

BE CONVERTED AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN



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To be converted and become as little children was the answer the Lord Jesus gave when His disciples asked, "*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" as we read in the verses below :

Mt 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.

*3 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.*

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

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

If we study the passage above, we would notice that before the Lord Jesus answered the question of His disciples concerning "*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" by saying "*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*", He first explained who would or could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: "*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

Through this description the Lord Jesus wanted to tell His disciples not to hold a wishful thinking of becoming the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, since there was still the question whether they would be allowed to enter into it,

referring to the fact that they should first meet the requirements if they really longed to enter therein.

The Lord Jesus explained that there were two requirements for children of God to fulfill to be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, which were to "be converted" and "become as little children".

To Be Converted or To Repent :

The Apostle Paul explained to the Romans about the importance of conversion or repentance :

Ro 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

6 Who (He) will render to every man according to his deeds.

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life;

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

So as described in the verses above, conversion or repentance is not just a "confession" but must be a "manifestation", showed by living a new life true to one's repentance or in accordance with the word of God. Thus it is most important "not just talk the talk, but walk the walk".

Ac 26:20 ...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

The Lord Jesus many times talked about conversion, either directly or through parables.

In the parable of The Sower, it is told that the man who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and seems to be growing, yet still leads a worldly life and does not truly repent, his faith will ultimately die out.

Lk 8:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

*14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and **pleasures of this life**, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

In the Book of Daniel, it is explained that at the end time many people would be cleansed and purified so as to be worthy to enter into the Kingdom of God. But the hypocrites or the wicked among the children of God whose life is mundane or who do not truly repent will not understand the phenomena of this cleansing and purification. They will continue to live in sin and eventually be left behind.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. (Da 12:10)

To Become As Little Children

Little children always think of their father as an incredible figure, a super hero who can do anything. That's why when little children meet with difficulties they always come to their father with the confidence that he will certainly be able to help them overcome or solve those difficulties. We often hear little children say, "I will ask Daddy to help me", "I will ask Daddy", "Daddy certainly can", and the like.

No wonder that little children are always proud of their father and always long to be near him.

Now, besides having an earthly father, we also have a Heavenly Father!

The Bible very clearly explains who our Heavenly Father is and how unlimited His authority and power are.

"The Creed" also mentions these and some churches include reading the Apostles' Creed in their liturgy.

The Apostles' Creed states among others :

*I believe in God, the Almighty Father,
Creator of the heaven and the earth...*

Whether we regularly read the Apostles' Creed or not, the most important is: **do we really believe the omnipotence of our Heavenly Father?**

Are we proud of our Heavenly Father, and do we really believe that He is able to do anything, just like little children who are proud of their father and believe him to be a super hero who can do anything?

I have studied and pondered long enough about what it means to "become as little children" in the passage mentioned earlier, until one day I was reminded of an incident when our big family was on vacation. At that time we were in the car while my daughter and son in law with my grandson sat in front of me. My 3 years old grandson was chatting with his father about the movie "Cars", a children's film of racing cars.



My grandson likes the film very much and has a collection of cars shown in the film. Suddenly my grandson said to his father, "Dad, I want a Hudson Hornet".



His father replied, "Well, Daddy will buy it for you." My grandson immediately became quiet, satisfied with his father's promise and gave no comment on it. He did not ask, "When, Dad ?" Or affirmed, "Surely?" My grandson did not ask nor discuss any further about his request, instead he instantaneously started talking about something else. For him his father's words, "Well, Daddy will buy it for you" were enough. He was assured that his father **definitely** will buy it for him. Such is the nature of a child !

In the course of my life as an entrepreneur, I experienced a great difficulty in the year 2009. Just then we faced such a complicated problem that we nearly had to close off half of our restaurants.

Usually when there are problems in the company, I will analyze them and then search the books for references to solve those problems, because I love reading books. So if the problems are about human resources, for example, then I will analyze them to find the core of the problem. If the results of the analysis indicate that the problem is in the recruitment section, I will look for books on recruitment, study them, then implement the propositions to resolve the issue. Or we pay consultants to help us find the solution.

But at that time I took a different step. I tried to solve the problem only by praying, something I have never done before. I chose this way because I was reminded that what I owned then and what was happening in my life actually occurred solely due to God's grace. Moreover from God's Word I had studied I believed that it was just what we should do: to appeal only to the Father, in prayer.

