

25-1109a Transcript

25-1109a - *Be Like a Child*, Tom Freed

Bible Readers: Kevin Woosley and Scott Reynolds

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Be Like a Child

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 0:45): Kevin Woosley Matthew 18:1-4: (0:04) Good morning. The first scripture reading is out of the book of Matthew, (0:11) it's chapter 18 verses 1 through 4. At the time the disciples came to Jesus saying, (0:20) Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Then Jesus called a little child to him, (0:26) set him in the midst of them, and said, Assuredly, I say to you, (0:30) unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom (0:37) of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom (0:43) of heaven. Amen. (0:44)	2nd Reading (0:50 - 1:17): Scott Reynolds Psalms 131:1-2: (0:50) Psalm 131 verses 1 through 2. (0:55) O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty, nor do I involve myself in great matters (1:02) or in things too difficult for me. Surely I have composed and quieted my soul. (1:10) Like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me. (1:17)
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Transcript (0:04 - 30:51), Preacher: Tom Freed

(1:23) Morning. Good to see everybody. My turn in the rotation to preach. (1:30) My sermon is called, Be Like a Child. (1:34) How many of us here today find ourselves wishing we were younger? (1:40) Have you ever paused in the midst of a hectic day, bills piling up, deadlines looming, (1:48) or age reminding you of the years and imagine what it would be like to be a child again, (1:55) to wake up without the weight of the world on your shoulders? (1:59) I'm sure many of us have entertained that thought.

It's not just the physical toll of aging, (2:07) sore joints, gray hairs, or that nagging fatigue, but the mental and emotional strain, (2:15) rough getting older, you know, pain that's not as fun as when you were a child. (2:23) The endless cycles of worries that rob us of peace, (2:29) and where kids were desperate to grow up, counting down the birthdays, (2:35) dreaming of a driver's license and independence, so we can all remember as a child, (2:42) couldn't wait to get older, couldn't wait to go to a rated R movie, (2:45) go buy cigarettes or smoke, you know, drink or whatever, to drive. (2:54) But flip the script as adults, and suddenly we trade it all for one more carefree summer.

(3:02) It's the irony of life. Youth chases maturity, while maturity longs for youth. (3:10) Wouldn't it be great to be a child again, brimming with unbridled joy, (3:16) boundless energy, and wild imagination? No mortgages, no performance reviews, (3:23) no regrets whispering in the night.

(3:27) The world felt like a playground, full of wonder and possibility. (3:34) Remember playing

games you dreamt up, building forts from couch cushions, (3:40) or believing you could conquer any mountain with a stick sword? (3:44) Life was simple and full of joy then. (3:48) There's, you know, some of us that had the stick sword in our imagination, (3:54) fighting off imaginary demons.

(3:57) Compare that to now. Millennials, and let's be honest, all generations, (4:04) have a term for this harsh awakening. They call it adulting.

I think that's a cute phrase, but (4:13) it's a moment you graduate, step into the real world, and suddenly you're juggling jobs, (4:19) relationships, and responsibilities that feel like they're closing in. (4:25) I saw a TikTok the other day, a young woman sobbing after her first day of work, (4:33) overwhelmed by the sheer exhaustion of it all. If that's how it feels after eight hours, (4:40) try working 12 or 16 hours a day.

Just imagine the toll after 30, 40, or 50 years of work. (4:50) So she's in for a rude awakening, you know, your first day of work, (4:54) you're in tears, it's going to be rough. That's why your parents always told you, (4:59) enjoy being a child, because it's no fun working the rest of your life.

(5:04) A few weeks ago, we lost a dear colleague at the mill who'd worked there for 61 years, (5:15) retiring in his dreams at the age of 80. We never retired. Me, after 14 years working there, (5:25) I'm already counting down the days of freedom.

Lord willing, I won't have to wait that long. (5:30) I already want to work retired. I'm already, you know, hoping I can do something else.

