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Title: Life Comes at You Fast: A Child's Radical Faith

Preaching: Katie Kerr, Minister to Children & Families

Text: [1 Samuel 16:7-13](#)

E-mail: [Katie Kerr](#)

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My children have just finished the 2nd grade and 4th grade and I can hardly believe it. They are growing up right before my very eyes! I can hardly keep them in clothes or shoes. And Braydon is about to eat us out of house and home! You have probably heard the saying, "Times flies when you're having fun." Well, I think it should be "Time

flies when you have kids!"

We are starting a new sermon series this week called, "Life comes at you fast." And boy does it ever! Each stage of life holds unique opportunities and challenges that teach us what it means to live a life of faith and we will use David as our tour guide. Today I get to start with childhood which seems pretty fitting since I am the Minister to children and families.

My goal as the Minister to children and families is to create a safe, loving, educational environment for children to grow within their faith. Now that might sound good, but what does that mean exactly? The definition of faith is *a strong belief in God*. How does a child develop this strong belief? Where does it come from? And, here's one for you, what does that look like in a pandemic? These are all questions that I think about daily, so I bet you're wondering how does this pertain to me? And maybe the real question is what can I learn from children? Well, that's what we are going to explore today.

Psalms 127:3-5 tells us, "No doubt about it: children are a gift from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a divine reward." Our journey toward faith starts as a child. Whether we are influenced by our parents, grandparents, Sunday School teachers, a pastor, or friends, children learn from what they see and hear. Children are so impressionable. They are like little sponges ready to soak up whatever information comes their way. Children are innately curious, so as we teach them about the glory of God they want to know more. I mean there some pretty cool stories in the Bible and well to have someone who will love you always sounds pretty good too. When it comes to your faith journey, are you as vulnerable and inquisitive as a child?

Our scripture today comes from 1 Samuel, we find David, the youngest of eight tending the sheep and pretty much forgotten. Now we need to go back a bit to get a full understanding of what is going on in Israel at this time. King Saul has disobeyed God and no longer has God's favor. God has told the prophet, Samuel, to find a new king to anoint in the name of the Lord. Now Samuel is a little apprehensive because King Saul is still in power, but God gives him a plan and Samuel obeys. Samuel is sent to the house of Jesse where he is to find the next king of Israel. It is also important to remember that Saul was a very favorable candidate for king because he was so tall and handsome. It seemed like Samuel was looking for those same attributes in the next king. Let's pick up there in 1 Samuel 16 verses 7-13.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Have no regard for his appearance or stature because I haven't selected him. God doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart." Next Jesse called for Abinadab, who presented himself to Samuel, but he said, "The LORD hasn't chosen this one either." So Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "No, the LORD hasn't chosen this one." Jesse presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD hasn't picked any of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Is that all of your boys?" "There is still the youngest one," Jesse answered, "but he's out keeping the sheep." "Send for him," Samuel told Jesse, "because we can't proceed until he gets here." So Jesse sent and brought him in. He was reddish-brown, had beautiful eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, "That's the one. Go anoint him." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers. The LORD's spirit came over David from that point forward." (1 Samuel 16:7-13)

This sure sounds like a story for the little guys or the often overlooked. Here is David, the youngest of eight, out tending sheep. He wasn't even invited to the party. God pays no attention to the world's pecking order and chooses the youngest and smallest son. And he tells us why he has done so right in verse 7, "Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven't selected him. God doesn't look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart." You see David was pure of heart and that is what was most important to God. David also had a few other things going for him. He had a radical and humble trust in God. He had hope despite the human evil in the world. Sounds like an impressionable young man with a strong belief in God. We're going to learn more about David's life in the coming weeks, but for today we are going to focus on his childhood.

Children have the same radical faith as David! They don't overthink it, they don't overcomplicate it, they are open and willing to learn and grow. When I

asked my kids, what do you know about God? This is what they said, "He's there every day and helps me along the way. When I'm having a tough time, God is there to help me. He's always with me when I'm sad. He encourages me when I need him. I know God loves me." If a child can have such radical faith, why can't we as adults? What is it that is holding us back?

About 4 years ago we were at an Easter egg hunt outside. This was a breakfast with the Easter Bunny event and the egg hunt was held at a specific time. Off the kids ran filling their baskets with eggs. When all the eggs were collected my kids came over to show me their full baskets. As we started walking back inside we noticed a few kids who had showed up late for the egg hunt. My son walked right over to them and started emptying his eggs into their baskets. The faces of those kids just lit up and the mother thanked him. Talk about a proud mom moment, but I also think that was a God moment. I didn't tell him to give the kids some of his eggs, he did that on his own. Braydon wasn't thinking of himself, he was thinking about showing kindness and love to others. He didn't say, "You snooze you lose." He jumped into action. That is what it looks like to live a life of faith. To do unto others, treat others with kindness and compassion, to love your neighbors, and to have radical faith.

Life does come at you fast. Marriage, new jobs, children, loved ones pass, retirement, illness, graduations, tragedies, and triumphs. What can we learn from children about living a life of faith? Slow down and take it all in. Stop and pick that dandelion and make a wish. Be vulnerable to learn something new about your faith. Maybe that's joining a Bible study, praying more, or volunteering in Sunday School. Be curious. Allow yourself to ask God why and be willing to wait and listen for the answer. Trust in God. Know that he is with you always. Even if we don't understand things; Jeremiah 29:11 tells us "I know the plans I have *in mind* for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for *peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.*"

We are all at different stages of our faith journey and I encourage you to remember moving forward the radical faith of children. Even though life might feel like a sprint at times, remember it is a marathon with stops along the way to make adjustments. We might veer off course from time to time, but we can always get back on the path knowing that God remains forever faithful.