Belongs. To. Such. As. These. And. At. Least. Part. Of. The. Meaning. Of. That.

I. Think. Is. That. Children. Can. Be. Members. Citizens. Of. His. Kingdom. That.

The. Disciples. Are. Wrong. About. Children. That. The. Kingdom. Belongs. To. This. Category. As. Well. That. They. Can. Be. Christians.

And. Mark. Tells. Us. In. Verse. In. Verse. Sixteen. Of. His. Account. In. Mark. Ten. That. Jesus. Took. The. Children. In. His. Arms. Put. His. Hands.

On. Them. And. Blessed. Them. A. Picture. Of. Such. Affection. And. Concern. From. Jesus. Isn't. An. Amazing. Thing. When. You.

[13 : 37] Think. About. It. They. Were. Being. Hugged. By. God. Incarnate. They. Were. Receiving. A. Cuddle. From.

The. Word. Of. God. Made. Flesh. It's an amazing privilege for them. It's a picture of the gospel. When we come to know Jesus.

We are. Hugged. By. God. Incarnate. Who wants to enfold us. In his arms. And in his love. Now.

In all of this about. Jesus. Welcoming. Children. We are being called. To be. Like. Jesus. Concerned. To welcome.

Children. And value. Children. There are all kinds of ways in which. That might be applied. To us. Tonight. For example.

[14 : 34] We think of our own. Doctrine of. Infant baptism. That is such an important thing. In terms of our identity. As.

A church. That Jesus is willing to receive. Children. And bless. Children. And without offending. Anyone here. If you're from a Baptist church.

It's always been interesting to me. And I found it. Especially in St. Andrews. With so many people. From a Baptist background. Who would. Criticize. The free church.

For infant baptism. You know. I think. I think. Probably. Most of the people. I had in the church. In St. Andrews. Were from some kind of Baptist. Background. And they couldn't understand.

This baptizing children. But I would ask them. Well. What do you do in your church? Oh. We have infant dedication. I would say. Well. You're saying.

[15 : 28] I'm unbiblical. Where do you get that? In the book of Acts. Because they would always tell me. What churches do. Should be in the New Testament. And practice from the book of Acts.

Where do you get that? In the book of Acts. And. They would say. Well. It's not a sacrament. It's just something that we do. And I would say. Isn't it interesting. That.

You don't want infant baptism. But you can't help. But put something in its place. It's actually a good instinct. I don't think what they're doing is right. I think they should baptize children.

But their instinct is right. Because they have a savior who loves children. They want to bring their children to that savior. And have a service in the church. Which recognizes.

That this child is part. Of a special family. And God loves this family. They're actually. Covenant theologians.

[16:24] In another way. Though they don't realize it. Or we think of. The importance of children. Being accepted. In services of worship.

And being catered for. Now. I stand here. As somebody. Who. People might think. Well. You're not. You're not the first person.

I would take a bunch of toddlers. To listen to. You know. For 35 minutes. Or whatever. I accept that. But. I'm not. I'm not. Offering myself. As an example.

I'm. I'm trying to offer myself. And you. The challenge. Of this kind of passage. Of scripture. And saying. At our. Services. Of worship. Especially our. Sunday morning service.

Is it. Family friendly. Is it. Contemporary. Child friendly. And. If it's not. Are there things.

[17:20] We could do. To make it more. Accessible. To families. With their. Children. There are all kinds. Of issues there. Of course. It's also important.

For the church. To encourage parents. And to understand. The world. In which we live. And how. Fast changing. It is. And to be able. To. Speak.

And care. And counsel. And pastor. And provide things. So that. Parents. Are helped. In bringing up. Their. Children. In such a.

Challenging world. Helped by the church. In this. Pivotal. Role. That they have. I also think. It's important. To encourage. Young faith. If I was to go off.

On. On that topic. We'd be on it. For the rest. Of our time. And I'm going to try. And resist doing it. But. I believe. That young.

[18:15] Youthful. Christian faith. Should be. Encouraged. That our normal model. As covenant. Churches. Shouldn't be. That we expect. People. To grow to adulthood.

