

A seven-year-old girl admitted calmly to her parents that Billy Brown had kissed her after school that day. "How did that happen?" gasped her mother. "Well it wasn't easy," admitted the young girl, "three of my friends had to help me catch him and hold him down to get him to do it."

One day a little boy was sitting and watching his mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. He noticed his mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head.

He looked at his mother and inquisitively asked, "Mommy, why are some of your hairs white?"

Recognizing a teachable moment when she saw one, the mother replied: "Well every time you or your sister or your brother do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy ----- it turns one of my hairs white."

The little boy thought about this revelation for a moment and then said, "Momma, is that why ALL of grandma's hairs are white?"

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The things little ones say --- but notice Jesus says the Father, our heavenly Father – will continue to reveal things to little ones – rather than to the wise and the learned. . . . Elsewhere in the Gospel Jesus says that unless we *become* like little children – we will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

So the kingdom belongs to the childlike – to the little ones --- which can be a bit perplexing for those of us who have worked so hard expending a lot of time, energy, and cash ---- to try to be wise and learned.

What might be revealed to us by the Father – if we all gave up the wise and the learned routine – and gave into the "little one" that, in God's eyes --- we really are? That is -- relied a little more on the inner child hiding within us all – and a little less on all the head knowledge we are carrying around – and often times take so much pride in?

*Come to me, all you weary, with your burdens and pain. Take my yoke on your shoulders and learn from me.*

You have to pay attention – because sometimes our crafty liturgist – uses the closing song of one Sunday to set us up for the next Sunday. . . .

To that little one, to that inner child hiding within us – Jesus speaks this very comforting invitation, "Come to me." Because Jesus knows. Jesus knows how weary we can become. He knows that our lives can become full of burdens.

For a moment, let all the people and places you have gone to for "refreshment" flash before you.

And then hear Jesus' invitation deep within you: "come to me – and let me bring freshness back into your life. Don't be afraid of bringing all of who you are. Even the wounds of the past. Even the embarrassments you try so hard to cover up. Bring all of your burdens. Even your sin --- and I will refresh you."

To our inner child, to the little one that we still are – this invitation can carry a liberating freshness which nothing else we can pursue can come close to.

And to the child so familiar with adult burdens – Jesus offers us a new yoke.

Like one ox trying to pull a yoke alone – haven't our shoulders become tired and sore?

Jesus invites us to quit trying to pull the load alone –and to yoke ourselves to him – and this is where the real learning will begin.

Our pulling alone of the yoke of life was strenuous and proud. With Jesus helping to bear our burdens as our yoke-mate --- our pulling will be gentle and humble.

The revelation we can receive as a little one – not a wise and learned one --- is that the heart of Jesus is so much bigger than ours.

All of our burdens are still there. But Jesus loves what we truly love. Our deepest commitments are the ones Jesus has given us and come out of the desires of his own heart.

The world he loves, the people he cares for with tender mercy, and the depth of himself he gives – are so much more than we can ever imagine bearing.

Yet, yoked to him, the burden is light. And that can give us an ease that gives our souls rest. And a child's joy.

