

## **“Like a Little Child” – Part 2**

Ephesians 1:3-7

→ How do you respond to the gap between what every child needs—and what every child gets?

### **HOW THE BIBLE SHEPHERDS US THROUGH THE GAP BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND REALITY**

#### **1. The Gospel and the Kingdom introduce a new reality for those who are born again. Eph. 2:3-7**

- A new reality. v.3 ‘every spiritual blessing in Christ’
- A new history. v.4 ‘in Christ He chose us before the foundation of the world’
- A new family. v.5 ‘adoption as sons’  
-Adoption in an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.
- A new purpose. v.6 ‘to the praise of his glorious grace’
- Forgiveness—and grace lavished on us. v.7

→ This new reality overtakes—but does not erase—our story.

#### **2. Many of our on-going struggles and difficulties come from things we experienced in childhood.**

- 1 Corinthians 13:11: When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

→ There are things we truly believe—about God, ourselves, the world—that are simply wrong.

#### **3. It takes intentionality, perseverance, and work to change.**

- Repentance (turning around and going in the other direction) is both a process and a decision.
- 1 Cor. 15:9-10: For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not without effect. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
- 3 essentials: The Word of God, a walk (daily relationship) with God, and the community of God's people.
- Sometimes we have right longings, but wrong strategies. Proverbs 27:7: He who is full loathes honey, but to one who is hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

#### **4. We tend to focus on what we don't have—rather than on the reality of what we DO have in Christ.**

- 2 Cor 8:12: For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.
- John 6:9: “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?”

#### **5. We live in an increasingly “victim” culture which focuses on the ways we have been wronged.**

- Repair—not reparations. Forgiveness—not fighting.
- Both the one asking for forgiveness and the one granting forgiveness must give up their power and rights.

#### **6. God is working a greater purpose through our pain and struggles.**

- John 9 – Jesus and his disciples pass a man blind since birth.
- Disciples: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
- Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Matthew 11:28-30: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Psalm 73:25-26: Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

## **SOME OF THE CORE NEEDS OF EVERY CHILD**

### **1. Basic care and nurture.**

- Provision. Healthy food to eat. Proper rest. Medical and dental care.

### **2. A safe and secure environment. Home is a place to “settle” oneself physically, emotionally, spiritually.**

### **3. Relational connection and belonging.**

- Attachment (healthy connecting with others) and attunement (like tuning a radio).

### **4. To learn boundaries. Learning limits, ‘right & wrong’, challenge & support, discipline.**

### **5. Regular reinforcement of personal worth**

- Repeated messages that the child is valued, unique, and special

### **6. Encouragement to grow and develop personal gifts and talents.**

- Opportunities to try new things; learn about oneself; home is a safe ‘home base’ after trying something new

### **7. A pathway to healthy sexuality.**

- What does it mean to be a man? A woman? How are they to relate? Male headship in the home. The goodness and dangers of sexuality.

### **8. A healthy pathway to fellowship with God.**

- Modeling. Teaching. Repairing.