

做一个热爱小孩子的小孩子——马可福音 10:13-16

Becoming a Little Child Who Loves Little Children—Mark 10:13-16

Introduction, Outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 10:1-16; Matthew 18:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-4

Mark 10:13-16

13 And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." 16 And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

- What are the differences between children and adults? Children rely completely on others; adults are independent and self-sufficient. Children ask when they don't know; adults pretend they know and don't care to ask. Children show their emotions plainly; adults hide their true feelings. Children love company and fear loneliness; adults just like to enjoy themselves. Children are ready to learn new things; adults are hard to learn or to change... Which do you like better?
- This passage talks about two kinds of children: actual children by age, and child-like adults. Jesus says: the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these—actual children and child-like adults.
- *"Those who share the mind of Christ share His concern and love for children. No church or Christian movement has prospered spiritually that has disregarded or neglected the care and training of its children. The heart that is warm toward the Lord will inevitably be warm toward children."*— A pastor
- However, the disciples in the passage did not have such a heart. They were taught by the Pharisees from childhood that you earn your entrance to the kingdom by your own merit. God's Word tells the opposite — the kingdom of heaven is where God's grace is on full display, not human merit. Therefore, there are only two kinds of people in the kingdom: actual children who have no merit whatsoever, and the child-like adults who know they have no merit. The only people who cannot enter the kingdom of heaven are those who think they have merit.
- Outline:
Title: Becoming a Little Child Who Loves Little Children
 1. Opposition to the Little Children (v.13)
 2. Grace for the Little Children (v.14, v16)
 3. Example of the Little Children (v.15)

Opposition to the Little Children (v.13)

- "The little children": Luke mentions "babies," and verse 16 states that Jesus "took them in His arms," indicating they were the age of babies.
- "so that He might touch them": It's not just a simple touch, but to lay hands on them and pray a prayer of blessing. This is a Jewish tradition based on the Old Testament, that Jewish parents would bring

their children before the elders in the synagogue and ask for a blessing like this: "May this child grow up to be famous in the Law, faithful in marriage, and abundant in good works"

Jesus had just taught about marital faithfulness (vv. 1-12), refuting the teaching of religious leaders at the time who permitted divorce for any reason, defending God's beautiful institution of marriage.

Among the crowd were some young parents who were thrilled, seeing hope for good family relationships in Jesus! So they took their children to Jesus so He may lay hands on them and pray for them.

- "The disciples rebuked them": They spoke harshly, like "What are these children doing around here? Get them out!" Apparently, they thought Jesus had more important things to do than to take time to bless these children.

One pastor says the disciples here "presumed to act as protectors of Jesus, thinking they know what's best." They wanted to protect Jesus' time as if they knew priorities better than Him, so they tried to help Jesus prioritize His ministry. They thought: "Your task is preaching; what can these children understand? It's not worth wasting time on them!"

【Mindset】 At this moment, the disciples only wanted to make their own team bigger and stronger. What contribution can these children make to the team? Wait till they grow up. They had no idea how much Jesus loves these young lives.

【Analogy】 Sometimes, when others serve the Lord in ways that differ from your priorities, you immediately look down upon them, as if what they do has no spiritual value. Then, like the disciples here, you try to stop them and teach them to do what you think they should do. This is actually a serious spiritual pride.

- "He was indignant and said to them...": "Indignant" literally means "deeply distressed," expressing an intense emotion. The disciples' opposition to the children brought Jesus to a state of extreme mental anguish, for the disciples' hearts were filled with arrogant self-righteousness at that moment.

Grace for the Little Children (v.14, v16)

- "for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these": These words emphasize their blessed privilege—they possess the kingdom of God. The kingdom is theirs. No one can take the kingdom of God away from them.

【Key Point】 "Such as these" in the original text denotes a category, referring to all children **without any specific requirement**. Jesus did not check their family background to see if they were born into godly families; He did not check if their parents were part of the "covenant people," if they had repented of their sin and believed in God; He did not examine the children's behavior or ask their parents if they were naughty or obedient at home; nor did He ask if they had been circumcised or baptized. If Jesus were to teach infant baptism, would there be a more suitable occasion than this? However, none of these was a requirement for children to possess the kingdom of God.

