

Rev. Janet R. Doyle  
Elmer Presbyterian Church  
Worldwide Communion  
20th Sunday after Pentecost  
Sunday, October 6, 2024  
Scripture: Mark 10:13-16  
Sermon: Let The Children Come

Mark 10:13, "People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them."

Jesus had a very busy day. He had healed many. He was teaching thousands. The disciples thought Jesus was far too important to deal with children. The parents were bringing their dear children to Jesus. But His disciples were trying to keep the children away. They thought Jesus was just far too busy to spend time with little children.

Fathers and mothers, and perhaps older children, were bringing young children, many of whom were babies to Jesus for his blessing. It was a very ancient tradition in Israel to have rabbis bless the children, even little infants.

We should not discount children because they are young. It's more crucial that we reach them now because they are young. If we do not point them to Christ, we may lose them to the world. How many of us wish we would have heard the Gospel as a child, but you didn't, and you ended up wasting precious years of your life?

The disciples rebuke came because of ignorance regarding the children's need. If they had been sick or deranged or demon possessed, the apostles would not only have allowed them to come, they would have brought them to the Jesus and helped them along the way. What they did not see was that they were in far greater need of the Savior because they were coming to the Son of God simply as children because they were in need of the Savior's grace.

That is the condition of every boy and girl in this community, in our families, and in our world today. Everyone no matter what age needs to be

brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and his love and forgiveness of sins.

Parents can sometimes be so busy providing for their family, that they have the tendency to neglect what is most important for our family, specifically, bringing our children to Jesus Christ. It is important to work, it is important to serve the local church, it is important to get your children involved with sports and other activities, but we must never sacrifice our family's spiritual need to know we are created in the image of God and loved by God. Children need to have a solid foundation in Jesus Christ in the midst of a crazy, beautiful chaotic world we live in. Each day is a gift from God, and we need to teach children that there is a God and there is eternal life with God. This is not the end but only the beginning,

Today we have to be careful that we aren't wasting our time, or rather spending our precious time on the wrong priorities and our family, specifically our children will get the leftovers.

We as parents often have the wrong priorities. It is good to have a solid work ethic for our children, but we can be busy with the wrong things. We can be so blinded to our children's spiritual needs that we neglect our children in the area of their life that is most important.

What good is a good education if they lose their soul?

What good is a great job and a ton of money if they don't believe in eternity with their Savior?

We must realize that by training our children now for Christ, we are training future men and women! This is the most important job of a parent. Jesus' disciples were shockingly rebuking the parents from bringing their children to Jesus. The children around us are the greatest mission field.

We need to bring our children to Jesus! How we need to see them come to know the Lord! The greatest mission field in all the world is right here before us! Children—they must be taught what it is to come to the Lord at a young age! Let the children come to Jesus! Bring your children to Jesus! Introduce your children to Jesus!

You may be faithful in the work of the church, but that doesn't mean your children will come to Christ. You must personally invest the Gospel in them and pray for your children.

It is our spiritual responsibility to nurture our children in the Christian faith at home with them, by bringing them regularly to church and, for those of us who don't have children, we still have a responsibility within the family of God to do what we can to encourage the nurturing of children in the faith.

Jesus is absolutely clear in verse 15, where he says this: *“Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it”*.

We must also be like little children in our faith to enter the Kingdom of God. We need to take the time to listen to the children and learn from them about matters of faith and about God.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that our faith should be childish in the sense of immaturity but that we are to be *childlike* in our faith.

What does that mean? What does a childlike faith look like?

First we are to be helpless. At the heart of our Christian faith is the realization that we are utterly helpless before God. We are utterly helpless when it comes to living out the Christian life. We simply cannot do it on our own strength. Just as a baby is utterly helpless without a parent to provide for its every need, so we are helpless before God. And true faith begins when we recognize our helplessness and are content to rest in that and stop struggling in our own strength.

The second childlike quality is dependence. If we are helpless, then we must be dependent on God. The Lord is our Provider and we are dependent on his provision, in this life and in the next.

No-one can enter the Kingdom of God in their own strength.

No-one can enter the Kingdom of God through an attitude of independence.

To enter the Kingdom of God, we must be childlike in acknowledging our helplessness and our dependence. As we do that, we will inherit the Kingdom of God and know what it is to have life in all its fullness.

Paul, who wrote so much of the New Testament, is a perfect example of this as he wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:10: “I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, all for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong”. That is a beautiful state of mind to aim for, isn't it?

And once we move into that state of being, the action of Jesus towards the children in this passage becomes our own experience, verse 16: *“And Jesus took them in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them”*

What a beautiful promise for each one of us: the blessing of Jesus on our lives when we rest in our helplessness and our dependence on him as Children of God.

As we rest in that childlike quality of faith, the riches of the Kingdom of God will be ours. Let us pray for a childlike faith. Let us become more helpless, more dependent on God and see what blessings Jesus will pour out upon us as a church family and the children we are called to minister to in our lives.

The children were attracted to Jesus because they were loved and accepted and were able to be at ease in His Presence.

It is important for us to feel that way as well. We all want to feel loved and wanted and noticed.

Our Lord Jesus said: *“Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”* (verse 14). Citizens of the Kingdom of God must be as little children trusting in God their Father for unconditional love as we come to him.

As you come to the Lord’s Table this morning come as a little child trusting in the Lord with your life and pray for all the little children of the world that they would know his love and peace.

Jesus loves you and wants you to come!