

## AUGUST 12, DEACON KEVIN DAUDLIN

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” I personally feel that the answer to this should be obvious, but I don’t think that is what they meant. When you look at Jesus’s answer, you get the impression they are talking about their community, the people who were with them following Jesus. When you look at this question in that context, it brings back memories of similar times in our own lives.

We see this all of the time in governments, our parishes, groups we may be involved in and sometimes even in our own families. Who is the greatest, who holds the most authority, who is the boss or better yet, who is in charge?

The disciples aren’t any different from all of us. They wondered the exact same thing. It is how Jesus answered them that is different.

He called a child over and placed the child among them. Then very succinctly, Jesus told them that they needed to become like children just to enter the kingdom of heaven, let alone becoming the greatest. It is not any different for us. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus was calling on not only his disciples but all of us to become more child-like. He also doesn’t mean childish. He does not want us to revert back to being kids. However, he does expect us to be child like.

When you think of a child what comes to mind? Children tend to be trusting, especially with their parents. They trust that they will not be hurt and that we will be looking out for their best interest. They put all other cares aside because they know they are protected, nurtured and generally just taken care of or looked after.

As we grow this trust tends to wane. I have heard so many people say, “I do not trust anyone until I get to know them.” I’m a little strange because I have a tendency to trust everyone until they’ve hurt me a few times. Not once, a few times. I like to give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

However, that is not human nature. Instinctively most people are naturally distrustful. We also can be very judgey when looking at others. I have heard these phrases many times, “Look who came here today! What are they doing? Hmm... what is their intention?, What are they up to now?” Sound familiar.

That is not our job. We do not have the right to judge anyone. No one gave us this permission. That is God and only God’s role. When we do not judge people and give them the benefit of the doubt just like a child you may be surprised as to what happens.

Maybe they, we will change for the better. It may even take a while. Look at who Jesus chose to help him and grow his church. Were they all stars or super beings? Maybe Judas who betrayed him? Or Peter, the rock on which he will build his church, who denied him three times, the others who fight over positions, or maybe the rest of them who all ran off just when things got tough.

Despite all of that, look at all they were able to accomplish. God calls on those you least imagine! He calls on us. Just look at me! What was he thinking when he asked me to become a deacon, and then put me in a position where I’m here talking to you.

Just like children, Jesus is asking us to trust in our Father, knowing that he will never abandon us. He is asking us to have that child like joy bringing happiness to life, our family and friends. The other quality of children we need is simplicity. Everything is simple to them and brings them great joy. Before you started, making all that happens so

complicated or that end of the world attitude, that was you. You can give so much to others when you just remember those simpler times when you were so open, giving freely of yourself.

It was never our job to judge or discard anyone. Our job is to be that child placed among the apostles. To be intentionally small, forever collecting and learning with no prejudices. Therefore being a child has nothing to do with physicality, but more like a virtue brought about by hard work. It has nothing to do with what you are but more about who you are. Going back to a time in your life where learning was way more important than judging and where just being good far outweighed everything else including being right.

God is asking us to return to a time when we were fully teachable, impressionable and flexible. This will open us up to receive all that God has to offer and become more Christ like. Whether we are lead astray or not God will come looking for us, even if you are the only one. When he finds you or more like when you find God, He will be happier than over the ninety-nine that never strayed.