

## Entrance into the Kingdom of God Requires a Child-Like Faith

### Mark 10:13-16

Mark 10:13-16 – *“Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” <sup>16</sup> And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”*

### Background Notes

In verse 13, the word that is used for “children” can include babies as well as pre-teens. It’s the same word that was used to describe Jairus’ daughter in Mark 5:39, and she was 12 years old. We know that babies were included among the children here, because they are mentioned specifically in the parallel passage in Luke 18:15. So babies, children, and pre-teens all were brought to the Lord.

These children were brought to the Lord for blessing because it was quite common in that culture to bring children to a great rabbi for blessing. And what a great blessing they received! The Lord took them in His arms, laid His hands on them, and called for God’s blessings on each one of them!

Verse 16 says, *“He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them,”* The word that’s used for “blessed” could be translated *“fervently blessed.”* This was not just a formal invocation of blessing, like a benediction that’s often pronounced at the end of a church service. This was more like a prayer of blessing from a warm-hearted father who prays fervently for his dearly loved children.

It’s significant that it seems that none of the children were left out, or that any child received a “lesser” blessing. There was no selection process going on here at all. **The Lord blessed all of them!** This fact may be a point in favor of the doctrine that all children, before they reach the age of responsibility, are part of the “elect company” of believers. However, that doctrine can’t be proved from this passage of Scripture alone, so it is not one of our doctrinal points from this passage.

### Doctrinal Points

#### 1. Children are important to the Lord!

How many of you remember that Sunday school song, *Jesus Loves the Little Children?*

“Jesus loves the little children - all the children of the world.  
Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight.  
Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

That truth is certainly taught in these verses. Our Lord knew that the suffering of crucifixion was only a short time ahead - and yet He took time to bless the children! Certainly children are important to the Lord.

In verse 14 Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to them and do not forbid them.”* Here we see that our Lord was tender, compassionate and socially gracious in the way He came across to people. He was not stern and stand-off-ish. Children aren’t attracted to stern or unattractive people, but here the children readily came to the Lord. They let Him take them in His arms, and they let Him bless them. What a beautiful picture! It’s a great indication of our Lord’s character – tender, compassionate and socially gracious.

The Lord was greatly displeased – indignant - when the disciples tried to stop the people from bringing the children. The disciples thought that the children were not important to the Lord, but the Lord was indignant that children would be sent away from Him! The word used here conveys a strong emotional response from the Lord – He was **greatly displeased!** Why? Because children are important to the Lord!

Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Children were important to the Lord - then and today. Children are important to the Lord.

## **2. Entrance into the kingdom of God requires a childlike attitude.**

Verse 14 again: *“Do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.”* What did our Lord mean? Did He mean that children are more important than adults in the kingdom of God? Did He mean that children who die and go to heaven are going to remain children? No. Verse 15 explains what the Lord meant. *“Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”*

Once again, as in chapter 9, the Lord used children as an object lesson, and the point of object lesson is our doctrinal point: “Entrance into the kingdom of God requires a childlike attitude.”

In John 3:3, the Lord said, *“Except a person be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* There’s only one way into the kingdom of God. You *must* be born again, through faith in Jesus Christ. Here in Mark 10 the Lord was just as emphatic. Look at verse 15: *“Assuredly I say to you, [meaning this is a solemn pronouncement] whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”* “By no means” - an emphatic negative! There’s only *one* way into the kingdom of God.

In what ways does a person have to become like a little child to be born again and enter the kingdom of God? Well, children are essentially trusting and receptive to what is told them. They are not skeptical. They're open to believe what's told them. In the same way, people who become Christians must, in simple faith and trust, believe that Christ died on the cross for their sins and trust Him as their personal Savior. The Bible teaches this, and those who question that truth and are skeptical about the clear teaching of Scripture remain outside the kingdom of God. We must be childlike in our reception.

Furthermore, children are helpless and dependent. They can't use money or power to gain position. They can't buy their way into the kingdom - they must receive what's given to them as a gift. In the same way, no one can use money or power to enter the kingdom of God. They must receive salvation as a gift.

Have you become like a little child and entered the kingdom of God? Or are you still thinking you can force your way into the kingdom of your terms? Entrance into the kingdom of God requires a childlike attitude.

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. Let's not misrepresent the Lord.**

When the disciples rebuked the people who were bringing children to the Lord, they actually misrepresented the Lord. The average person on the street would have thought that this was the Lord's policy - that the Lord didn't want to be bothered with children. They would have thought the disciples were just carrying out the Lord's policy. But nothing could be further from the truth!

The disciples misrepresented the Lord. They may have meant well. They may have wanted to give the Lord more privacy, or more time to rest. They may have wanted fewer interruptions for the teaching seminars, or many other reasons. But they lacked spiritual sensitivity - and they ended up misrepresenting the Lord!

We, too, can misrepresent the Lord. For example, if we don't care for children, or if we take an academic approach to our faith, or if we don't get involved in Christian service, we actually misrepresent the Lord. We may not mean to. Our motives may even seem to be pure. But we need to be careful not to misrepresent the Lord by what we say or do.

Do people see Christ in you - or do they get a distorted picture of what the Lord is really like? Let's not misrepresent the Lord.

### **2. Let's bring our children to the Lord.**

Just as the parents brought their children to the Lord in that day, let's bring our children to the Lord today. I'm so glad that my parents led me to Christ when I was a pre-teen. I often wonder where I'd be today if I hadn't been brought to the Lord

as a child.

Some of you have children; some of you have grandchildren; some of you have children and grandchildren. It is of utmost importance to do what you can *now* to bring your children or your grandchildren to the Lord - when they are young, in their early years, when they are open, when they are receptive, before they become skeptical. Teenagers become more closed, and they have their own agenda. They become more skeptical, and they have so many other interests that begin to take their attention. If they come to the Lord as children, and then grow to become Christian teens, they can be very effective with their peers. They can be greatly used by the Lord.

Timothy is an outstanding biblical example of a parent and grandparent bringing a child to the Lord. In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul says of Timothy: *“...from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* Who taught the Scriptures to Timothy when he was a child, so that he became a believer? 2 Timothy 1:5 gives us the answer: it was the faith of his mother and his grandmother. *“When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”*

Lois and Eunice were godly Jewish women who taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures, so young Timothy was open to the gospel and accepted the Lord when the message of salvation was presented. Timothy may have accepted the Lord when he heard Paul preach the gospel, but his mother and grandmother did the groundwork of bringing Timothy to the Lord. As you know, Timothy joined the apostle Paul in his missionary travels. He may have joined Paul when he was still in his teen years.

Another reason why Eunice is a good example to us of a parent bringing a child to the Lord is that her situation was not ideal. Acts 16:1 indicates that Timothy's father was not a believer, which would have made it especially hard to teach and train young Timothy in the Scriptures. But his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were faithful and overcame the obstacles and brought Timothy to the Lord. So Eunice should be an encouragement to single parents, or to a parent who is married to an unbeliever.

We all have a responsibility to bring our children to the Lord, even when the situation is not ideal. And it can be done, even though we may face a lot of obstacles. *Now* is the time, when the children are young and more open. Strike while the iron is hot!

Do everything you can to bring children to Christ in their early years. Pray for them. Get them to Sunday school, Christian camps and youth activities. Have family devotions. Discuss the Scriptures with them, and include invitations to accept Christ now. Biblical parental guidance in this crucial “life and death” decision is not “manipulation” (as some people may say). It is biblical!

Let's bring our children to the Lord.