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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Advent

*Like a Child*  
*Matthew 18:1-4*

Children did *not hold* a special place in the heart of adults at the time of Jesus. They were little more than slightly valuable property, if they were male children.

But they did hold a *very special place* in the heart of Jesus.

When Jesus' own disciples wondered who was the greatest among them, Jesus brought a child before them and told them to look----  
 look at this child---*become like this---*  
 because whoever becomes humble like this child  
 is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

It was not what they were expecting.  
 Jesus took a little person with *no respect* for any status or privilege,  
 someone totally *dependent* upon others,  
 someone *amazed* by life itself---  
 and said—this, this is your example for greatness in the kingdom of heaven.

And it's still our example for faith today.

Why?  
 Why should we become child-like in our faith?  
 There are plenty of *childish* qualities we don't need to have....

God doesn't want us to become childish.  
 No, God wants us to become child-like in our faith.

First think about the *wonder* of children.  
 Kids have an incredible sense of wonder.

Every Sunday they are amazed at what I am bringing for them in the treat basket. They marvel at the beauty of life, like bunnies in the yard, and butterflies in the courtyard at Pentecost. And of course they know that the *answers to life's* most important questions, are usually 'God' and 'Jesus'.

*In the fall of 2005, 8-year-old Briton Nordemeyer of Brandon, South Dakota, lost her tooth. Briton had heard about the victims of hurricane Katrina, and wanted to help the little children who lost all of their possessions. So, she decided to donate the money the tooth fairy would bring for her missing tooth to the local chapter of the Red Cross.*

*Instead of waiting for the tooth fairy to arrive, however, Briton mailed her tooth to the Red Cross. She included a letter explaining her desire, and her confidence that the tooth fairy would render payment upon arrival.*

*When news about Briton's generosity reached the public, the Red Cross received a \$500 donation from an anonymous donor who had heard the story and wanted to help provide a fairy-tale ending. Sam O'Neal, St. Charles, Illinois; source: Todd Hertz, "\$500 Tooth Saves the Day," Ignite Your Faith (June 2006), p. 41*

Kids are also ***humble***.

By this I mean that they are usually oblivious to status, hard work, & money, The little ones don't care that I went to Princeton, or got up at 5:30 to prepare for worship, or how much money I make....they just want to hear stories and love.

You know how Jesus says whoever welcomes a child in my name ***welcomes me***? Know people you just can't stand because you are paying attention to their status, or work (or lack of), or their money (or lack of)?

Well, just imagine these people who anger or repulse, or frustrate you, Imagine them as smiling cooing little babies, or toddling toddlers. Isn't it easier to welcome them if this is how you see them?

Isn't it interesting that God came to earth in the flesh as a ***baby***?  
Pretty humble.

Kids are not just full of ***wonder***, and blissfully ***humble***,  
They are also ***dependent***.  
They can't make it in this world all alone. And they know it.

(they may protest with lots of ‘I do it myself’, but ultimately they are dependent).  
Jesus himself entered the planet completely reliant on Mary and Joseph.

Kids want to have big people *to lean on, to trust,*  
to love, to hold onto in life.  
They want role models, and mentors,  
stories to live by, and people who will hold them up and hold them accountable.

So what about *you*?  
Could you use a little more *wonder, humility,*  
*and trust* in something beyond yourself? I could!  
Not exactly what you hear advertised on TV.....  
But definitely what we hear from our Savior Jesus.

After all, He’s the *one who said*  
The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.  
Whoever wants to be first, shall be servant of all.  
Those who lose their lives will find them, and those who find will lose.

*What about you?*  
Do you need to take time to be amazed at the world around you?  
To marvel at the twinkle lights on the tree, or the big moon in the sky?

Do you need to be *blind to the power,* money or privilege of people,  
And just see them as little children for once?

Do you need to *trust in God* a little bit more?  
Hold onto God, look up for a role model, a mentor,  
Look to the Bible for some stories to live by, to your church family for some  
people who will hold you up and hold you accountable?

Who is *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven?  
Whoever becomes humble like a child is the greatest in the kingdom....  
whoever welcomes a child in Jesus’ name welcomes Jesus

And what do we look *forward to in heaven?*  
A day when the wolf will live with the lamb,  
The leopard will lie down with the kid,  
The calf and the fatling together....and a little child will lead them.....(Isaiah  
11:6)