Not trusting in Jesus. And then have a dramatic. Conversion. In their twenties. Or even later. But the churches. With our theology. Should expect.

Younger. Faith. Let the little. Children come. Children come. It's also important. To encourage. Grandparents. How often. They have a key. Role. In the.

Spiritual life. Of a child. A lot of grandparents. Spend a lot of time. With young children. Nowadays. In child care. And they often.

Have a tremendously. Important role. In what the children do. And they need to be. Encouraged too. And all those who work. Among children. I don't know. All of you here.

[19:12] Involved in this. But it's important. For the church. To acknowledge. What people do. Among our children. I know there's a lot. Going on here. A lot of people. Are very committed. To work amongst.

Children and young people. And I hope you encourage. Marianne. In her work. And I hope you encourage. Those who teach. In Sunday school. And those who run. All the various activities.

And clubs. And so on. That you actually. Speak to these people. And thank them. And say that you pray for them. Specifically. That this ministry. Is on your heart.

So that they might be. Encouraged. In the work. That they do. And there's lots of other things. I could apply. But I leave that point. Where it is. Except to say this. That.

Some time ago. I must have said something. About. Children. And the future. Of the church. And somebody came to me. Afterwards. And said. What you said there.

[20 : 08] Was very very wrong. And they were right. That I was wrong. Because I said. Children. Are the future. Of the church. And they said.

No. Children. Are part of the church. Of the present. Children. Are part of the church. Now. They're not the future. Of the church. Though I know.

What they meant. Because I'd said it myself. I understand. What that means. But children. Are the church. Of the present. And need to be valued.

As part of the church. Of the present. Rather than thought of. As perhaps. Someday. Being significant. In the church. Of the future.

So Jesus. Welcomes children. And we need to. But secondly. Jesus. Welcomes. The childlike. Let me read again.

[21 : 01] From the middle of verse 16. Let the children. Come to me. And do not hinder them. For to such. Belongs. The kingdom of God. I think. Part of the meaning there. Is to do with being childlike.

It's not just children. That he welcomes. But the childlike. Truly. I say to you. Whoever does not receive. The kingdom of God. Like a child. Shall. Not.

Enter it. Now. We read earlier. In Matthew 18. Jesus. As Jesus. Spoke. About the importance. Of being.

Childlike. In entering the kingdom. And childlike. In living in the kingdom. He said. That the greatest. In the kingdom. Will be the one. Who is most. Like.

A child. And so. He says here. That the kingdom. Belongs. To such as these. And that the kingdom. Must be received. Like. A little.

[21 : 57] Child. So. There's an element. Of the childlike. In Christian. Conversion. And in Christian. Discipleship. Now. What does that mean?

Well. A couple of negatives. First of all. It doesn't mean. That we are to be. Childish. The epistles. Have a lot to say.

About being. Grown up. And mature. And. Feeding on meat. Than all the rest of it. And there's a danger. That. People might hear.

This about being. Childlike. And think. That it means. That they don't need. To grow. In knowledge. And in the rest of it. And the Christian. Church. Has had. The greatest.

Intellect. Sometimes. On the face. Of the earth. As believers. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. But. I've often. Noted. That these great.

[22 : 51] Intellectuals. Are also. Very. Very. Childlike. In their faith. They're not. Childish. But they can be. Very. Childlike. I knew a great.

Theologian. The United States. Called Cornelius. Van Till. We used to go to. Bible study. In his house. And. I used to try. To read his books. And I couldn't.

Understand them. And. I'm not that. Interested. In some of the things. He was doing anyway. But even when I. Tried. To understand. I often. Couldn't get the point. Of what he was saying.

Tremendous. Stratospheric. Intellect. And yet. A childlike. Believer. Or it's a story told. About one of the great. Theologians. In Scotland.

In the 19th century. And. He must have been. Preaching somewhere. He was staying in a house. And there were theological students there. And they thought. When he went. Off up to.

