



“Being Like Little Children”
Psalm 8:1-9; Matthew 18:1-4
October 5, 2008

Introduction: Since we celebrate today the infant baptism of Andy, it is a good moment to reflect on how each of us are called to be like little children.

Changing

What is the overarching message of Jesus? To answer this, we must go to the beginning of the Gospels, where John and Jesus both challenge us, saying in Matthew 3:2, 4:17, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.*” Repentance Biblically is more than just a change of mind or feeling sorry about our sins, repentance is a deliberate turning away from sin, a returning to God that can be seen in a change in behavior and daily living. The kingdom of heaven refers to the rule of God, as a present reality and as a future hope. In the text for this morning, Jesus tells us “*I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*” Change, or repentance and admission of our sins is central to our becoming who God wants us to be. In his book, **The Doctrine of Repentance**, Thomas Watson tells us, “*the two great graces essential to a saint in this life are faith and repentance.*” We can only become like Jesus after repentance and after admitting how we are sinful and need Him. Paul Copan gives us a working definition for sin: *Sin is in essence doing what we want; sin is having attitudes that are self centered and self absorbed rather than God centered.* How much are you changing? Where and how do you need to change today?

Humbling Ourselves

Being like little children also involves humbling ourselves. Jesus reminds us, “*Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*” Jesus reiterates this elsewhere, saying in Mark 10:43-44, “*Instead, whoever want to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.*” Humility is essentially having a healthy and correct understanding of who we are and who God is. Scripture reminds us of the blessings of humility. Psalm 149:4 tells us, “*For the Lord takes delight in His people, He crowns the humble with salvation.*” James affirms the call to humility, saying in 4:10, “*Humble yourself before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*” I was reading the book **The Case for the Real Jesus**, by Lee Strobel. One point is that all of the issues people have with Jesus these days are not intellectual ones, but heart ones. People do not want to believe in the real Jesus, because they do not want to repent or to change their lives. In our hearts, are we willing to be humble, are we really willing to be like Jesus? The key here is whenever we have conflict, to remind ourselves, it is not about me, or as Rick Warren reminds us, *life is not about you* (or for that matter about me).