

“UNLESS YOU CHANGE”

Devotion for 06/24/24

Charlie Burke

I had the wonderful experience of participating in VBS this past week. This included working with extraordinary volunteers and helping teach a class that introduced the children to basic, simple gospel concepts about having God as a friend. I've done Children's Sermons before, and led kids in worship, but this was different. Rather than me having an impact on them, it was I who was impacted. We covered God as a friend who's real, a friend who loves, a friend we can trust, a forever friend, and a friend for everyone! I am certainly familiar with the idea of having a God that I can trust and love, but there have been times in my life when these basic concepts have escaped me, especially as I became what the world refers to as a “mature adult”. I think we somehow drift away from this child-like faith as we move forward in life. Reason and logic seem to replace faith and trust. We begin to place our faith and trust in “horses” and “chariots” rather than in the “name of our God” (Psalm 20:7). Today that translates into portfolios and retirement accounts!

As I entered retirement last year, I was forced to face an economic environment that is filled with uncertainty and unpredictability, and needed to be reminded where my help comes from (Psalm 121). The kids at VBS provided that reminder by reinforcing that God is a friend I can trust. I was amazed at how easily and how quickly the kids grasped this concept. There was no reason or logic to overcome. They recited and sang these words without any trace of doubt or hesitation. I know that because I saw it in their eyes as the week went on. There was a sparkle that clearly communicated that they believed every word they received. They didn't need confirmation or convincing. They received these basic truths with simple faith. God said it and they believed it!

When the week was over, God led me to a verse in Matthew that says: “Truly I say to you, that unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18:3). Those are strong words. By the end of last week, I found myself searching my soul and looking for areas that need to change and become more like a child. I am sad to say there are many, but I am very grateful that God used the simple concepts found in a VBS class to remind me that He is indeed a friend I can trust. So after spending a week working next to extraordinary volunteers and experiencing the faith of children, I wonder did I teach them, or did they teach me? I think the answer is obvious. Do you have child-like faith? I certainly hope so, because “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”. It is certainly something to think about.

