

As a Little Child

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Ligesom et lille barn

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I testify that babies and children and youth are images of the kingdom of God flourishing on earth in all of its strength and beauty.

Jesus began the last year of His mortal life by intensifying the training of His Apostles. If His message and His Church were to survive Him, more had to be pressed into the hearts of 12 very ordinary men who had known Him for scarcely 24 months.

One day Jesus witnessed an argument among the Twelve and later asked, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves?” Apparently embarrassed, they “held their peace,” the record says. But this greatest of all teachers perceived the thoughts of their hearts and sensed the first blush of personal pride. So He “called a little child unto him, ...

“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

It should be noted that even before Christ’s birth, King Benjamin’s farewell sermon included this profound comment on a child’s humility. It says, “The natural man is an enemy to God, ... and will be, forever and ever, unless he ... becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, ... humble, ... full of love, ... even as a child [responds] to his father.”

Now, there are obviously some infantile inclinations we don’t encourage. Twenty-five years ago, my then-three-year-old grandson bit his five-year-old sister on the arm. My son-in-law, caring

Jeg vidner om, at spædbørn og børn og unge er billeder på Guds rige, der blomstrer på jorden i al dets styrke og skønhed.

Jesus intensiverede oplæringen af sine apostle, da han nærmede sig det sidste år af sin jordiske tjenestegerning. Hvis hans budskab og hans kirke skulle overleve ham, skulle der presses mere ind i hjertet på 12 almindelige mænd, der knap og nap havde kendt ham i 24 måneder.

En dag blev Jesus vidne til en diskussion blandt De Tolv og spurgte senere: »Hvad var det, I talte om på vejen?« Men tilsyneladende flove over deres diskussion »sagde [de] ikke noget«, fortæller optegnelsen. Men den største af alle lærere vidste, hvad der rørte sig i deres hjerte, og fornemmede en spæd antydning af menneskeligt hovmod. Så »han kaldte et lille barn hen til sig ...

og sagde: »Sandelig siger jeg jer: Hvis I ikke vender om og bliver som børn, kommer I slet ikke ind i Himmeriget.

Den, der ydmyger sig og bliver som dette barn, er den største i Himmeriget.«

Det bør bemærkes, at selv inden Kristus blev født, var kong Benjamin i sin afskedstale kommet med denne dybe udtalelse om børns ydmyghed. Der står: »For det naturlige menneske er en fjende af Gud ... og vil være det for evigt og altid, medmindre han ... bliver en hellig ved Herren Kristi forsoning og bliver som et barn, underdanig ... ydmyg ... fuld af kærlighed ... ligesom et barn underordner sig sin far.«

Med det sagt, så er der nogle barnlige tilbøjeligheder, vi selvfølgelig ikke tilskynder til. For 25 år siden bed mit dengang treårige barnebarn sin søster, der dengang var 5 år, i armen. Min svi-

for the children that night, frantically taught his daughter all the lessons on forgiveness he could think of, concluding that her little brother probably didn't even know what a bite on the arm felt like. That ill-conceived fatherly comment worked for about a minute, maybe a minute and a half, until there was a window-rattling cry from the children's bedroom, where my granddaughter calmly called out, "He does now."

So what is it that we are to see in the virtues of life's junior varsity? What was it that brought Christ Himself to tears in the most tender scene in the entire Book of Mormon? What was Jesus teaching when He called down heavenly fire and protective angels to surround those children, commanding the adults to "behold [their] little ones"?

We don't know what prompted all of that, but I have to think it had something to do with their purity and innocence, their inborn humility, and what it could bring to our lives if we retain it.

Why are our days of despair labeled by one as "vanity of vanities"? How is it that "vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men" are the words that characterize the great and spacious building, so spiritually dead in Lehi's vision? And the Zoramites, that group who prayed so self-servingly? Of them Alma said, "O God, they [pray] unto thee with their mouths, while they are puffed up ... with the vain things of the world."

By contrast, is there anything sweeter, more pure, or more humble than a child at prayer? It is as if heaven is in the room. God and Christ are so real, but for others later on, the experience can become more superficial.

As Elder Richard L. Evans quoted some 60 years ago: "Many of us profess to be Christians, yet we ... do not take Him seriously. ... We respect Him, but we don't follow Him. ... We quote His sayings, but we don't live by them." "We admire Him, but we don't worship Him."

How different life could be if the world esteemed Jesus above the level of a profane swearing streak from time to time.

