

Bless the Children
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
March 29, 2008

There are two programs in the area that I have brought in to make presentations to the Allen Rotary Club within the past month:

- Challenge Air
 - A program of volunteer pilots
 - They meet all day at a designated airport
 - Food and entertainment is provided
 - Children with challenges are allowed to actually pilot a plan
 - Blind
 - Paraplegic
 - Quadriplegic
 - All are treated with dignity
- Generous Kids
 - A program for all ages
 - Parents of children in each age group are given ideas to assist giving their children the attitude of giving
 - It may be money, or it may be time, or it may be making of a gift

Matthew 18:

- 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
 - the disciples question shows they were being childish – not childlike!
- 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,
- 3 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.
- 4 "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
 - What does it mean to humble oneself as a child?
 - devoid of arrogance – a child has yet to learn to be arrogant
 - not self-exalted – a child's self-esteem is not developed
 - submissive to authority
 - children are innocent
 - they have no prejudices
 - they have no inhibitions
 - they have no pre-conceived notions of how the world "should" be
- 5 "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.
- 6 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.
 - it is our responsibility to help those little children, whether real babies or babes in the faith
 - we should not be teaching them prejudices
 - we should not be teaching them inhibitions

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- we should be opening their minds to learning
- there are dire consequences for us if we don't

The importance of being childlike is stressed throughout the Bible. Children are mentioned 1802 times in 1515 verses in the whole Bible; 157 times in 148 verses in the NT alone.

In one episode of MASH:

- an abandoned child was left at the 4077th MASH unit
- a mix -- Korean/American
- the Koreans had no tolerance for a 'mixed breed'
- the American bureaucracy had no way to help
- the situation was clearly not the baby's fault
- the baby faced a future of chastisement, ridicule, denigration and probably death
- the child was eventually left at an orphanage that specialized in assisting in these situations
- the program highlighted our human insensitivity to real victims

Galatians 3:

- 26 For you are all sons (or children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Christ had to come as a child to be an example for us.

Isaiah 9:

- 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever

Matthew 7:

- 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
- 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
- 9 "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

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March 29, 2008

- 10 "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?"
- 11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"
- 12 "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

John 13:

- 31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him."
- 32 "If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately."
- 33 "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you."
- 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."
- 35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - Notice that, during his last hours, he referred to His disciples as "little children"
 - They weren't young; they weren't children, but in their knowledge and understanding

In another episode, another child was left at the MASH unit:

- this time, the unit adopted the child
- Captain Honeycutt became so enamored and concerned that he asked his wife if they could adopt him and she agreed
- In the end, the child's family came to reclaim him

Most of you are well aware of our situation with Matthew and James.

- Adopted from Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, Russia
- Left alone in an orphanage where the attendants are not allowed to bond with the children
- At age 18 or so, they would have been turned out to the streets

We have done a study of the Bible concerning adoption and found that an adopted child is no different than a natural born child.

Romans 8:

- 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

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March 29, 2008

Ephesians 1:

- 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

In **1 John**, the writer refers to his readers of his letter as “little children” eight times. In Chapter 3, John explains much of his meaning of referring to us as “children”

1 John 3:

- 1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
- 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
- 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
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- 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.
- 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
- 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.
- 10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

The book of **Proverbs** gives parents several statements of instruction of raising children:

- 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 20:

- 11 Even a child is known by his deeds, Whether what he does is pure and right.

Matthew 11:

- 25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

These instructions are paralleled with God’s relationship to us in:

- 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

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March 29, 2008

- and
- 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.
 - Just as God has left an inheritance to us, through the death of His Son

Matthew 18:

- 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
- 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,
- 3 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 19:

- 13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.
- 14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
- 15 And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

Luke 18:

- 16 But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Numbers 6:

- 22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
- 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:
- 24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;
- 25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;
- 26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.'"

Let us all join together for the Blessing of the Children.