



JESUS UP CLOSE

February 2018

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."

Matthew 11:25

Have you ever tried to bring yourself back to the child you used to be during those days when everything in the world around you was sparkling new? Have you ever drawn close—really close—to examine beautiful things?

If we could only be like that child again, seeing Jesus up close. It would be so good if we could truly see the real person Jesus was and still is for us. Invisible to our eyes, though real.

Many children create imaginary friends for themselves. Few will consider those friends real in that they can be touched or seen. But to them they are "as-real." Imaginary

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friends have been shown to provide good company for children who have a lot of time to themselves and might be lonely. They provide someone to talk to and play with. The friends listen to the children and support them. An invisible friend is special and does not judge or find fault.

Sounds a bit like Jesus, doesn't it?

Could we possibly summon back such an imagination and see Jesus as a child might see an invisible friend? The difference, of course, would be that our friend Jesus won't be in our imagination alone. Jesus, though we might not physically see him, is very real.

How awesome our experience of Jesus would be if we could—like a child—imagine being with him as he walked the earth two thousand years ago. Imagine how you'd feel as you see him do the unthinkable—touching a leper and healing him. Imagine what it would be like to be part of a crowd, hearing Jesus present the most radical ideas you had ever conceived. What a thrill to realize a better world is possible! A world where God reigns.

Imagine Jesus so close that you could almost touch him. Can you feel the water in the basin sloshing around your feet as he bends over and washes them? How humble! You realize you want to be like him. You realize how you too would like to serve rather than be served.

As children, we readily obey Christ's call to us. We follow him, and he does give us what we long for. We do grow to be more and more like him.

If we could only be like children again . . .

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