[23 : 46] To bed. That they would listen. Outside the door. For his. You know. Profound prayer. Never heard a prayer. Like this one. And they listened. Outside the door. And this great man.

Who'd been speaking theology. With them all evening. Said the 19th century. Equivalent of. As I lay me down. To sleep. I pray the Lord. My soul to keep. And so on.

He prayed a child's prayer. Then he got into bed. Presumably slept like a baby. Great mind. He wasn't childish. Though he was childlike.

Another negative is. This does not mean. That children are innocent. Sometimes taken that way. Children are sinners too. And we probably all know.

That even our own children. Even our own grandchildren. Are sinners too. So it doesn't mean being childish. And it doesn't suggest.

[24 : 44] That children are innocent. In that sense. So what does it mean positively? Well remember. We're thinking in the passage here. Of little children.

And. In our age of course. In our kind of culture. We know that some children are robbed of their childhood.

By neglect or abuse. Not thinking of that kind of child. We know also that children can grow up. Very quickly in our world. In a consumerist.

Media manipulated world. And be cynical and sophisticated. Beyond their years. Very early. So try to put these images out of your mind.

And just think. Of. A toddler. In that culture. In our culture. Who's enjoying a proper childhood. Or a three year old girl.

[25 : 43] At nursery. A five year old boy. On his first day at school. Just think of little children. Who are enjoying a proper childhood.

What might Jesus be saying to us. In pictures now. About what it means to be childlike. In entering the kingdom. And in living in the kingdom.

Well for the rest of our time. As quickly as I can. I want to go through a few pictures. That came to my own mind. And. You'll be glad to know.

That I stopped at ten. There are ten pictures. But they're very quick ones. They're just things. That came to my mind. As I reflected on this.

Images that flashed. Into my head. And I want to just run through them. Very quickly. I don't. I don't have visions. I'm not suggesting I have visions.

[26 : 41] But these are. The sorts of visions. That came to me. As I thought about this. Theme. They're not in any particular order. Just as I came up with them. And listed them. And in some cases.

They're more about coming into the kingdom. In other cases. They're more about being in the kingdom. But in each case. They're talking about. What it means spiritually. To be childlike.

Images of children. Number one. Is feeling small. Feeling small.

Do you remember what that was like? Being in. A crowd of people. When you were little. And the people around you were.

You know. You're two or three. And everybody around you seems so huge. They seem like giants. Spiritually.

[27 : 39] It's very important to recognize my own smallness. My own smallness in this vast universe. My own smallness before God.
That I'm spiritually small. And little. And weak. And helpless. And I'm needy. And I'm vulnerable. That idea of feeling small.
Is surely important. Or. Number two. Feeling afraid. Do you remember what it was like to be a child. And to be afraid.
Perhaps. Afraid of the dark. Wanting a light on. In your room. Or just outside it. Feeling afraid of being.
Left alone. Feeling afraid. When your. Parents went out for the evening. And you wanted to. Be sure that they would come back.

[28 : 37] At the end of the evening. And whatever your fears were. Now perhaps. Some of them seem very strange to you. But you can maybe just remember. What it was like. To have these.
Childhood. Fears. Spiritually. It's important. To recognize. That we should. Be afraid. Of certain things.
That we should be. Afraid. Of. Dying without. Jesus. Should be afraid. Of judgment. And a world beyond. And that in this world.
Of so much darkness. We should be afraid. Of the dark. And want to have the light. Of the world. In our lives. That we should be afraid. Of being alone.
And want somebody. In our lives. Who we can. Absolutely. Trust. Sometimes. I think.

[29 : 33] Women are better. At admitting this. Than men. Men don't want to. Be childlike. In the sense. And admit their fears. They want to be tough.
And macho. They don't need anybody. To help them. Through the dark. But we do. We need to admit that. Number three. Ripping off the paper.
My picture here. Is of a child. Getting a present. And they rip off the paper. And they can't wait. To get into. The present. Children are good.
At accepting. Gifts. And Jesus. Here is saying. Receive the kingdom. Of God. As a child. Receive it. As a.