Therefore I "resolved" to work out the problem only through prayer despite the risk of losing half of my business enterprises when I failed. I did not ask for help to any consultant or someone else, nor read any books. I did not tell the

issue to anyone, not even to our families. Only I and my wife knew about the matter and we just prayed. We used to pray regularly then in our family worship at night, but thereafter I personally would pray again at midnight. Besides that, I also asked for prayer support to some ministers in several theological schools or seminaries whenever they conducted a prayer meeting or a time of fasting, but I never told them what my problem was even though some of them asked for an explanation. I would only say, "Please pray for my business." Just that much, because I believed the Lord knew my problem, and I rest in this.

As the owner and chief director, I rarely get angry, but the condition of the company was getting worse to the point that I once became angry in a meeting and broke the teacup. I hurt my hand then and had to run to the ER. Even today some scar of the wound is still obvious. During that difficult time I kept thinking how to solve the problem, whether to call a consultant or remain to pray only. Finally I decided to get the solution by praying and so I looked for a team of intercessors. I contacted a pastor to find me a team of intercessors who are willing to pray regularly at my home. The pastor then planned to introduce me to a team of ladies given the gift of prayer to do so at our home. But the introduction to these ladies was aborted when I said I would give the team some money for transport. They did not want their services be looked upon as a paid ministry. However, they promised to keep praying for us. I was somewhat confused, because while I did believe these ladies would pray for us, I could not know for how long and how often. So I asked my wife to increase the frequency of our prayer-time by praying regularly every morning too before we start any activities.

Praise the Lord, He finally bestowed us the solution to the problem of our company in May 2010 in such an extraordinary way, a kind of settlement that I myself would never knew of existing. Whereas previously we could lose a lot of money due to closing off half of our business enterprises, instead the reverse or

the opposite happened. Therefore, from that moment on we would rely on the Lord solely by praying for each problem we face, while prior to it I was very cynical and looked down on those who rely merely on prayer. Heretofore I thought that since God has given us wisdom and strength, thus we ourselves should try and make effort to settle each problem we face. But soon I realized that I was wrong!

Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

From that experience and also by studying God's Word, I understand that actually we have a Father who arranges all the best for us :

29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Our Father directs each of our steps :

Ps 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

If there is something we want, we simply ask Him :

Lk 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

When we pray and ask God for something, the Lord Jesus tells us to believe that we have received it. This means we put our faith in God and trust that He would give us what we ask for :

*Mk 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, **believe that ye receive them**, and ye shall have them.*

Sometime ago at a certain event in Papua I was introduced to a mother who came from Jakarta. After we talked for a while the lady said that due to her limited funds, she had bought a one-way ticket only for the departure, and at that very moment she still had no ticket yet to return to Jakarta. However she said, "By faith I believe that God will provide for my return ticket". This she told not only to me but also to several others she encountered. I said in my heart that even when that lady repeatedly said, "By faith ..., by faith ...," very likely that she actually **did not believe**. For if she really believed she **needed not tell so to many people, not even to a single person!** Mk 11:24 clearly says, *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, **believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them**".*

If we believe that **we have received them**, then of course it is not necessary to tell anyone that we are in need of something, since we have already prayed and asked God, and **God has given us**, just like the case when my son in law responded to the demand of my grandchild by saying, "Well, Papa will buy it for you", my grandson instantly believed without uttering any single word. And then, my grandchild just wait for "*it shall be given unto you*".

Jas 2: 17 said,

*"Even so faith, if it hath not works, **is dead, being alone.**"*

If we study the above verse, the word "works" here does not mean just doing something even though something good, **but concrete acts of faith.**

The meaning of the verse will be clearer as we read a few verses further :

Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*

The above verses explain that Abraham was considered as the father of the faithful, because he dared to act in his faith, to sacrifice his son Isaac when God commanded him to do so. It means that Abraham acted in accordance with God's will though he might not understand the reason. He still did it, because he believed in God's perfect plan and trusted Him.

Learning this we now can understand why the Lord Jesus said that if we do not have the true faith, which is the faith like a child's, we will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven because **our faith is actually dead.**

"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."(Mt 18:3).

At one meeting, there was a pastor who said that when we have a struggle, we should ask God for His help but should also tell our struggle to others. This principle he shared sounds spiritual as it stated that we should ask help from the Lord God, yet actually it was based on feeling of uncertainty in God's power! That minister's opinion of encouragement **to tell others too** was clearly non-biblical, for it seemed **to doubt the power of God**, to doubt that God is able to do anything!

