

Week of January 8-14

“BABY” LESSONS

Scripture Reading: Read Matthew chapter 5

Years ago, the Christian organization, Focus on the Family, described a wonderful way to teach children (and adults too!) a spiritual lesson that we can find in our Scripture reading today. The parent was instructed to stand at the top of a staircase and to challenge their child to find a way to get to the top of the stairs without touching the stairs or the rails or the walls. The child was told that a solution was possible. After a few minutes, and some failed attempts by the child, the parent was to descend the stairs and have the child hop on the parent’s back so that he or she could piggyback them up the stairs

This same principle is at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus lays out many radical demands for his would-be followers. Christ’s kingship is to cover every aspect of our lives: our relationships, our thoughts, our words, our actions, our use of our time and money, our jobs, our goals and dreams, etc. His kingship demands are summed up with his challenge to “Be perfect, therefore, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” Many people try to “climb the stairs” to reach God’s perfect standards but all fail. To climb the stairs without touching them, the rails or the walls is impossible. To meet the standard Jesus demands is even more impossible...on our own.

Mercifully, though, we are not on our own. The King provides the righteousness that sinners can’t produce to all those who acknowledge they are “poor in spirit.” Only those who know they have no claim on God’s mercy are in a position to throw themselves on God’s mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It is only when a child depends completely on his or her parent, and not in their own ability, that they can reach the top of the stairs. It is only when we fully trust in Jesus that he carries us on his back to the Father and we reach “the top of the stairs” and experience salvation.

That’s not all, however. At salvation, God’s Spirit takes up residence inside of us and begins to change our lives from the inside out so that the commands the King demands are able to be met in us, not in our strength, but in his. As his kingship takes root in our lives we begin to see the character of the King being developed in us. Then, our godly lives in Christ allow us to serve as salt of the earth and as light of the world pointing others to the King.

Action Step: Take a look at one of your baby pictures. Reflect for a few moments on how dependent you were on your parent(s) as a baby. Then, connect those thoughts to what Jesus says in Matthew 5:3 and our need for His grace.

Prayer Focus: For the Lord to give you a “baby”-like dependence upon Him.

Take-a-way: *The way up is down...in humble dependence upon the King!*