

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 28, Jesus Loves the Children

Speaker: Corey Brown

Passage: Mark 10:13-16

Big idea: Kingdom Faith is Child-like, not Childish.



¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16

We are going to be looking at this very famous passage of the Bible. We are going to break it down and we are going to see how we can get a handle on what it looks like to be a child in God’s Kingdom.

BIG IDEA
Kingdom Faith is **Child-like**, not **Child-ish**



Mark 10:13, “People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.”

This is an interesting place to incorporate this teaching, directly after the teaching on divorce. Most scholars agree that Jesus did not say this in conjunction with the teachings on divorce in the previous passage, but instead it was brought into this section because it relates to families.

The word for child here is *paidia*, meaning little child, or young child. We could assume that the people were bringing their infants and very young children to Jesus to bless them as was the Jewish custom to have a Rabbi, or prophet bless your child on their 8th day (circumcision day).

This would have been a great honour for the people to have Jesus, someone seen by the common people as at bare minimum a prophet from God. But it blessed Jesus even more, since he has such high value for Children, the weak, and the marginalized.

This idea about the touch from Jesus is actually an important detail. It is an indication not only of affirmation and care, but a clear statement of blessing.

The disciples respond by rebuking the people. The word rebuke here is *epitimiao* (*epit-em-i-o*) and is the idea of being unnecessarily aggressive, or being “gruff”, hostile, to sharply charge a change of action or thought.

The last time that this word came up in our study of Mark was a few weeks ago when we studied Jesus telling the disciples what kind of Messiah he was, and Peter “sharply charged” or rebuked Jesus that he was wrong about his identity.

This same attitude is present here, because children were a nuisance in the ancient world, unless they were your own.

The disciples had a misplaced view of the teachings of Jesus, and his care and compassion toward the vulnerable, the marginalized, the outcast, and the lowly.

Mark 10:14, “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.’”

Jesus saw this and was indignant. Some translations say “greatly displeased” but that does not get to the heart of the matter.

The word here for indignant is *aganakteō*, which is a state of anger aroused by injustice.

The idea here is not just that Jesus wants to ensure that children have the right to come to him, but more the idea of “Do not KEEP them from me”. Jesus makes a claim here that these children are His.

Jesus has such a deep care and love for children and was appalled at the disciples’ behaviour towards the downcast and marginalized of society, in this instance, young children.

Think back a couple weeks ago to the message Pastor Neil went through in Mark 9, in which Jesus talks about treatment of children.

Mark 9:36-37, “He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘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.’”

The disciples knew better, they had already been taught this truth.

Children matter to Jesus. In regard to the treatment of children, it is an issue of justice for Jesus. They were the lowest class and most ostracized of society in the ancient world. Jesus had taught them, when you treat children properly, you are showing that you care about me, and my kingdom.

We see this not only in this passage but in the number of times Jesus heals children in Mark’s Gospel.

- He raised a dead 12-year-old little girl.
- He healed the Centurion man’s son, from fits of demonic oppression.

Jesus has cared for children. In chapter 9, He brought a child up on His knee and embraced them. The disciples should know, and yet, they rebuke the crowds. But Jesus tells them not to hinder any of these families bringing their children to Jesus.

So, Jesus says something striking here in verse 14, “do not hinder them”. Do not put stipulations on their coming, on their love, on their desire to follow me, but foster it, encourage it, and let them come to me.

There has been a lot of discussion what Jesus meant by “the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”, but what if we just looked at all the time Jesus expressed that simple faith in him was what gave us access to the kingdom. Seeing that the kingdom was for the marginalized, the outcast, the small, and the “insignificant”. We are then able to understand that Jesus is making the argument that there is no one insignificant to Jesus.

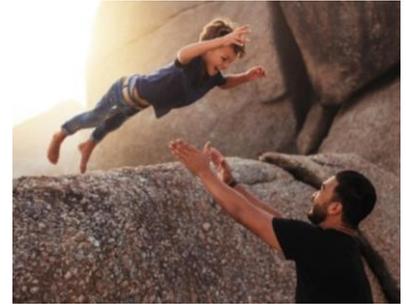
Mark 10:15, “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Jesus is speaking to the disciples. It was the disciples who were stopping the children from coming to Jesus, and Jesus is using this as a word picture to show them the reality of the Kingdom. He is saying ‘don’t get in the way of those coming to my kingdom, regardless of who they are to you’. Because the reality is that whoever does not come like a child, does not come.

Picture the image of a child jumping into their dad's arms.