But children really do love Him, and that love can carry over into their other relationships

gersøn, der tog sig af børnene den aften, prøvede hektisk lige der, midt i situationen, at lære sin datter alt det om tilgivelse, han kunne komme i tanke om, og afsluttede med, at hendes lillebror nok ikke engang vidste, hvordan det føltes at blive bidt i armen. Denne ugennemtænkte faderlige kommentar lod til at virke i omtrent et minut, måske halvandet minut, indtil et skrig, der fik vinduerne til at klirre, lød fra børnenes værelse, hvorfra min datters datter roligt råbte: »Nu ved han det!«

Hvad er det så for dyder, vi bør have øje for blandt dem på livets juniorhold? Hvad var det, der rørte Kristus selv til tårer i den mest rørende scene i hele Mormons Bog? Hvad var det, Jesus lærte os ved at sige »se jeres små«, da han nedkaldte himmelsk ild og skærmende engle, som omgav de små?

Vi ved ikke, hvad der medførte alt det, men jeg er nødt til at tro, at det havde noget at gøre med deres renhed og uskyldighed, deres medfødte ydmyghed, og hvad det kunne føre med sig i vores liv, hvis vi holder fast ved det.

Hvorfor er vores svære tider blevet omtalt som »endeløs tomhed«? Hvorfor er det, at ordene »menneskenes børns tomme indbildninger og stolthed« karakteriserer den store og rummelige bygning, der er så åndeligt død i Lehis drøm? Og zoramitterne, den gruppe, der bad så egenkærligt? Om dem sagde Alma: »Se, o Gud, de anråber dig med deres mund, mens de er opblæste i storhed over verdens tomme ting.«

Er der på den anden side noget mere sødt, mere rent eller mere ydmygt end et barns bøn? Det er som om himlen er i lokalet. Gud og Kristus er så virkelige for dem, hvor det for andre senere hen kan blive en mere overfladisk rutine.

Som ældste Richard L. Evans citerede for mere end 60 år siden: »Mange af os bekender os til at være kristne, men vi ... tager ham ikke alvorligt ... Vi respekterer ham, men vi følger ham ikke ... Vi citerer hans ord, men vi lever ikke efter dem.« Vi beundrer ham, men vi tilbæder ham ikke.«

Hvor anderledes ville livet ikke være, hvis verden satte Jesus højere og ikke blot brugte hans navn som et led i en række skældsord fra tid til anden.

Men børn elsker ham virkelig, og den kærlighed overføres til deres andre forhold på livets

in the playground of life. As a rule, even in their youngest years, children love so easily, they forgive so readily, they laugh so delightfully that even the coldest, hardest heart can melt.

Well, the list goes on and on. Purity? Trust? Courage? Character?

Come with me to view the humility before God demonstrated by one young, very dear friend of mine.

On January 5, 2025—91 days ago—Easton Darrin Jolley had the Aaronic Priesthood conferred upon him and was ordained a deacon in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Easton had longed to pass the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for as long as he could remember. But this sacred opportunity was accompanied by the stomach-wrenching fear that he would fail, that he would fall, that he would be teased or embarrass himself and his family.

You see, Easton has a rare and very destructive illness, Ullrich congenital muscular dystrophy. It has progressively filled his young life with formidable challenges while shattering his hopes and dreams for the future. He will soon be in a wheelchair permanently. His family does not talk about what awaits him after that.

The Sunday after his ordination, Easton would pass the sacrament for the first time. And his privately held motivation was that he could present himself and these sacred emblems to his father, who was the bishop of the ward. In anticipating that task, he had begged and pled and wept and begged, extracting a guarantee that no one, no one, would try to help him. For many reasons, private to himself, he needed to do this alone and unaided.

After the priest had broken the bread and blessed it—an emblem representing the broken body of Christ—Easton, with his broken body, limped up to receive his tray. However, there were three sizable steps from the meetinghouse floor to the elevated stand. So, after receiving his tray, he stretched up as high as he could and placed his tray on the surface above the handrail. Then, sitting down on one of the higher steps, with both hands he pulled his right leg up onto the first step. Then he pulled his left leg onto the same step, and so on up until, arduously, he was at the summit of his personal three-step Mount Everest.

He then maneuvered himself to a structur-

legeplads. Som regel, selv i deres allerførste år, har børn let ved at elske, de tilgiver beredvilligt, og deres latter kan smelte selv det koldeste og hårdeste hjerte.

Ja, listen fortsætter og fortsætter. Renhed? Tillid? Mod? Karakter?

Kom med mig og se den ydmyghed over for Gud, som en af mine kære unge venner udviste.

Den 5. januar 2025 – for 91 dage siden – fik Easton Darrin Jolley overdraget Det Aronske Præstedømme, og han blev ordineret som diakon i Jesu Kristi Kirke af Sidste Dages Hellige.

Easton havde længtes efter at omdele Herrens nadver lige så længe, som han kunne huske. Men denne hellige mulighed blev ledsaget af mavepinefremkaldende frygt for, at han ikke kunne finde ud af det, at han ville falde, at han ville blive drillet eller bringe skam over sig selv eller sin familie.