That's why some people quipped at such principle by saying that they who followed the suggestion are the ones who "ask God for His help but pray in the ears of their fellowmen"! And this is just one example of the condition of the church at the end time as stated in 2 Timothy 3:5 :

*Having a form of **godliness**, but **denying the power thereof**: from such turn away.*

The verse explains that at the end time, namely today many people are seen worshipping God earnestly, they go to church diligently, are active in the ministries, pray regularly and fervently, take pleasure in praising God with a loud voice, listening attentively to the Word, even observe praying and fasting period routinely, yet in fact they do not believe in God's power. That's why they use a lot of tactics to get their prayers and wishes "fulfilled". There are people who use psychological approaches to stir a person's emotion, or intimidate someone that he or she would sin if he or she does not help, or offer a position to someone so that he or she will contribute more, or manipulate the Word to suit their interests and many other tricks. If we use methods like that to gain something, then surely our faith is dead, and according to what the Lord Jesus said, **we will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!**

If we observe the life of Job, we see that Job was a remarkable man, because he was godly, upright, feared God and shunned evil.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Even if we study further, we will see that Job was a man whom God was proud of, for there has never been another man that God praised in front of the Devil.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, an escheweth evil?

However, the question is whether Job who was godly, upright, God-fearing and shunned evil, would be considered adequate in God's eyes? The answer is no! That is why God allowed Job to be tempted.

It is interesting to learn when God stopped the trial and considered it **enough**.... which was when Job stated,

*42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now **mine eye seeth thee.***

This means that it was at the time Job did not only know God from what he had heard but he personally could see God which enabled him to know God properly.

When we come to church to hear God's word, listen to the testimonies of others or read the Bible, we actually know God only from **hearing**, because we have no **experience** with Him. God wants us not just to hear the Word, but to manifest His Word in our lives evidently when we have actually experienced the truth of His Word. At that moment we can see God because we really see and recognize God's presence in our lives to solve every problem of our lives even direct each step we make.

Therefore we need to have a childlike faith that believes fully in the power of God so that we can surrender ourselves completely to Him to see His power and plans manifested or realized in our lives.

Job 42:5 reminds me of a pastor I once met. At that time we were talking about the money collected in the church as an offering. On the occasion he said that as a servant of God, he belonged to them who rarely or hardly mention about money in their ministry. Even laughing he said that he belonged to them who

are "allergic" to talk about money matters. Why did he never talk about money? He said that not long after entering the ministry, his child got sick with the dengue fever and needed to be hospitalized while at that time he had no money. Fortunately the hospital did not ask for an advance payment then as it does today. When his son was in hospital, he and his wife struggled how to pay for the child's medical expenses. He did not want to ask anyone for help; they just prayed to God for His help. And miraculously someone unexpectedly gave them an envelope containing money for the hospital fee, although he and his wife never told anybody about their child's sickness. At another time they did not have food in the house, and amazingly they found a bag of rice laid in front of their house. Until we met they did not know who sent the rice, because the family had never told anyone of their condition. He further told us that God had been taking care of them until that moment. They never lacked anything though perhaps restrained from spending lavishly, yet they were very happy because God always suffice their needs. Then he went on saying what made them rejoicing was that they could see the wonderful things God had done to provide for them. The miracles God did had really strengthen them and brought them closer to the Almighty Father, Creator of heaven and earth.

John 4:1-42 describes the Lord Jesus met with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. After talking with Him the woman was shocked and amazed as the Lord knew about the state of her family. Later the woman went into the city and said to the people there :

"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (Jn 4:29)

The people of the city came to see the Lord Jesus, and finally they said that they believe Him to be the Savior of the world, but not because of what the woman had experienced and told them, but because they themselves had heard Him and **they knew** that Jesus is the Christ.

*In 4:42 and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and **know** that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

Only by hearing is not enough, but one must know and experience personally !

Why did those people know? They knew because they themselves saw the Lord Jesus, which means that they experienced meeting the Lord Jesus and had a personal relationship with Him. **And that is the true essence of Christianity, our personal relationship with God.**

*40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and **he abode there two days.***

To become as a little child, in knowing God the Father and in believing of His power is something that the Lord demanded us, so that we can see the wonderful works God has done in our lives. All this will become a strong or solid foundation for our faith to enable us to stand firm in following Christ under any circumstances and finally be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.