

Speaking to the soul



Childlike

Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!” Matthew 11:25-26

I seem to have spent my life surrounded by children. When I was nine years old my mother gave birth to twin girls –

much to her surprise! From then on, I have almost always had children around me - whether our own three children, our foster daughter or friends' children who my wife has been looking after. I thank God for this blessing and dare to think that it has helped me to understand Jesus' insistence that the only way to enter his kingdom is by being childlike.

I don't believe that Jesus was in any way belittling the blessing and importance of being wise and clever. His point is that wisdom and cleverness by themselves will never lead to spiritual wisdom. Indeed, they can often obstruct the path to the kingdom of God by making a person arrogant and self-confident. The person who is childlike knows that they don't have all the answers, and that is central to humility. Only as we come to the Lord with empty hands, and a willingness to go on an adventure with him, is he able to work in our lives.

Some while ago, our foster daughter acquired some caterpillars. The pleasure of seeing them turn into cocoons was something that we all shared. To see them completely change in nature was a matter of delight for all of us. And then, after a few days in a state of apparent lifelessness, our foster daughter squealed with joy when, one by one, they turned into beautiful butterflies.

One sunny afternoon we all went into the back garden and released them. I could give a long, scientific account of all that happened, but that could easily miss the sheer wonder of the process. It takes a childlike spirit to enter into the amazing miracle of life and growth. I think that's what Jesus was getting at here. We need to be humble enough to see

the amazing miracles that God is doing in our world every single day.

QUESTION

In what ways do you need to become more childlike?

PRAYER

Lord God our Father, help me to be humble enough to look at life with childlike eyes. Amen