(5:37) Steve King, he also worked until he was 80, and he's still preaching and helping us out. (5:47) And Wally also mentioned that he worked almost 60 years. (5:52) That's, you know, that's what life turns into.

You're working to, you know, pay your debt. (6:03) About it. But sometimes, just what it takes to get by.

It's not getting any easier. I'll probably (6:11) have to work until 100, you know, with the government, their spending, and everything else (6:16) happening. Later on the rest, raising kids through tantrums and tuition, (6:24) bonding bills, taxes that seem to multiply like rabbits, (6:29) health scares, economic roller coasters, political divides that fracture families.

(6:37) Life stresses just don't add up. They multiply, turning joy into survival mode. (6:43) There's no fun, especially nowadays.

Everybody's stressed out. Everybody's (6:48) hurting and going through something. Doesn't matter who you are.

You know, it'd be great (6:54) to just be a kid again. You wouldn't have had those worries. We echo Jacob's lament to Pharaoh (7:01) in Genesis 47:9. The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years.

(7:10) Few and evil have been the days and years of my life, and they have not attained into the days (7:17) of the years of the life of my fathers and the days of their pilgrimage. (7:22) This was one of those great characters in the Bible, you know, who God was with him. (7:29) He lived 130 years, and he said his days were few and evil.

So what does that mean for us? (7:35) You know, it definitely feels like the days are evil a lot of times for us, and time does fly by. (7:46) And here's the gospel truth, the great news that flips the script. (7:52) We don't have to be miserable and full of despair as we age.

As followers of Christ, (7:59) God invites us. No, he commands us to reclaim that childlike spirit. (8:06) Jesus doesn't just permit it.

He makes it the entry key to his kingdom. (8:12) Mark 10, 13 through 15 says, people are bringing little children to Jesus (8:18) from him to place his hands on them. But the disciples rebuke them.

(8:24) When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, let the little children come to me, (8:31) and do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I tell you, (8:37) anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter into it. (8:44) So they tried to push the children away. They didn't want the children bothering Jesus.

(8:50) So he told them that you have to accept the kingdom as a child. (8:55) He even says the kingdom of God is like this with children. (9:01) A better invitation in a world that worships wisdom, strength, and self-reliance.

(9:07) Jesus says, stop striving, become like these little ones. Today let's explore why we lose (9:16) that childlike wonder as we age, and how to reclaim it. (9:21) We'll uncover the losses, the choices, the restorations, and the glorious inheritance (9:27) of letting us as God's children.

So we all start out life like blank plates, (9:36) naive, innocent children, echoing Adam and Eve in the garden. Before sin's shadow fell, (9:46) they walked in perfect harmony with God, trusting, obedient, unashamed. Genesis 2.25 (9:53) paints it vividly.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Paradise was their (10:00) playground. Life was perfect.

You know, they had a great relationship with God. But one bite of (10:10) forbidden fruit, and innocence shattered. You know, it didn't last long to paradise, (10:19) because the devil lied and deceived them, tempting them to doubt God's goodness and seize control.

(10:28) Genesis 3.7 tells us, then the eyes of both of them were opened, (10:34) and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for (10:38) themselves. Sin brought shame, separation, spiritual death, and a curse that echoes through (10:47) creation this day. The rippling effect of sin is everywhere.

It keeps multiplying. (10:57) You know, it didn't take long for them to go for a bite of fruit, so their children, (11:02) you know, came, committed murder. Now look at the world.

Look at how much sin's in it. (11:08) You know, there's murders, there's robberies, there's rape every single day. (11:17) The devil's playbook hasn't changed.

He prowls like a roaring lion, seeking to devour, (11:24) stripping our innocence at every turn. For too many, it starts brutally early, (11:31) physical or sexual abuse, often from trusted family or friends. (11:36) According to rain, one in nine girls and one in 53 boys under 18 will experience sexual abuse at (11:43) the hands of an adult.