Ser I, Easton lider af en sjælden og meget nedbrydende sygdom, Ullrich kongenit muskeldystrofi. Den har løbende fyldt hans unge liv med store udfordringer, alt imens den har knust hans håb for og drømme om fremtiden. Han vil snart skulle bruge en kørestol permanent. Hans familie taler ikke om, hvad der venter ham efter det.

Søndagen efter han var blevet ordineret, skulle Easton omdele nadveren for første gang. Og hans ønske, som han holdt for sig selv, var at kunne gå hen og give disse hellige emblemer til sin far, der var menighedens biskop. Forventningsfuld havde han tigget og bedt og grædt og tryglet og fået om en garanti om, at ingen, ingen, ville prøve at hjælpe ham. Af mange årsager, som han holdt for sig selv, havde han brug for at gøre det selv og alene.

Da præsten havde brudt brødet og velsignet det – et symbol der repræsenterer Kristi sønderbrudte legeme – fik Easton med sit nedbrudte legeme haltet sig op for at modtage sin bakke. Men der var tre store trin op til forhøjningen. Så efter han havde modtaget sin bakke, strakte han sig, så langt han kunne, og satte bakken på fladen over gelænderet. Så satte han sig på et af de øverste trin, og med begge hænder trak han sit højre ben op på det første trin. Så trak han sit venstre ben op på det samme trin og så fremdeles, indtil han med stor anstrengelse havde besteget sit personlige tretrins-Mount Everest.

Dernæst manøvrerede han sig hen til en

al post by which he could climb to a standing position. He made his way back to the tray. A few more steps and he stood in front of the bishop, his father, who, with tears drenching his eyes and flooding down his face, had to restrain himself from embracing this perfectly courageous and faithful son. And Easton, with relief and a broad smile consuming his face, might well have said, "I have glorified [my father and] have finished the work [he gave] me to do."

Faith, loyalty, purity, trust, honor, and, in the end, love for that father he so wished to please. These and a dozen other qualities make us also say, "Whosoever ... shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Sisters and brothers and friends, at the top of the list of the most beautiful images I know are babies and children and youth as conscientious and priceless as those we have referred to today. I testify that they are images of the kingdom of God flourishing on earth in all of its strength and beauty.

In that same spirit of testimony, I bear witness that in his youth, Joseph Smith saw what he said he saw and conversed with those with whom he said he spoke. I testify that a humble and pure Russell M. Nelson is God's ordained and gifted prophet and seer. Coming from a lifetime of reading, I bear witness that the Book of Mormon is the most rewarding book I have ever read and the keystone of my little dwelling in a kingdom of many mansions. I bear witness that priesthood and prayer are restoring my life—Christ's priesthood and your prayers. I know all this to be true and bear witness of it in the name of the most loyal and humble of all God's sons—Alpha and Omega, the Great I Am, the crucified, the faithful witness—even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

bærende stolpe, som han kunne rejse sig op ved. Han fik stavret sig tilbage til bakken. Et par skridt mere og så stod han foran biskoppen, hans far, der med tårerne strømmende ned ad sine kinder måtte beherske sig for ikke at omfavne denne så fuldkomment modige og trofaste søn. Og Easton, der lettet stod der med et bredt smil, kunne meget vel have sagt: »Jeg har herliggjort [min fader og] fuldfør[t] den gerning, [han] har givet mig at gøre.«

Tro, loyalitet, renhed, tillid, ære og i sidste ende kærlighed til den far, han så gerne ville behage. Disse og dusinvis af andre kvaliteter gør, at vi også kan sige, at »den, der ydmyger sig og bliver som dette barn, er den største i Himmeriget«.

Søstre og brødre og venner, jeg vidner om, at øverst på listen over de smukkeste billeder, jeg har set, er spædbørn og børn og unge, ligeså samvittighedsfulde og dyrebare som dem, vi har omtalt her i dag. Jeg vidner om, at de er billeder på Guds rige, der blomstrer på jorden i al dets styrke og skønhed.

I den samme ånd bærer jeg vidnesbyrd om, at Joseph Smith i sin ungdom så det, han sagde, han så, og han talte med dem, han sagde, han talte med. Jeg vidner om, at en ydmyg og ren Russell M. Nelson er Guds ordinerede og begavede profet og seer. Udfra en livslang læsning bærer jeg vidnesbyrd om, at Mormons Bog er den mest givende bog, jeg nogensinde har læst, og at den er hjørnesteinen i min lille hybel i et kongerige med mange boliger. Jeg bærer vidnesbyrd om, at præstedømmet og bøn fornyr mit liv – Kristi præstedømme og jeres bønner. Jeg ved, at alt dette er sandt, og jeg vidner om dette i det navn, der tilhører den mest loyale og ydmyge af alle sønner – Alfa og Omega, den store Jeg Er, den korsfæstede og det trofaste vidne, ja Herren Jesus Kristus. Amen.