【Theological Supplement】 Meaning of Baptism: to depict spiritual realities with an outward sign. Water baptism depicts the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Bible explicitly teaches three spiritual truths depicted by water baptism: 1) Dying to sin, being alive to righteousness, and receiving new life

(Romans 6:1-11); 2) Being incorporated into the body of Christ, becoming a member of the church (1 Corinthians 12:13); 3) The cleansing of sin (1 Peter 3:21). **Only those who clearly believe in and are saved by the Lord can receive baptism according to the meaning assigned to it by the Bible (rather than by tradition)!**

【Theological Supplement】 This is not to say that all children are saved into eternal life immediately upon birth, nor that the salvation once obtained can still be lost. Children are neither believers nor unbelievers, for they do not yet have the ability to actively choose to believe or reject Jesus. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them in a special way. When they reach an age of accountability where they can understand the gospel and make a choice for themselves, they will only be able to enter the kingdom of God through repentance and faith in Jesus.

For those who have reached the age when personal saving faith can be exercised, the kingdom is entered only by a divinely illuminated understanding of what it means to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The implication of such as these is that for those who, because of young age or mental deficiency, are incapable of exercising saving faith, God grants them, in the event of death, entrance into the kingdom by the sovereign operation of His grace. When children die before they reach the age of decision, they go into the presence of Jesus Christ, because they are under the special protection of the sovereign King. — A pastor

【Conclusion】 Yes, infants who die prematurely are all chosen by God to enter the kingdom of heaven!

【Discernment】 Where is the age cutoff? The Bible does not tell us. That special age varies from person to person. Some people with cognitive disabilities never have that ability throughout their lives, so they are under the special grace and protection of God throughout their lives. Because we do not know when each child will be held accountable by God, we must seize every opportunity to preach the gospel to them as early as possible. **Once they have the ability to understand the gospel, their salvation will depend on whether they trust the gospel or not.**

【Significance (to God)】 **To demonstrate God's abundant grace!** Children enter the kingdom of heaven not because they are pure and sinless (c.f. Psalm 51:5; Genesis 8:21; Psalm 58:3), but solely because of God's immense grace! The kingdom of heaven is the place that displays God's grace!

【Significance (to us)】 1) This concerns your **knowledge of God**; 2) This directly relates to your **understanding of salvation** (v. 15). Children are the best metaphor for salvation. God uses the metaphor of children to demonstrate that **salvation is entirely by His grace, not by any human effort.**

Example of the Little Children (v. 15)

- "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all": According to the mainstream religious teaching of that time, children are the least qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven, because they have not achieved any spiritual accomplishments. However, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven not only belongs to children, but that everyone who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven must become like a child.

【Key Point】 There are only two kinds of people in the kingdom of heaven: children and those who are like children. Children obviously have not achieved anything; those who are like children declare that all the achievements they once thought they had are worthless before God. They acknowledge that they can never achieve anything to deserve God’s salvation.

【Note】 Adults must be “converted” (“turned around”) to “become like children” (Matthew 18:3). **They must discard the sophisticated, proud, and self-confident attitudes accumulated from their growing experience; they must admit that they have no ability to achieve anything spiritually; they must acknowledge that they have never done anything pleasing to God; they must rely on the heavenly Father completely for their lives, just like children do; they must acknowledge that all they have comes entirely from the grace of the heavenly Father.**

【Think】 Is this something that can be accomplished instantly? When you first believed in the Lord, you simply had a fundamental childlikeness. However, in the sanctification process, you will continually discover various adultlike sins popping up, that you’re just never humble enough or trusting God enough. In one sense, the process of spiritual growth is a continual turning back to become like a child.

Psalm 138:6 says, "For though the LORD is exalted, yet He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar."

Concluding application

Apart from continually becoming spiritually like children ourselves, how can we imitate Jesus in loving our children?

First, Teaching. Teaching them God's Word from a young age is the most important expression of love. Family worship is highly recommended.

Second, Being an Example. Teach children to pursue God by setting an example of pursuing Him yourself. When children see you spend time enjoying worshiping God, they will know that worshiping God is a joyful thing.

Third, Heartfelt Companionship. Companionship is an important expression of love. Take time to play with your children, chat with them, and laugh together.

Fourth, Trusting and Waiting on God. You cannot force your children into knowing God. In the matter of salvation, we must only trust and wait on God.