

IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN

Tuesday, August 8

Reading: Mark 10:13-16

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. **15** Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

It is appropriate that the gospel of Mark follows Jesus' discussion on marriage and divorce with a story about children. It was a custom for parents to bring their children to a rabbi for a blessing. But Jesus' disciples rebuke the parents and send them away. Children were considered the least important members of Jewish society. The disciples probably viewed the children as just another distraction to take up Jesus' time which could be spent on more important things. In their minds, they were protecting Jesus and His busy schedule.

However, Jesus had different priorities. He was very upset and rebuked the disciples for this action. Far from being a waste of time, Jesus claimed that only those who were like these little children could enter His kingdom. Little children are helpless and totally dependent on others for their wellbeing. This is how everyone must come to Christ. They must realize that they are helpless to save themselves and depend on Christ for their forgiveness and salvation. We must all come to Jesus with the faith of a little child.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "The Disciples Rebuked Them." The disciples had their priorities all mixed up. They believed the children were not important enough to see Jesus, while Jesus made them a priority and said everyone must come to Him like a little child. Believers today can get their priorities mixed up just as easily. We can focus on what we think is important and ignore what God wants us to do. We need to stay connected to God through His Word and prayer and be open to hear the voice of the Spirit speaking in our hearts and directing our paths. Otherwise we may miss the will of God in favor of our own thoughts and desires.
2. "He Took the Children in His Arms." Besides a lesson in salvation, what can Jesus blessing the children teach us?
 - (1) Jesus loves children – They are not "second class citizens." They are important to Jesus and must be important to those who follow Him. We are never closer to the heart of Jesus than when we love and teach children.
 - (2) Jesus affirmed the spiritual capacity of children – While we must never pressure or force a child into a false confession of faith, children have the capacity to understand and respond to Christ. It is important to teach them God's Word from an early age.

The story is told of evangelist D.L. Moody who was asked how his meeting went. He replied that there were 2 ½ decisions made for Christ. The man assumed Moody meant 2 adults and 1 child were saved. Moody corrected him by saying that 2 children and 1 adult came to Christ. Children have their whole life to live for the Lord; adults have only what life they have left! What are you doing to help boys and girls hear and respond to Jesus? Is "children's ministry" important to you or do you consider it a "babysitting service" so you can worship?