

It was a big day at the city convention center. The parking lot was packed, as the cars drove back and forth trying to find the last remaining parking places. People were standing in line to get into the auditorium. Every seat was taken, and people were spilling out into the lobby and hallways.

Why was it such a big day at the convention center? A very intriguing person would be speaking, a very unique person. What made this individual so special and so unique was his very high degree of faith. This person had the strongest faith of all believers in the world. He was going to speak that day and reveal his secret to having such a strong faith.

The limousine pulled up to the convention center. People crowded against the window to see if they could catch a glimpse of the strongest believer in all the world. But you couldn't see him. His entourage quickly escorted him into the building, amid all the flashing cameras and microphones. It almost looked like they were carrying him, but you couldn't quite see.

What would he be like? Evidently, he trusted in God more than anyone else on the face of the earth. Regular people experience doubts from time to time, but this person has never doubted once in his life. As you stand there, waiting for him to walk onto the stage, you read the poster that describes him:

- He believes in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.
- So-called "scientific facts" and intellectual arguments spoken by atheists and evolutionists that contradict the Bible don't bother him.
- He has witnessed tragedies in the world and he has experienced personal tragedies in his life. But those things never once caused him a single doubt.
- This strong believer has heard practically every anti-Christian argument ever made since Adam and Eve. But he has never doubted once.

And today, he's going to reveal the secret of having such a strong faith. The lights are starting to dim. People are quieting down. The introduction is made. The audience gasps as he walks onto the stage.

What do you see? You can't believe it. It's ... a two-year old toddling across the stage. **This** is the person who believes in God more than anyone else? It looks like he's still wearing a diaper underneath his clothes. **This** is the person who has never once doubted even when faced with personal tragedy? This is it? A two-year old? How can he be my role model for a strong Christian faith?

But then you remember the words of Jesus, "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a (little) child shall not enter it." (Lk. 18:17). "Let the (little) children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." (Lk. 18:16).

One day, long ago, people were bringing young children to Jesus so that He would touch them. But Jesus' helpers, the disciples, didn't want these parents and their little ones bothering Jesus so they tried to shoo them away. They believed that Jesus was too important, too busy, and too great of a teacher to be bothered with humble and lowly children. And yet these parents wanted Jesus to do more than pat their children on the head. In Matthew and Mark's Gospel, we see that Jesus prayed for the children people brought to Him and He blessed them (Mt 19:13; Mk 10:16). Something special was happening here. This was not just a pat on the head and a wish of good luck. Jesus was giving these little children spiritual gifts, gifts which He now gives in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Here in our text, Jesus praises not only these humble children but also all "children" when he says, "Let the children come to me." Jesus doesn't want anything to stand in the way of their coming to Him in faith. What's more, Jesus says that the kingdom of God is entered when one has their childlike faith. This simple, childlike faith worked by the Holy Spirit really is the strongest faith in the world, whether it's faith that's held by a two year old or a ninety-two year old. The kingdom of heaven comes to all who humbly trust the Lord no matter what their age or status.

We sinners enter the kingdom of God only by faith in Christ. We must come to the humbling, even mortifying, realization that we are unworthy sinners and that we are nothing but given-to by God. God gives this kind of saving faith to those who are **humble** who know that there is

no righteousness in themselves that should make them acceptable to God. This is the kind of faith Jesus wants you and me to have.

To simply believe in Jesus, to simply take Him at His Word, even when everything in the world is telling you otherwise – *that's* childlike faith. No doubting. No second-guessing. No trying to figure everything out with logic, as good as that is in its proper place. Simply *believing*.

Trusting that what the Lord says *is* true, no matter what because you know that God does not lie. That's childlike faith. And what's the secret? Let's hear it right from that little child in the auditorium that everyone came to see: On the stage in the spotlight he begins to sing, "Jesus loves me this I know" – Why? How? - "For the Bible tells me so."

Has God really made it that simple? Yes! Are you carrying around the secret to having a strong faith? That Bible you have. Read it. Take God at His word, no matter what. Believe the simple, yet utterly profound truth that Jesus loves you and died for you and rose again. The Christian faith is simple enough for a child to believe and yet the deep mysteries of God revealed to us in that same Word astound the greatest, lifelong teachers of Christian theology. You can read the Bible every day, every day learn more, and yet never learn all that there is of God's great love for you. In fact, this is the one book you can never know well enough, until you meet the author.

Simply believe like a little child and keep believing and in your faith as a child grows. Just like it says in 2 Peter 3: 18, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," Your Savior Who loves you, Who promises never to leave you and Who reveals Himself to you in His Word, the Bible. Keep that Bible open in your life, and God will give you a faith that "can move mountains." Amen!