

Theme: Unlike the kingdoms of this world, the Kingdom of God does not give preference to the powerful or wealthy but is open to everyone who will receive it like a little child by recognizing their helplessness and great need that only Jesus can meet.

## I. Intro - Wisdom and Innocence of Children?

- A. Eric Church - "I Learned That From My 3 year old"
- B. Many similar songs - kids are wise and innocent
- C. Disney movies - kids are the wise heroes!
- D. That is NOT what the ancient world thought!
- E. Is that what Jesus meant here- or something else?
- F. What is Jesus teaching us in this text?

## II. The Disciples Fail Again!

- A. People bringing little children to Jesus for blessing  
People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. Mark 10:13
  - 1. People want Jesus to bless their children
  - 2. Other rabbis may have done this as well
  - 3. This seems to be a natural desire for families
- B. The disciples' response - rebuke them!  
People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. Mark 10:13
  - 1. The disciples 'rebuked' the people for this
    - a. This is a very strong word to describe their action!
    - b. Jesus rebuked demons (Mark 1:25; 3:12; 9:25)

- c. Jesus rebuked the wind (described in Satanic terms) that threatened to kill them (Mark 4:39)
  - d. Jesus rebuked Peter when he was influenced by Satan (Mark 8:30-33)
  - e. This is not a gentle turning away - they are treating them almost like the Devil himself!
- 2. The disciples' action in rebuking the people bringing the children displays an underlying attitude that such people were not worthy of Jesus' attention and time.
  - 3. This was very typical of the attitudes towards children during the time of Jesus, both among Jews and Gentiles.
  - 4. The people of the ancient world would not have written "I Learned That From My 3-Year-Old"!

## C. Jesus' response to the disciples - indignation!

- When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14
- 1. Jesus was not happy - He was indignant!
  - 2. Indignant is a strong word - and it is only applied to Jesus' emotions in this passage.
  - 3. Jesus is very unhappy with the attitudes and actions of the disciples! Why is He so upset?

## III. The Kingdom, Disciples, and Little Children

- A. The Kingdom is for everyone - including little children!  
When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14

1. Instead of trying to hinder the children, the disciples should be opening the way for them to come to Jesus!
2. The disciples thought the children were beneath Jesus' attention, but the kingdom belongs to children - and those like them!
3. Jesus had already spoken of this when the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest! He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup>"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:36-37
  - a. In the face of their arrogance, Jesus took a little child and said they must learn to welcome little children.
  - b. To welcome little children is to welcome Jesus and the Father!
  - c. Ironically, John's immediate reaction at that time was to talk about how they had stopped a fellow believer from driving out demons in Jesus' name "because he was not one of us"!
  - d. At that time, the key point was receiving the little children - which is exactly the opposite of what the disciples were doing now!
  - e. Rather than receiving the little children they were rebuking and sending them away!
  - f. This is all owing to the upside-down nature of God's Kingdom, which does not value the things valued by this world and does not operate by the principles of this world.

4. The kingdom of God is not for the powerful and privileged but rather for everyone!  
When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:14
5. The disciples are still thinking like the world around them - and this is the opposite of the kingdom of God!

- B. Only those who become like little children can enter the kingdom  
I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.  
Mark 10:15
1. Jesus' ultimate point here is not just that the kingdom is open to little children - but rather that even adults must be like little children if they want to enter the kingdom!
  2. Little children - and women, the poor, the uneducated, slaves, and other outcasts - are all welcome in the kingdom.
  3. In fact, those who think of themselves as privileged and powerful are disqualified from entering the kingdom!
  4. The point is not in the supposed wisdom or virtues of children, but rather in their helplessness and willingness to recognize their neediness and to openly receive.
  5. The only requirement to enter the kingdom is to recognize that we are outcasts who bring no reputation or value to the kingdom but simply receive God's gift with gratitude!

C. Jesus receives and blesses the little children

And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. Mark 10:16

1. Jesus displays the values of the kingdom by receiving the children, holding them, and speaking God's blessing on them.
2. This is in direct contrast to the actions of the disciples - and most people in His day!
3. Jesus is setting the pattern for His disciples to follow down through the ages, for it is the nature of God's Kingdom to welcome and bless those overlooked by the kingdoms of this world.

#### IV. Applying the Word

A. Have I received the Kingdom like a little child?

1. This is a prerequisite for entering the kingdom, like being born again (John 3)
2. Only those who realize they are helpless and without merit or claim can come to Jesus and receive the Kingdom.
3. This is contrary to ways of this passing age which bases everything on merit, on who you know, on receiving the powerful and ignoring the outcast.
4. The world teaches me to sell myself, to show my merit, to convince others - and especially God - why I am worthy of attention and love.
5. But the entryway into the kingdom requires me to reject any attempt to justify myself before God.
6. Have I ever seen that I am as helpless as a little child, an infant, in saving myself?

7. Come to Christ today empty and be filled!

B. Am I receiving the 'little children'?

1. This has been a major theme in this section of Jesus giving lessons for the disciples.
2. As disciples, we must consciously and consistently reject the value systems of this world to embrace the value system of the kingdom!
3. This includes receiving those whom the world considers of lesser value with equal dignity to the powerful, the wealthy, the beautiful, and the respectable.
4. Am I receiving children as heirs of the kingdom?
  - a. Parents - do we realize the importance of loving, blessing, and teaching our children about Jesus and His Kingdom?
  - b. This must be a high priority for every parent! It is better to "fail" at work or other areas and invest in our children than to be acclaimed by the world and lose our children!
  - c. All of us - am I willing to invest in the next generation by serving in the nursery, children's ministry, VBS, or helping at a local school?
5. Am I receiving those the world discounts?
  - a. The 'little children' are real, but they also represent those rejected by society at large, as we see in Jesus' reception of those that society counted of little or no value - women, the sick, the poor, the socially outcast.
  - b. Do I follow Jesus in this - or is my attitude shaped by the world?
  - c. This will require constant shaping by the Holy Spirit!

6. Am I willing to invest time to bless others?

- a. One reason people ignored the little children was time - it takes time to bless others.
- b. Our culture encourages leaving no margin or space to have the time to bless others.
- c. Am I willing to free us time to be with and bless others?
- d. A few times it appears the disciples missed “divine interruptions” - the feeding of the multitude; the Syro-Phoenician woman; the woman with bleeding; the little children
- e. Sunday is a great time to begin leaving margin to allow caring for one another and blessing one another
  1. Come early, stay late, and be with your brothers and sisters!
  2. Leave time to do this - go out to lunch (Mark and his mom), reach out to visitors, etc.
- f. We can't bless others if we are always rushing to the next event or responsibility!

C. The Children's Table

1. Corporate prayer - BCP confession of sin
2. Assurance and invitation: 1 John 1:8-9
3. Come and be fed and blessed by Your Father!

The Kingdom, Disciples, and Little Children

Mark 10:13-16

April 14, 2024

Communion

Psalm 115:14-15

Teaching keywords: Kingdom of God; discipleship; humility and pride; service; blessing; grace; marriage and family

May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children.  
<sup>15</sup> May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 115:14-15

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.  
<sup>14</sup>When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. <sup>15</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” <sup>16</sup> And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16