

JESUS WELCOMED LITTLE CHILDREN  
Devotional for October 7, 2018 based upon Mark 10: 13-16

The Gospel writer Mark tells us, "People were bringing little children to (Jesus) in order that He might touch them" (10: 13), but the disciples spoke sternly to them. In contrast to the attitude of the disciples, Jesus welcomed little children. I can think of at least three reasons why.

First, JESUS WELCOMED LITTLE CHILDREN IN ORDER TO SHOW THEIR GREAT WORTH. The disciples were trying to keep people from bringing their children to Jesus. They may have resented this imposition upon the Master's time and energy. They may have made the tragic mistake of believing that the needs of children are not very important. Which is amazing when you remember that just a few days before Jesus had told them how important it is to welcome children. In the previous chapter - in response to their arguing over who was the greatest – Jesus had taken a little child and said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me, and whoever welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me." (9: 37) The way we treat children is the way we treat God.

But here the disciples were acting as if they neither heard nor remembered anything of what Jesus had said. Mark tells us that when Jesus saw the disciples' attempts to keep children away, He was indignant. It displeases Jesus very much whenever we stand in the way of children coming to Jesus, for children are very important to Jesus. And so I believe that this story is telling us that whether or not we are parents or grandparents or great grandparents, and whether or not our own children or grandchildren or great grandchildren attend the church that we attend, all of us need to be investing time and energy in making sure that our church has ministry for children. We need to be a part of letting children know that we love them and how much God loves them.

Second, JESUS WELCOMED LITTLE CHILDREN IN ORDER TO BLESS THEM. It was very common in Jesus' day for parents to bring their children to a godly rabbi and ask him to bless them. With the teaching and miracle ministry of Jesus, it was no doubt an exciting prospect for parents to have their children blessed by the Master.

Christian counselors agree on the importance of receiving your parents' blessing. Christian author and psychologist Gary Smalley speaks of two kinds of people – blessed people and unblessed people. He tells of the good things that happen to people who have received their parents' blessing and the bad things that happen to people who have not. No wonder Esau became so upset when he realized that his brother Jacob had tricked their father Isaac into giving him the blessing.

Third, JESUS WELCOMED LITTLE CHILDREN IN ORDER TO TEACH ABOUT SALVATION. A Christian organization that works with children estimates that 85% of Christians come to faith in Jesus before the age of 21. This is a staggering statistic. And many of those who come to faith in Jesus later in life do so as a result of seeds that were sown during their childhood. What childlike – not childish but childlike – characteristics did Jesus have in mind when He said, “Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it”? (10: 15) I can think of three.

First, HUMILITY. I believe that it is no coincidence that Luke records this incident of Jesus and the children right after the story of the Pharisee and the sinner. The Pharisee was self-righteous, so therefore not at all righteous in the sight of God. The sinner humbly confessed his condition to God, so Jesus said that he was forgiven.

Second, children possess a simplicity of FAITH. They have a wonderful ability to trust and then to act on that trust. But those of us who are older have been lied to and manipulated and taken advantage of and taken for granted so many times that we have developed a tendency to doubt and be cynical and skeptical.

Third, children are WILLING TO RECEIVE A GIFT without suspecting that there may be strings attached. In contrast, adults do not want to be beholden to anyone. Adults do not believe that there really is such a thing as a free lunch - there really is such a thing as a “something for nothing” gift.

Parents were bringing little children to Jesus in order that He might touch them. This morning Jesus wants you to come to Him in order that He might be able to touch your life. Will you come to Him in humility and with a simple, child-like faith? Will you come and receive His love, forgiveness, and grace?

Pastor Dennis D. Nelson