



REFLECTIONS

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**Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me,
and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of
heaven belongs to such as these."**

Matthew 19:14

Unexpected Blessings

The crowds had just begun to form when we entered the old city through Herod's Gate. Inside the walls we paused for a moment to choose our way. To our right the narrow street led steeply upward toward places unknown and to the left it sloped severely down to places unfamiliar. Neither direction offered an attractive alternative.

But as we pondered our choice, a young boy silently appeared beside me. "Where would you like to go?" he asked. With no particular destination in mind we had little need for a guide; but attempts to discourage the boy were of no avail. So he invited himself along, and soon we found him taking the lead and ourselves content to follow.

"What is your name?" I asked somewhere along the way. "Isaac," he answered in clear Americanized English; then his eyes danced, and a smile formed on his cheeks as he changed his answer into his native tongue. "Ee' sok," might be a phonetic spelling of his name in the language he spoke. So from then on, we called him Eesok.

Isaac was a resident within the walls of old Jerusalem. His life was not an easy one, but the worldliness of it gave him wisdom beyond his years. At age ten he had deftly selected us as a target for his services; and he patiently ignored our rejections until we had firmly embraced him as our unexpected friend.

For an hour or two he led us down the streets of the old city into shops that caught our eye and past the street vendors who didn't. He pointed to places that tourists find of interest and to fascinating places that might have gone unnoticed, all the while charming us with his effervescent chatter and his ever-winning smile.

Several times Isaac tried to say goodbye but we discovered that a few shekels would encourage him to travel on with us a bit further. Finally he said goodbye for good and disappeared into the crowds as silently as he had come from it.

On reflection, Isaac took us nowhere we might not have otherwise gone; yet we felt saddened and a bit alone after he left us. We were no more lost in the maze of streets without him, and we felt no less secure. But a part of the day's enchantment had ended leaving a void that was filled only by our memories.

God brings unexpected blessings into our lives from time to time—something at just the right time and in just the right place to bring a little extra joy. The morning in Jerusalem with Isaac was one always to be counted among them.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.