Present. So often. Grown ups. Are. Cynical. About. A free gift. What's the catch.

[30 : 32] But you give a child. A gift. And they say. Is it really for me. Yeah. It's for you. Rip it open. And get it out. As quickly. As they can.
Jesus. Wants us. To that kind of attitude. To the gospel. Of the kingdom. It's a gift. It's free. It's for you. Open it up. Rip off the paper. And enjoy.
What's inside. Number four. I'll call this. Knowing. Breakfast. Will be. There. Remember.
When you didn't worry. About anything. You didn't worry. About. Earning money. To put food. On the table. I don't ever remember. As a little child. Worrying.
About whether my parents. Had enough. Money. To give me breakfast. In the morning. Never entered my head. I didn't lie awake. Worried about the bills. That had come in. I didn't know bills came in.

[31 : 27] I just got up in the morning. And expected. My breakfast. To be there. Because. You had a trust. A sense of dependence.
On your parents. And again. It's about. Finding somebody. You can depend on. Somebody who is. Worthy of your trust. As a savior.
As a father. As a friend. Believing that your father. Will look after you. You trust him. Like a child. That he knows. What he's doing. And what he's doing.

Is for the best. Number five. Curiosity. Of a child. Asking. Questions.

I think this is a characteristic. Of children. Isn't it? We all remember. The stage. When our children. One by one. Our grandchildren. Or friends. Began to say.

[32 : 22] Why? And then you get another. Why? And another. Why? You want to know. Why? And they ask you. Their questions. And their questions.

Are genuine. They're real questions. Often. Adult questions. Are genuine. They're. They're cynical. Or they're trying to. Show how clever.

The questioner is. Or they hope you don't know. The answer to their question. But children's questions. Are genuine. They want to know. And so. With us. If we're childlike.

Coming into the kingdom. And living in the kingdom. We ask questions. We ask questions. Of the Bible. Of God. Of others. Because we're hungry. To learn.

Number six. Listening to a story. Isn't that a picture. Of being a child. How some of us. As children. Love. Just to listen. To somebody.

[33 : 18] Reading a story. Or. Even better. Sometimes. The kind of person. Who was good at telling us. A story. Making up a story. Even as they went along. And we didn't know.

Where it was going. We loved. Listening. To stories. Children love listening. Well. So for us too. The childlike. Love. Listening. To Jesus.

Love. Listening. To his word. Want to learn. From him. An example. Of a childlike person. In the gospels. I think. Is Mary. The Mary and Martha story.

Isn't it true. That Martha. Is doing. The grown up stuff. But Mary. Is doing. The child stuff. She's sitting. On the floor.

At Jesus feet. Listening. To his stories. Number seven. Saying please.

[34 : 16] Making honest requests. Children will come. With their. Very simple. Direct. Requests. No beating. About the bush.

I need. A drink. Of juice. That's it. Somebody said. Recently. The only person. Who would. Waken up.

An emperor. At three in the morning. For a drink of juice. Is the emperor's child. Anybody else. Would be in trouble. But. When his little.

Three-year-old boy. Shakes them awake. And says. I want a drink. Of juice. Juice. The emperor. Doesn't put him. In. The tower. He gets them. A drink of juice.

Or gets somebody. To get it. Children coming. With their. Honest. Simple. Direct. Real. Requests. And that's how. The childlike. Come in our prayers.

[35 : 09] We come to. Abba. Father. And we say. This is how I feel. This is what I need. This is what I want. This is what I hope for. And we pour out.

Our. Honest. Souls. To God. And give him. Our requests. Number eight. If I'm counting these right.

Number eight. I just want to be here. That's a childlike thing to say. I remember our girls. They would sometimes. I'd be in the study.

And one of them would sometimes. Just come in and sit on the floor. And. I would say. I'm. I'm busy just now. But I. I can come and play. In a little while. Oh. It's all right.

Oh. Do you want something? No. I just want to be here. Are you sure? Yeah. I just want to sit with you. For a wee while. And they would sit for ten minutes. Just there.