That's not just heartbreaking, it's satanic assault on the soul, (11:50) robbing joy before life begins. If Satan can, he's going to attack you as early as possible (12:00) and ruin your life. Even without such horrors, we do the job ourselves.

Romans 3.23 declares (12:11) all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. I had one preacher say that (12:18) if Adam and Eve didn't sin, you surely would have. You can't just blame them.

All of us have sinned. (12:25) Temptation bombards us on screens in school, at work, and whispers from friends. (12:35) Peer pressure isn't just a teen phase, it lingers, pulling us toward conformity.

(12:40) I even deal with peer pressure still at work or, you know, even with older friends. I guess it's (12:47) easier as you get older, but it's still there. Why? Because the devil wants us worldly.

(12:54) Not spirited, not spirit-led. 1 Corinthians 15.33 warns, don't be misled. Bad company corrupts good (13:04) character.

It's rarely the other way around. The fun rebel drives a steady one down, not vice versa. (13:14) We've all had that friend, throwing in the moment, trouble in the morning.

Our parents (13:21) weren't wrong. Choose wisely or you'll become like them, saying birds of a feather flock together. (13:29) That's true.

I've had plenty of friends over the years that were a ton of fun I like to hang out (13:35) with, but I ended up getting in a lot of trouble. Satan tempts, accuses, conforms us to the world's (13:44) mold. But take heart, innocence is lost if you're in good company.

We've all fallen. That's why we (13:52) need a Savior, Jesus, who came to restore what sin stole. Sin leaves us at a fork, the narrow road (14:05) to life, or the broad highway to destruction.

Matthew 7, 13-14. The narrow path Jesus' way (14:16) looks dull to the world. Self-denial, sacrifice, countercultural.

(14:23) You know, it doesn't look fun to be a Christian. You think to yourself, (14:27) I can't do anything. Every single thing is a sin.

Even thinking about doing wrong is a sin. (14:35) The broad way, a never-ending party of pleasures, applause, ease. When conviction hits and we glimpse (14:42) at God's holiness, the choice crystallizes.

The way of the world seems fun, the way they show it (14:51) on TV. You're partying, doing whatever you want, sex, drugs, and rock and roll. They don't show (14:58) you the consequences, especially the eternal consequences.

Some are blind to denying even (15:05) God's existence, but Romans 1-20 leaves no excuse. For since the creation of the world, (15:13) God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, (15:19) being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse. Creation screams of a (15:27) creator.

From galaxies to DNA. No dodging judgment day with I didn't know. You think God's (15:37) going to accept that, that you just didn't know? Do they accept that in court? If you get a ticket (15:44) and

say, well, I didn't know the law.

Oh, you're still going to get a fine or thrown in jail. (15:52) Acts 17-30 says in the past, God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people (15:59) everywhere to repent. So in the old Testament, he would allow certain people that lived by (16:08) their conscience to go to heaven because you had the Israelites, which were God's people and all (16:14) the rest didn't know the law, but now he calls everybody to repent.

There is no acceptance. (16:22) If you didn't know and you were ignorant. So what's your choice? Stairway to heaven or (16:28) highway to hell? Jesus doesn't sugarcoat it.

Count the cost. Luke 14-26-33 challenges. (16:38) If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, and even his own (16:44) life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my (16:49) disciple. He urges us to build widely, fight strategically, surrender fully. The road is (16:58) rugged.

Satan attacks relentlessly, but eternity is worth it. You've got to count the cost. You've (17:05) got to realize you're in for the long haul.

If you're not prepared for it, the Bible warns, (17:14) you know, you don't want to start something you can't finish. I remember summer camp as a kid, (17:21) two counselors offering two different hikes, one promised an easy stroll, (17:28) the other a steep winding trail through thorns and streams. I chose the hard one.

(17:36) It was exhausting. I had some difficult terrain, but the views, the laughter, and the bonds forged (17:43) were unmatched. Life with Christ is like that.

