

As a Little Child

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Kama Mtoto Mdogo

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Kaimu Rais wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

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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,

Ninashuhudia kwamba watoto wachanga na watoto na vijana ni sura ya ufalme wa Mungu iki-nawiri duniani katika nguvu zake zote na uzuri.

Yesu alianza mwaka wa mwisho wa maisha Yake duniani kwa mafunzo ya kina kwa Mitume Wake. Kama ujumbe Wake na Kanisa Lake vingepasa kibakia baada yake, vingi vingepaswa kuandikwa katika mioyo ya wanaume hawa 12 wa kawaida ambao walikuwa wamemjua Yeye kwa takribani miezi 24.

Siku moja Yesu alishuhudia mabishano miongoni mwa wale Kumi na Wawili na baadaye akawauliza “Mlishindania nini njiani?” Ni wazi wakiona aibu kwa kubishana kule, “walinyamaza,” kumbukumbu inasema hivyo. Lakini huyu mkuu zaidi ya waalimu wote aliona mawazo ya mioyo yaona kuhisi mwanzo wa ukuaji wa majivuno binafsi. Hivyo “alimuita mtoto mdogo, ...

“Na akasema, Amin, nawaambia, Msipoon-goka, na kuwa kama watoto wadogo, hamtaingia katika ufalme wa mbinguni.

“Yeyote ajinyenyeshe mwenyewe kama mtoto huyu, huyo ndiye aliye mkuu katika ufalme wa mbinguni”

Ikumbukwe kwamba hata kabla ya kuzaliwa kwa Kristo, mahubiri ya mwisho ya Mfalme Benjamini yalijumuisha maoni muhimu kuhusu unyenyekevu wa mtoto. Yanasema “Mwanadamu wa kawaida ni adui kwa Mungu, ... na atakuwa, milele na milele, asipokubali ... kuwa mtakatifu kupitia upatanisho wa Kristo aliye Bwana, na kuwa kama mtoto, mtiifu, ... mnyenyekevu, ... wingi wa upendo, ... kama vile mtoto [hunyenyekea] kwa baba yake.”

Sasa, ni wazi kuna baadhi ya mienendo ya kitoto ambayohatuihimizi. Miaka ishirini na tano

my then-three-year-old grandson bit his five-year-old sister on the arm. My son-in-law, caring 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 es-

iliyopita, mjukuu wangu wa miaka mitatu aliuma mkono wa dada yake wa miaka mitano. Mkwewe wangu akiwa na watoto usiku huo, kwa hasira alimfundisha bintiye masomo yote ambayo angeweza kufikiria kuhusu msamaha, akihitimisha kwamba kaka yake mdogo pengine hakujua hata jinsi kung'atwa mkono kunakuwaje. Mawazo haya ya baba ambayo hayakuwa yamefikiriwa vizuri yalifanya kazi kwa karibu dakika moja, labda dakika moja na nusu, mpaka kuliposikika sauti kali ya kilio kutoka chumba cha kulala cha watoto ambapo mjukuu wangu wa kike alisema, "Sasa anajua."

Basi ni kipi ambacho tunapaswa kukiona kwenye maisha ya wadogo? Kilikuwa ni kipi kilichomfanya Kristo Mwenyewe kutokwa machozi katika tukio la kinyeyekevu kwenye Kitabu cha Mormoni? Kilikuwa ni kipi Yesu alikifundisha wakati alipoamuru moto toka mbinguni na malaika wenye kulinda kuwazunguka watoto wale, akiwaamuru wakubwa "kuwatazama watoto [wao] wadogo"?

Hatujui kile kilicholeta haya yote, lakini ninafikiria ilikuwa ni kuhusu usafi na utakatifu wao, unyenyekevu wao wa kuzaliwa nao, na kile ambachokingewezakuletwa katika maisha yetu kutokana na hayo.

Kwa nini siku zetu za kukatisha tamaa zilipe-wa jina na mtu mmoja kama "Ubatili mtupu"? Ni kwa jinsi gani kwamba "mawazo yasiyofaa na kiburi cha watoto wa watu" ni maneno ambayo ni sifa za jengo kubwa na pana ambalo limekufa kiroho katika ono la Lehi? Na Wazoramu, lile kundi ambao waliosali kwa kujitukuza wenyewe? Kuhusu wao Alma alisema, "Tazama, Ee Mungu, [wanaomba] kwako na midomo yao, na bado mioyo yao imezidiwa na kiburi chao ... kwa hivi vitu vingine vya ulimwengu."

Ukilinganisha, je, kuna kingine chochote kizuri zaidi, kisafi zaidi, au kinyenyekevu zaidi kuliko mtoto akisali? Ni kama vile mbingu iko chumbani. Mungu na Kristo kweli wapo, lakini kwa wengine uzoefu huu unaweza kuwa wa kijuuju sana.

Kama Mzee Richard L. Evans alivyonukuu karibia miaka 60 iliyopita: "Wengi wetu tunakiri kuwa Wakristo, na bado sisi ... hatumchukulii Yeye kwa uzito mkubwa. ... Tunamheshimu Yeye, lakini hatumfuati Yeye. ... Tunanukuu maneno Yake, lakini hatuyaishi." "Tunapendezwa Naye, lakini hatumuabudu."

Maisha yangukuwa tofauti jinsi gani kama

teemed 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 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

ulimwengu ungemtukuza Yesu zaidi ya kiwango cha kuapa bure mara kwa mara.

