

March 27, 2022 - Mark 10: 13-16 - “Reaching Youth for Jesus”

Introduction:

There is a true story of a little girl in 1884 named Hattie May Wiatt seen sobbing because she was turned away from Sunday school because of overcrowding at Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia. That day Hattie May Wiatt started saving her pennies to help the church make more room in their children’s ministry. Pastor Conwell eventually found a place for her. Two years later, Hattie May died tragically. Wrapped in a handkerchief next to her bed her parents found 57 cents and a piece of paper with a note saying that the money was to help the church build a bigger children’s ministry so no child would be turned away. Now this was in 1886 when 57 cents was no small savings for a little girl from a poor family. At Hattie May’s funeral, her mother gave that 57 cents and that note to her Pastor.

Pastor Conwell had her 57 cents in loose change turned into 57 pennies. He then told the congregation the story of little Hattie May and sold the pennies for a return of about \$250. Some of the members of the church formed what they called the Wiatt Mite Society which was dedicated to making Hattie May’s 57 cents grow as much as possible and to buy property for the Primary Department of the Sunday school. A house nearby was purchased with the \$250 that Hattie May’s 57 cents had produced and the rest is history. The first classes of Temple College which in later years became Temple University in Philadelphia, PA., were held in that house. Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia is a testimony of the work of God motivated by that little girl’s desire for Sunday School.

How many children will we turn away because we don’t have the teachers to reach them and train them in our Sunday school and Youth Group? I want to challenge you this morning to look to the future with anticipation and not with reluctance. See the future for what God wants it to be. God desires that little children come to Him and many children would love to come to Jesus and a church that teaches Him. We just need to seek God’s guidance in doing this in a godless age where parents don’t think it is important.

Maybe we have forgotten how precious it was for us---for our children. It is very important to remember and for all of us with children it will certainly be helpful. Thank God he doesn't forget as is portrait in this true story. All three of what we know as the synoptic writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, give us this precious event in the itinerate ministry of our Lord. So it must have very important value and I believe special emphasis for the church today.

I. Jesus loves all the little children.

1. We come to one of the most tender, sensitive, lovely portions of all the Scripture. It's our Lord blessing the little children. This is a very unique situation where our Lord blesses little children. This passage in the Gospel of Mark brings before us three important truths. Jesus loves all the little children' and second Jesus desires them to be nurture in the truth and third, a child-like faith is necessary to be saved. We start with the story of the blessing of the children, found in Mark 10, beginning with Verse 13:

2. It is a beautiful scene, which has proven to be a source a tremendous blessing to thousands of children around the world, throughout all the centuries past. The children loved him immediately, and wanted to come to him. And he indicates here so clearly that it is easy to come to Jesus when you are a child. It has proven to be a source a tremendous blessing to thousands of grieving parents for this passage gives indication that little one when they died in the womb or out are taken to heaven.

It is one of the dearest passages about children. Jesus did show great affection on a number of occasions for children in the gospel accounts. He also received praise from children.

3. People are bringing their “*pī-dē'-on*” (a young child, a little boy, a little girl or infants) babies and little children to Jesus. These parents saw His love and saw His majesty and heard His preaching about the Kingdom. These are parents who care about the future of their children. These are parents who want their children to know God, they want their children to be a part of the Kingdom of God they want their children to have eternal life as any sensible parents would.

4. Mark indicates however, that the disciples were trying to protect Jesus by preventing or rebuking the parents from bringing their children to him. Mark emphasizes the imperfect tense or the continuing nature of the rebuking (“*epitimaō*” e’-pē-tē-mā’-ō) it is a very strong word. Literally it means they censured them, or they reprimanded them. In a noun form it means punishment. They turned on these parents.

Under their world view, children had no place in the system of religion, no place before God. However the Talmud tells us that it was a very customary thing for parents to bring their children, their little children, to be blessed by the elders of the synagogue. And in Judaism there was a special day set aside for this, the day before the Day of Atonement, the day before Yom Kippur.

So, the disciples were really going after them, threatening them. "Look, you can't be interrupting the Lord by bringing up these babies; it's very disturbing when we're trying to teach. We can't have this...

II Jesus desire them to be taught

1. But, when Jesus saw it, he was indignant. In fact, the language is sharper in the Greek. He was angry, and severely reprimanded these disciples. He said, "Don't do that; stop it! Let the children come unto me; for such belongs to the kingdom of God." Now, these disciples meant well. Yet they missed the point of the need and mind of a child. This is what Jesus was correcting. These disciples thought that Jesus needed protection from bothersome children.

2. The first significant point Jesus makes is that the children needed protection from the bumbling adults. So he says to the adults, "Stop hindering them let the children come to me. Get out of their way, and let them come." Too many parents are guilty of this sin. They punish their children by keeping them from church, Sunday School or youth club. Churches can be

guilty of this as well because we make no provision to bring the children to the Lord. Our biggest issue today is reaching the parents and getting them saved so they see the need to allow their children to come to Church.

Application:

The greatest blessing we can confer on children is to lovingly evangelize and teach them. Their salvation is still a work of God but we are to be the agents by which that work get done. If you are a teacher this is the reason you teach! We are the primary missionary in the life of these children. The world is a spiritual battlefield and we need to equip our children with the Word of God. They need teacher to teach them.

3. For out of God's word come the necessary truths to live, to stand for what we believe. Look at **2 Timothy 2:15** with me and especially all teachers. 2 Timothy 2:15 uses the word “study” which means to exert one's self, give diligence to reading and memorizing and properly understanding the Bible. “Rightly dividing the Word of Truth” conveys an important concept that one handles God’s word carefully, cautiously and properly. It also means to teach the truth directly and correctly.

4. Leaders listen...the foundation of leadership is character and integrity. It takes integrity to be an example and leader. The nature of leadership is servant-hood, the measure of leadership is sacrifice and the motive for leadership is love. Leaders are built by learning about God and His ways. In other words doing their homework develops leaders.

III. The Faith of a Child Saves.

1. The significant point in this passage is the qualities of childlikeness which Jesus says are absolutely necessary to enter the kingdom of God: ***"Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*** He does not go on to elaborate what these qualities are. He leaves it up to us to discover them as we look at children, for they are something every child represents. Regardless of their background or culture or race, or anything else, every child has these qualities. The commentators have had a field day trying to guess what they might be, but Jesus leaves it up to us to try to discover them.

2. A childlike spirit is one which captures the essence of humility and faith. And a child is wonderfully teachable. Children recognize their basic need for help and instruction, and they are wide-open, plastic, and easily molded. This is characteristic of children, and this is what Jesus meant. I want to thank all those who have joined to restart our Sunday School and Youth ministry. Every child needs to learn, and wants to be led.

Conclusion: Gospel / Invitation

This child like faith is necessary for the entrance to the kingdom of heaven. We need to be ready to give the gospel, know how to teach the gospel and express how important it truly is!