*Introduction*

God loves children, it’s a fact. We have brought this little child, Jacob, to God this morning, he is a gift from God.

When Jesus walked this earth children were brought to him, to be blessed and prayed for and although the disciples muttered and wanted to send them away, Jesus said:

***MATT 19:14 "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."***

Not only are they welcome in Jesus’ presence, He says that the Kingdom o heaven belongs to such as these.

Previously in the book of Matthew Jesus had said:

***MT 11:25-26 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.***

And

***MT 18:1-4 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.***

So children are important to God.

But that does not mean that the rest of us are not important to God, we are.

In the Gospel of John we have an amazing occurrence. A man by the name of Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council came to Jesus at night to ask him a very important question.

To bring it into modern times this is like a member of the Prime Minister, Mr Cameron’s Cabinet. An important person.

Like all good politicians, he does not get to the point straight away, he starts by saying:

***JOHN 3:2 "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."***

He hasn’t asked the question yet.

But Jesus replies – because as fully human yet fully divine, He knew what was on the mind of Nicodemus before he did,

***JOHN 3:3 "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. "***

Now this causes confusion for Nicodemus. He thinks he has to literally be born again by going into his mother’s womb for a second time.

Jesus replies:

***JN 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.***

Jesus is talking here of a new birth that is a spiritual birth.

Now in order to make sense of this issue, I need to take you back to what we call the ‘original sin’. Sin is rebellion against God and when God made man and placed him in the garden of Eden he gave them one command. It was a simple command. *“Do not eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden”*. A simple command,Yes!

Now the serpent, also known as the devil came along and sowed a seed of doubt in Eve’s mind He said “Did God really say”, and that doubt led to Adam and Eve sinning by eating of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.

From that moment on – they both died spiritually and were separated from God.

Having understood this, Nicodemus then asks

***JN 3:9 "How can this be?"***

From the moment Adam and Eve sinned to the coming to this earth of Jesus, that question could not be fully answered. But Jesus not only knew the full answer, He was the answer to the spiritual birth.

***JN 3:16-18 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.***

***What would YOU do with Jesus Christ?***

You see, Jesus came to this earth as one of us, as a baby, a child. He grew up into a man and went through all the things we did, with one distinct difference – he did NOT sin. He was perfect. The reason he came was to pay the penalty for our sin. All the things we have done wrong, the sinful thoughts, words, actions, throughout our individual lives, past present and future. He came to take the punishment for all that.

He died on a cross, nearly 2000yrs ago in your place and my place. WHY?

So that you and I could have forgiveness and freedom, pardon and peace, life to the full and one day a home in heaven with Him.

Now there are some that would come to Jesus with an intellectual mind, they believe that you have to work out this salvation in a rational and logical way.

Jesus says:

***"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.***

Some would come to Jesus and try and work their way to heaven, they want to feel that they have contributed to their salvation.

Jesus says:

***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.***

Some would look at Jesus and say “It’s not for me, I don’t need it, I don’t believe”

Jesus says:

***but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.***

The key to this is found in

***MT 18:2-4 He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.***

The truth this morning is this:

It doesn’t matter how much money you have, it does not matter what status you have in the world, it does not matter what other people think, we all need Jesus in our lives.

We all need to truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he was sinless and lived a sinless life and that he died on the cross to save us from our sin, He rose again back to life.

The Bible says we need to repent of our sinful lives and turn to God and ask for His forgiveness and allow Jesus to rule our lives.

*Conclusion*

Do you remember when you were small, and you would say something to your friends, and they would say back to you “How do you know?” and you would reply “Because my dad said so?”

Well, this morning, God – who wants to be your heavenly Father is saying you need to be saved from your sin.

To do that you need to become just like a little child, and humbly come to him and ask him to forgive you for all your sin, for you to turn from that sin in repentance to God and follow his way and ask Jesus in to your life.

Its as simple as that, so simple a child can understand it.

The challenge to you this morning is this – Are you man or women enough to become a child and do it.

The Bible has another promise for you who do, and it is this:

***REV 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me***

***1 TIM 2:4-5 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,***

Shall we pray.