The world mocks it as foolish. (17:52) 1 Corinthians 1, 18-25, for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, (18:00) but to us who are being saved is the power of God. That path is the most fulfilling adventure, (18:08) following Jesus.

Deeper joy, truer purpose, nothing can compare. (18:16) You know, all of us have lived life apart from God. You know, even in your Christian journey, (18:24) sometimes I've fallen away and fallen into sin, and although it's enjoyable for the moment, (18:32) nothing is better than following Christ.

Nothing can compare. So how do we shed that cynicism and (18:41) step back into wonder? Jesus models it. Receive the kingdom like a child.

Five keys straight (18:49) from scripture, simple, profound, and transformative. One is trust like a child. (18:57) Kids leave without looking, knowing mom and dad will catch them.

They don't fret over tomorrow's (19:04) meal. They rest in provision. Psalm 131, 1-2 paints it.

Oh Lord, my heart is not lifted up. (19:14) My eyes are not raised too high. I do not occupy myself with things that are too great or marvelous (19:21) for me.

I am calm and quiet in my soul, like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child (19:30) with my soul within me. So unlike a nursing infant who fusses and demands immediate satisfaction, (19:38) a weaned child around two to three years of age has learned to wait and trust, (19:45) content simply in his mother's presence, not overthinking, just rest in the greater one.

(19:56) Proverbs 3, 5-6 echoes, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

(20:03) In all your ways submit to him and he will make your path straight. (20:08) Surrender worry to the Father who never fails. Two is humble yourself.

Children boast zero (20:17) self-sufficiency. They need help and they know it. In Jesus' era, kids rank low, no status, no voice.

(20:28) Yet he elevates them as greatness is modeled. Matthew 18, 4. Whoever humbles themselves like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (20:42) The disciples bickered over rank.

We do too, chasing likes, promotions, spiritual points. Jesus says, (20:50) stop. Depend on me.

Run to your father like a toddler with straight knees and make your limits (20:59) receive his embrace. James 4, 10 promises. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.

(21:09) Three is stay teachable. Young hearts are clay moldable and eager. That's why Proverbs 22, 6 instructs, (21:19) start children off on the way they should go and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

(21:27) As you go through school, what they teach you sticks with you. (21:33) You know, that's why you look at the, you know, when these dictatorships and other things take (21:40) over, they go after the youth. You got the Hitler youth, the communists, even in this country, (21:45) they go after the youth.

We can see that schools are turning more into indoctrination camps (21:53) and teaching children the basics that they should be. But age hardens us. Loss of habits, (22:03) biases of experience.

We must unlearn lies and relearn the truth. We're taught lies our whole (22:09) lives. All the way through school, you know, a lot of things we're taught, we grow up, (22:18) are lies.

You know, evolution is a huge lie. That's just one of many. (22:28) We got to unlearn all that and learn the truth.

2 Timothy 3, 16-17, (22:37) all scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in (22:42) righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (22:48) So we have all we need in the Bible. It can equip us for everything.

(22:54) Dive into the word daily. Let it reshape you. As Psalm 119, 11 says, (23:01) I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

(23:06) Forget the old and embrace the new. The poor is obeyed with joy. (23:12) Kids obey mostly because they trust their parents' wisdom.

(23:17) We resist as adults, stubborn and set in our ways. But obedience unlocks blessing. (23:25) Jesus ties it to love.

If you love me, keep my commandments, John 14, 15. (23:34) You see all these people that claim they love God, (23:38) and then they don't follow the Bible. So do they really love God? Not

according to what he says.

(23:46) Isaiah 119-20, if you are willing and obedient, you'll eat the good things of the land. (23:53) But if you refuse and rebel, you'll be devoured by the sword. (23:58) History proves it.

Obedient nations thrive, like Israel under David. (24:05) Rebels sell like Babylon. Our land wavers because we've drifted from God.

(24:13) We can see the main problem with this country is we're going away from God. (24:19) We can see it deteriorating before our eyes. (24:24) Yes, 1 Peter 1, 14-16 calls, as obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires (24:32) you have when you live in ignorance.

