

September 11, 2017 -

Mark 10: 13-16 - "Bring Children to the Lord"

Introduction:

Jenny Smith was a young girl who once stood outside her small church in Philadelphia "because it was too crowded." "I can't go to Sunday school" she whimpered, as the pastor just walk by her. He saw her poor appearance and shabby clothes and found her a spot in Sunday school. However Jenny kept thinking of the children who had no place to come to Jesus. Two years later Jenny passed away in her poor run-down apartment in a housing project. Her parents called the kind hearted pastor and ask for him to handle the final details. Inside her purse was 57 cents and a note scribbled in childish handwriting which read, "This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday school.

For two years she had saved for this offering of love. When the pastor read this he knew what he had to do. Carrying this note and the little purse he got in the pulpit, he told the story of this unselfish love and devotion. He challenged his deacons to get busy and start raising money for a larger building. A local newspaper caught wind of it. It published a story about this sweet little girl. A realtor read the story and offered a large parcel of land. The church could not afford it. So he offered it for 57 cents. Checks started coming in from all over the country. Within 5 years Jenny's gift had increased to \$250,000, a huge sum of money at that time. If you are ever in Philly stop by and take a look at the Temple Baptist Church and at a Sunday School building which houses 100's of children, which seats over 3300 people. Have a look; too at Temple University, where 1000's of students are educated and trained. Check out the Good Samaritan Hospital. In one of those rooms you will see the picture of a sweet face little girl whose 57 cents, made such a remarkable history.

How many children will we turn away because we don't have the compassion of Jesus 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 and not what you want 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.

Maybe we have forgotten how precious it was for us or 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 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 two important truths. Jesus

loves all the little children' and second 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:

MK 10:13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. [14] But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [15] Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. [16] And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

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*" babies and little children to Jesus, parents who saw His love and saw His power and saw His majesty and heard His preaching about the Kingdom and His teaching about salvation and about eternal life. And 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're trying to get on with things. We can't have this..."

5. 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 & mind of a child. This is what Jesus was correcting. These disciples thought that Jesus needed protection from bothersome children.

6. 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.

Application:

The greatest blessing we can confer on children is to lovingly evangelize them. That's our priority as parents and as a church. Their salvation is still a work of God but we are to be the agents by which that work gets done. You and your church are the primary missionary in the life of your children. We must reach children for Christ and to do so we need you. We need parents, grandparents and youth people to pool together and bring them to Jesus. My fear as your pastor is that this year we will have to turn them away because we lack interest, compassion and the will to make a 2 hour sacrifice for them that could paid off great spiritual dividends and blessings.

II. The Faith of a Child saves.

The second 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.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
II Corinthians 3:19

Conclusion:

A childlike spirit is one which captures the essence of humility and faith. And a child is wonderfully teachable. Every child wants to learn, and is ready to be led. 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. This child like faith is necessary for the entrance to the kingdom of heaven.

Gospel / Invitation