

SERMON
By: Gail Fricker

“Through the Eyes of a Child”

October 14, 2018

Mark 10:13-16

What is the kingdom of heaven? "It's where girls get turned into angels . . . and then God tries to do the best he can with the boys."

Or... "It's a place where there are no doctors or lawyers . . . They don't need them because God does all the healing and because all arguments are against the law."

Out of the mouths of children come some of the most refreshingly personal views of about God's kingdom, all recorded in David and Elizabeth Heller's recent book.

The authors write that after extensive interviews with the kids, a separation of Earth and heaven has never seemed so tenuous or insignificant.

Throughout the 101-page book, children tell of a personal God deeply involved in their lives.

God is not portrayed as a distant, wrathful judge, but as a loving caretaker.

Johny, age 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ goes to great lengths to explain that he sees God as neither male or female, writing:

"God wears one side pink with a skirt, and the other side blue with pants". (A United Church Minister in the making!)

And Urma, age 11, clearly understands the concept of Kingdom of heaven earth, saying: "God lives wherever you imagine. ... To believe in God, you need to imagine. God does anything you can imagine."

This collection of children's heavenly thoughts is not only humorous, but it reveals the strong faith of childhood.

Perhaps this is what Jesus is referring to when he says

“anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, will never enter it.” (Mark 10:15)

Is Jesus reminding his disciples, and us, to have the simple faith of a child? Is she suggesting that we should look at the Kingdom of God through the eyes of a child?

In our world, we are sometimes guilty of trying to over rationalize and understand the world around us too much. We use our God given scientific knowledge to explain the world with theories and formulas. Creation becomes a big bang occurring eons ago in the nothingness of

space. Light is broken down into seven colors, each with specific wave lengths. Substances are broken down into symbols and numbers. And events like hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and volcanoes are analyzed in terms of the magnitude of force. We see the world through the eyes of a scientist, and we marvel!

Or perhaps we see the world through the eyes of a historian. Great events are recorded for posterity. We become obsessed with political leaders, elections and movements. Strikes, famines and revolutions are reported in terms of lasting effects on humanity. We see the world through the eyes of the historian, and we tremble.

Or do we have the lens of an accountant with columns of figures, ledgers and balance sheets? Is our primary concern with our profit and loss; with the buying and selling of shares; with personal investments and gains through mutual funds, and stocks? When we see the world through the eyes of the accountant, we begin to question our values.

Somewhere along the way, in our great search for knowledge and truth, we have forgotten to look at God's Kingdom through the simple eyes of child. We have forgotten that there are some things that we just can not explain. We have tried to analyze, research, and record, and in doing so, we have left no room for God's Holy mystery.

But Jesus reminds us that we must "receive the kingdom of God like a little child". We must be willing to let go of our need to understand everything. Our need to control. Our need to explain. And instead, we need to trust in God's love with the simple, accepting heart of a child.

That is why Jesus scolded his disciples for keeping the children away.

That is why Jesus tells us to be like children.

That is why Jesus says:

"the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (v14)

And that is why Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them.

As we bless Mason and Maggie today, let us remember, that we are all children of God. That we are all blessed by God. And as we make promises to God today, may we live in a way that the separation of Earth and heaven becomes smaller and smaller, so that we can see God's Kingdom of peace and justice in our world around us.

(Parts of this sermon is adapted from "There is a Season" by Betty Radford Turcott. Pages 100-101)