But just as he who called you is holy, (24:41) so be holy in all you do. Obedience isn't slavery, it's freedom. (24:48) Like a child delighting in dad's rules because they lead to good.

(24:52) God doesn't give us his rules because he wants us to be miserable. (24:57) He gives us his laws because if we follow, we're going to have a better life. (25:02) We're going to be blessed.

We're going to be happy. (25:06) We're going to have a good relationship with God. Number five is embrace wonder and forgiveness.

(25:16) Children don't just see the world, they marvel at it, (25:19) turning mashed potatoes or even mud into masterpieces. (25:26) Anybody remember the Christmas story where the kid is playing with his mashed potatoes and, (25:31) you know, the parents are yelling at him? But that's how kids are. That's what a lot of us do.

(25:37) We play with our food, you know, or whatever we have with our imagination. (25:44) You know, as a child you could do anything. (25:47) Jesus invites that awe.

Gaze at the stars, not in fear but in worship. (25:54) As Psalm 8, 3-4 declares, when I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, (26:02) the moon and the stars which you have set in place. (26:06) What is mankind that you are mindful of them? Human beings that you care for them.

(26:12) The universe is huge. You look up into the stars. You look at the world around us.

(26:19) You can't help but be in awe of God. How creative he is. All the different animals, people, bugs, (26:28) everything.

It shows a great creator, an awesome creator. Rediscover that childlike wonder at (26:38) God's handiwork. The sunrise painting the sky.

A flower's hidden geometry. (26:45) Or a baby's laugh echoing eternity. In forgiveness, kids quarrel and reconcile before lunch.

(26:54) Modeling the grace we crave. How often and quickly the kids forgive. But as adults, (27:01) you know, we hold on for things forever.

As Matthew 18, 21-22 teaches, forgive not seven (27:10) times but seventy times seven. Ephesians 4, 32 feels it. Be kind and compassionate to one another, (27:19) forgiving each other just as Christ forgave you.

Ditch the grudges, rediscover the playground of (27:28) grace. Who would have thought that Christian life isn't self-made empire building. It's childlike (27:38) surrender.

The exact opposite of what the world strives for. You know, I watch a lot of these (27:46) inspirational speakers, these people on YouTube have money and cars and fame. But all that means (27:52) nothing to God.

The things of the world are the exact opposite of what God wants you to strive for. (28:00) Not pride, provision, or perfection, but total reliance on the Father. 1 John 3, 1-2 marvels.

(28:09) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. (28:17) Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. (28:24) But we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him.

We shall see him as he is. (28:32) We are family. Jesus calls us siblings, both the one who makes people holy and those who are made (28:40) holy are of the same family.

So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. (28:47) Hebrews 2, 11-12. As heirs, we inherit everything.

God's glory, eternal life. Romans 8, 16-17. (29:00) The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

(29:06) That if we are children, then we are heirs. Heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ. (29:12) If indeed we share in his sufferings, in order that we may also share in his glory.

(29:18) Titus 3, 7 sums it up. So that having been justified by his grace, (29:25) we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. God gives us a gift we don't deserve.

(29:35) The wages of sin is death, but God's gift, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (29:42) Romans 6, 23. We deserve death from our sins.

We deserve an eternity in hell, (29:51) but God gives us a free gift of eternal life. Why would you want to suffer in hell for eternity (29:58) when God's offering the best thing this world has to offer? (30:04) If you're not yet a child of God, what are you waiting for? (30:09) The kingdom awaits those who become like children. (30:14) Trusting, humble, teaching, teachable, obedient, and filled with wonder and awe.

(30:22) Be born again, repent, believe, confess, arise and be baptized, calling on his name. Acts 22, 16. (30:32) Receive the Holy Spirit, your seal of sonship.

(30:38) If today's the day or you need prayer to reclaim your childlike joy, (30:43) come forward now. The water's warm, prayers are ready. The Father waits with open arms.