Lakini watoto kwa dhati wanampenda Yeye, na upendo huo unaweza kubebwa hata katika mahusiano yao mengine katika maisha yao. Kama sheria, hata katika miaka yao ya uchanga, watoto wanapenda kwa urahisi sana, wanasamehe mara moja na kucheka kwa furaha sana hata moyo katili na mgumu unaweza kuyeyuka.

Basi, orodha inaendelea na kuendelea. Usafi? Kuamini? Ujasiri? Hulka?

Njoo pamoja nami kutazama unyenyekevu mbele ya Mungu ulivyoonyeshwa na rafiki yangu mpendwa mdogo.

Mnamo Januari 5, 2025—siku 91 zilizopita—Easton Darrin Jolley alipata Ukuhani wa Haruni na aliwekwa kuwa shemasi katika Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho.

Kwa kadiri ya kumbukumbu zake Easton alikuwa ametamani kupitisha sakramenti ya Bwana. Lakini fursa hii takatifu iliendana na hisia za mchafuko wa tumbo za woga kwamba angeshindwa, kwamba angeanguka, kwamba atataniwa au kuleta fedheha kwake na kwa familia yake.

Sasa, Easton ana ugonjwa adimu na wenye kumsumbua, Ullrich congenital muscular dystrophy. Umeendelea kujaza maisha ya utoto wake kwa changamoto za kuleta woga wakati ukizima matumaini na ndoto zake za siku zijazo. Muda si mrefu angekuwa daima kwenye kiti mwendo. Familia yake haizungumzii kuhusu nini kitafuata kwake baada ya hapo.

Jumapili baada ya utawazo wake, Easton angepitisha sakramenti kwa mara ya kwanza. Na msukumo wake binafsi ulikuwa ni kwamba angeweza kutoa ishara hizi takatifu kwa baba yake, ambaye alikuwa ni askofu wa kata. Katika kutarajia jukumu alilotamani na kuliomba, akilia na kusihi, ilitoa uhakikisho kwamba hakuna yeyote, yeyote, ambaye angejaribu kumsaidia. Kutokana na sababu nyingi, za kibinafsi, alihitaji kufanya hili mwenyewe na bila usaidizi.

Baada ya kuhani kumega mkate na kuubari—ishara inayowakilisha mwili uliovonjwa wa Kristo—Easton, kwa mwili wake uliodhoofika, alichechemea kupokea trei yake. Hata hivyo, kulikuwa na ngazi tatu kubwa kiasi kutoka sehemu ya watu kukaa hadi kwenye sehemu ya viongozi wanapokaa. Hivyo, baada ya kupokea trei yake, alijinyoosha kwa kadiri alivyoweza na kuiweka trei juu ya sehemu ya kushikwa kwa mikono ya ngazi. Kisha, alikaa kwenye moja ya ngazi ya

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 structural 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.

juu, kwa mikono yake miwili alivuta mguu wake wa kulia kufikia ngazi ya kwanza. Kisha alivuta mguu wake wa kushoto kufikia ngazi ile ile, na kuendelea kwa namna ile mpaka, kwa juhudi hizo kuu, aliweza kufika kwenye kilele cha Mlima wake binafsi wa Everest wa ngazi tatu.

Kisha alitafuta njia yake mpaka kwenye mhimili wa sehemu ya ngazi ya kushikwa kwa mkonono ambapo angetumia kusimamia. Akaiendea trea yake. Baada ya hatua chache za ziada alisimama mbele ya askofu, baba yake ambaye machozi yalilowanisha macho yake na kufurika usoni mwake, ilibidi ajizuie kumpa kumbatio mwana huyu mkamilifu mwenye ujasiri na mwaminifu. Na Easton, kwa ahueni na tabasamu pana usoni mwake, angeweza pia kusema, “Nimemtukuza [baba yangu na] nimeimaliza kazi ile [aliyonipa] niifanye.”

Imani, uadilifu, usafi, utii, heshima na, hatimaye upendo kwa kile ambacho baba anatamani kiwe. Hivi na dazeni ya sifa zingine hutufanyasisipia kusema, “Yeyote ... ajinyenyekeshaye mwenyewe kama mtoto huyu, huyu ndiye aliye mkuu katika ufalme wa mbinguni.”

Akina dada na akina kaka na marafiki, kilicho juu zaidi kwenye orodha ya mtazamo mzuri ni juuao ni watoto wachanga na wadogo na vijana wenye sifa kama zile nilizoeleza leo. Ninashuhudia kwamba wao ni sura ya ufalme wa Mungu duniani wakistawi katika nguvu zake zote na uzuri.

Katika Roho hiyo hiyo ya ushuhuda, ninatoa ushahidi kwamba katika ujana wake, Joseph Smith aliona kile alichosema aliona na kuzungumza na wale aliosema alizungumza nao. Ninashuhudia kwamba Russell M. Nelson ameitwa na Mungu na ni nabii mwenye kipawa na mwonaji. Nikitokea katika maisha ya kusoma kila mara, ninatoa ushahidi kwamba Kitabu cha Mormoni ni kitabu cha thamani kuliko vyote ambavyo nimewahi kusoma na ni jiwe la kati la teo la makazi yangu madogo katika ufalme wa nyumba nyingi. Ninatoa ushahidi kwamba ukuhani na sala zinarejesha maisha yangu—ukuhani wa Kristo na sala zenu. Ninajua yote haya kuwa ni ya kweli na ninatoa ushuhuda juu ya hili katika jina la yule aliye mwaminifu na mnyenyekevu kuliko wana wote wa Mungu—Alfa na Omega, Mimi Ndiye, aliyesulubiwa, shahidi mwaminifu—hata Bwana Yesu Kristo, amina.