Children trust:

- Blindly
- with Faith
- Wanting to be loved
- Wanting to be valued
- Going to Jesus for Jesus



Verses 14-16 emphasize Jesus' high regard for vulnerable children as well as his focus on the childlike faith of anyone who would seek to enter the kingdom of God.

Childlike faith, childlike obedience, a child's sense of right and wrong, the full nature of childlike trust. These are the qualities of those who enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus is not giving the disciples any room for misunderstanding who the kingdom is for. It is not for the elite, it is not for the righteous, it is not for the important.

The Kingdom of God is for all those who realize their childlike need for grace, in a childlike trust and love that leads to all of these groups of individuals being loved by Jesus equally.

This, and this alone, is the effective call of the Gospel to God's Kingdom. You don't know, you can't know, you'll never know how vast and huge and wide and massive the truths of the Gospel are, but Jesus just simply asks us to put our faith in Him. He will handle it all.

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

In the same way that Jesus interacted with the boy in Mark 9, he lifts up these children in an embrace, and blessed them.

I would venture that while we do not know what this blessing entailed; it was greater than a typical Jewish briss.

What Jesus is doing, in relationship to this entire teaching, is modelling compassion, love and affection towards children, to direct his disciples in the right way, the Kingdom way, the humble way.

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Jesus does not instruct his disciples to become childish. Instead he calls them to be childlike (10:15) in simple trust and humility (9:33-37) before the God who atones (9:31). The power of humility resides in the fact that a humble person does not depend on his own limited strength. Rather, such a person entrusts himself to the powerful and deeply resourceful hand of God (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 1 Pet. 5:5-7). Humility does not seek itself. Rather, it pursues God's purposes in God's way. In this way, a humble person may be very strong in character, since such a person trusts entirely in God's power (1 Pet. 5:6-7)

ESV Commentary Series: Mark 10:14-16

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While I was preparing this message, studying, and getting ready. I thought it would be a great opportunity and very appropriate to have Mrs. Kimberly share with us her heart for Kids Ministry, her deep love to lead children to Jesus, and to be like Jesus, and why its so important that we do Jesus Centered Ministry to children well.

Watch the video interview with Mrs. Kimberly [HERE](#).

Children do not come with conditions. They do not come with a sense of their greatness, or a prowess to become the center of the universe. Typically, children are humble by nature, especially little children, they have no sense of the grandeur of themselves, they just are. This should be fostered and protected.

My son Campbell is 7 years old. A week or two ago we were having a conversation about his school, and what he loves to learn about. Because our boys have the blessing of being at London Christian Academy, Campbell was talking about how he learns about Jesus. I explained to him that not everyone gets to learn about Jesus in school, for a lot of kids they only get to learn about Jesus at home and at KidsChurch. His response was so telling of kid's hearts. He could not fathom why kids would not get to learn about Jesus at school. He had no concept of it; that this thing that he has been taught in our home, at school, and in KidsChurch, would not be a reality for others. He was completely oblivious to the "grown up" realities of some of these things.

Campbell has childlike faith. He has been told that Jesus loves him, that Jesus has died for his sins, he has had it explained that we need to repent and trust Jesus, and that is enough for him.

Now, one day that will change. As hard as it is for me to acknowledge, one day the simple explanations will not be enough to satisfy his curiosity. But the same simple realities and simple Gospel will remain the only thing that saves him, or anyone else.

As his parents, Caitlyn and I need to do the things that are commanded of parents in the scriptures.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

We are commanded to teach, guide, and shepherd our children towards Jesus, making the impression of God on their hearts, being Jesus people each and every day.

I would encourage you to take this verse to heart, make it present in your home, and do what it says. Understanding the impact that this can have:

Proverbs 22:6, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

While this is not a promise of salvation at all, it is good wisdom to be sure.

If the way we direct our children is towards Jesus, we need to trust him with the results of their salvation, but we can be faithful and intentional about impressing the truths of God to our children as the way they should go.

These are the things that Jesus says are important. Keeping his commands is how we show our love for him, but this is secondary to receiving him like a child. Child-Like faith is simple, humble, clear, honest trust in Jesus.

How does your faith look? Is it childlike? Does it reflect complete trust and dependence on someone other than yourself? Is your faith in Jesus simple and unwavering? Is your faith consistent because you trust Jesus alone?

The problem is we too often confuse and conflate the issues here. Be with Jesus, be like Jesus, be an arrow to Jesus, but do not allow your faith to be childish. Be serious, be focused, be intentional, be committed, be solid.

If you could dig deep roots of simple dependence on Jesus, the blooming of your faith would be incredible. Be serious about your faith, but do not think that in your seriousness you are earning grace because of your good works, your commitment or anything else.

Jesus beckons not only children to himself, but us to himself like little children.