

I am really excited. After three years of waiting, I now have the opportunity to be a part of Youth Sunday and pretend to be an adult. Because I grew up in a minister's family, preaching was the epitome of adulthood for me. I wanted to be just like Dad. I wanted to be so much like Dad that after a worship service, when my father was shaking hands with all the church-goers, I would crawl up under his robe and stick my hands out the opening in front trying to be congratulated for an inspiring sermon also. My brother sometimes played the game with me to see who could fool the most people. By standing here in this pulpit today, I have passed another psychological marker on my way to becoming an adult.

As a child, I pictured adults as, what I now would describe as: witty, wise, perfect, powerful, intelligent, independent and, well, big. But I remember having misconceptions about adults. I thought adults were always right. I also thought that "twelfth graders" were adults. Now, as a twelfth grader, I know that I was wrong. I'm going off to college next year and all those things that I admired about being an adult really scare me. I used to spend my spare time wishing I was an adult. Now, I wish I was a child.

Children with their youthful energy, carefree enthusiasm, and blind faith in Jesus possess many admirable qualities. With my quasi-adult eyes, I see the fantastic way children have with their faith. They are able to say "I believe," and they do. They don't know what it is to doubt because they don't need to doubt. Jesus understood this. He understood the joy of a youthful faith. "I tell you the truth," he said, "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." I believe that he wants us to radiate love and happiness.

While preparing this message, I tried to think what I could tell you that no one else could. I tried to think of what my brief background had that yours did not have. I came up empty, well almost empty. All I came up with was a different perspective. Because I am nearly an adult, I'm close enough to being a child that I understand that perspective also. What I have discovered in my vast childhood and brief adulthood is that as adults we pull back from totally blind faith in Jesus. Whether we do this because of fear or doubts, I don't know yet. What I know is children have no fears or doubts. Their youthful faith is strong enough to last them through eighteen years of ups and downs, radical changes, and peer pressure. This youthful faith is what we need in our lives. If this faith can withstand adolescence then surely it can withstand anything through the course of adulthood. We should all take lessons from the children. These young people have taught us many things, many good things. In fact my Father must agree that there is wisdom in the mouths of babes. He enjoyed using me as a sermon inspiration; that is the regular sermon. Although he didn't enjoy my taking part in the Children's sermon very much. He tried many different tactics to keep me from ruining his Children's Message. For some reason I had the uncanny capacity to be able to answer Dad's whole series of questions with just one answer. For some other strange reason, no one else wanted to answer any of my Father's questions so it was always my turn to answer. Now I have learned

that the Children's Sermons are often more enjoyable for adults than the regular sermon. This fact should tell us something. This should tell us that we need youth and youthful thoughts to feed our faith. We need a youthful faith.

I'm thankful that I've realized how wonderful youth is before my youth is over. I am able to enjoy it more because I know. Yet, I can only watch it slip through my fingers, because I cannot stop its passing. We should not mourn our loss of youth. We should not pity those who will lose their youth without knowing it, because we are capable of regaining this youth in our faith, to keep the energy, and the optimism and the wonderful blind faith in Jesus by committing ourselves to Him everyday forevermore.