[36 : 03] And then they would go away. And do something. And. I don't know why they did it. But they did it. And I've often thought that. The childlike are like that. They will just. Sometimes. Just want to be with somebody.

Just want to sit near them. Sit on their knee. Just be in the same room. And so with us. With God. We're. Happy to be near him. We just want to be with them.

We just want to be in his presence. We love him. And we want to be. Near him. Number nine. I love you lots.

You love when your kids. Or grandkids. Or nieces. Or nephews. Or whatever. Say that to you. And mean it. I love you lots. The unconditional love of a child. Well there it is too.

In the gospel. In the love. That is given to us. And the love that we respond with. Unconditional love of a child. You know the great criticism of.

[37 : 02] The church of Ephesus in Revelation. Is that they have lost their first love. They've lost the love of a child. The early love. And Jesus wants them.

To get back to where they were. And so we are called. To. Maintain and express. The childlike love.

That we had for the Lord. To seek to recapture it. If we've lost it. And just to be able to say to him. Again and again. I love you. I really love you.

You love me unconditionally. And I love you in return. Because you first loved me. And finally. Number ten. Wide eyed.

In wonder. The way that a child is. Wide eyed. With. A new experience.

[38 : 02] It's a characteristic of a child. Isn't it? To discover something new. And they're just so amazed. By it. I think of. People in St. Andrews.

Who came from. Very hot countries. Family from. Africa. For example. And. Their little. Tot. Seeing snow.

For the first time. I mean. Just the eyes. Were like. Saucers. What is going on here? This cold. White stuff. Was falling. From the sky.

And her hand is out. And it's falling on her hand. And melting. And. I mean. She would have sat there. All day. Looking at it. It was just so amazing.

Or. You've seen children. Seeing fireworks. For the first time. I remember our girls. First time. They saw fireworks. Each of them. And they were just. Blown away by it.

[38 : 57] By these things. Going up in the air. And exploding. And. Colors going everywhere. And then another one. Would go up. And another one. They couldn't believe. Their eyes.

Surely. With us too. Astonished. By the gospel. Continuing. To be. Fascinated. By. The gospel. Open eyed.

The. The stories of the bible. Are full of these kinds of encounters. Where people are. Full of awe. And amazement. Because of what's happening. Before their eyes. And you might say.

But. These things will pass. Well. I don't think so. I still get excited. About seeing snow falling. And. I still will stare. At the fireworks display.

It's not for the first time. And I know what's happening. But. You can still be fascinated. Again and again. By these same. Kinds of things. And so for us.

[39 : 55] In the wonder of Christ. In the wonder of forgiveness. In the wonder of answered prayer. In the wonder of a new insight. Into God's word.

In the wonder of a new experience. Of God and his grace. Moments that make your heart. Skip a beat. And you're wide eyed in wonder. At the whole.

We must never lose our. Spiritual capacity for wonder. As Christians. Childlike. Amazed. Open eyed.

Saucer eyed. Fascinated. By God and his word. And the glories of the gospel. I'd better finish. But. Jesus. Welcomes children.

And Jesus. Welcomes. The childlike. And we are all called. To come into his kingdom. As children. And continue to live in that kingdom.

[40 : 54] As childlike. Now and always. Amen. Let's finish in Psalm 131.

In Sing Psalms. Page 173. Psalm 131. Sing Psalms. Page 173.

My heart's not proud. Oh Lord. The second verse. My spirit I have calmed.

My heart is pacified. My soul is like a little child. Close. To its mother's side. I'll go to the main door at the end.

We sing the whole of 131. You stand to sing. And sing. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. My heart's not proud.

[41 : 49] Oh Lord. The quality is my heart. I do not love you by myself.

With things to great or high. My spirit I have calmed.

My heart is couched to hide. My soul is like a little child.

Close to his mother's side. Just like a little child.

My soul is bound in me. Oh, listen. Lord, we ask that grace, mercy, and peace from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be ours tonight and evermore.

[43 : 21] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Jesus, you're now! Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.