

Let the Children Come to Me

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] So our subject this morning is children, and it's interesting. This week I just received from a friend an email, and I get an email from him every morning, just kind of a little comedy to start the day, you know, just a little lightheartedness.

And this one is about a class of first graders that were given the assignment to complete the Proverbs. So they were given the first half of the Proverbs, and then they were just told to finish it on their own.

What are they going to come up with? These are first graders, okay? So let me read some of these. They're interesting. It's always, I always love to hear how children think about things. So, strike while the bug is close.

It's always darkest before daylight savings time. Never underestimate the power of termites. You can lead a horse to water, but how? Don't bite the hand that looks dirty.

[1 : 19] A miss is as good as a mister. Yeah. You can't teach an old dog new math.

If you lie down with dogs, you'll stink in the morning. The pen is mightier than the pigs.

The pen. You got to think. Clever kids here. An idle mind is the best way to relax.

I think that was written by a little boy. Where there's smoke, there's pollution. This must be L.A. A penny saved is not much.

Two's company. Three's the musketeers. Don't put off till tomorrow what you put on to go to bed.

[2 : 28] Laugh and the whole world laughs with you. Cry and you have to blow your nose. Children should be seen and not spanked or grounded.

And a bird in the hand is going to poop on you. I love it. The perspective of children. And that gets a little feel for what Jesus is talking about here too.

Because he's going to talk about being like children. And learning from children. Identifying with children.

So it helps us to get a little bit in that perspective. Our culture today gives a little bit more attention to children than the culture of the first century.

Which in some ways is good. We have a culture that's concerned about protection of children to some extent. There's lots of consideration, ideas, a lot of thinking about children.

[3 : 39] Some of it's good. Some of it's not. In first century society, the child was not regarded with the same kind of affection as we regard children today.

By society, not by parents. Parents, of course, love their children. But in terms of society view, they were not held with much affection. They have no status.

They have no rights. They're not highly valued. They're not productive. They're relatively unimportant to society. So in that mindset, we come to see how the disciples show their viewpoint of children.

As they rebuke parents from bringing children to Jesus. And so we see Jesus once again confronting worldly attitude.

The worldly attitude of his disciples. Once again, correcting how they think. He calls them to value children.

[4 : 45] And he calls them to rethink how we view children. And those children are the subject. It's not just about children.

It's also about us. So, we have seen in Mark chapter 8 and 9, that Jesus has been training what we might call kingdom character.

He's been training the disciples, calling them to a radical life. To counter cultural values. He began in chapter 8 with this statement.

If you want to follow me. If you desire to follow me. Then you must what? Deny yourself.

That's counter cultural. That's counter natural. Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. He goes on and talks about denying your soul. To not try to save your soul in this world.

[5 : 45] If you try to save your soul in this world, you will lose it. But if you lose your soul in this world, you will save it. So, in other words, not be led by your soul. Your soul, your affections.

You're wanting the easy, quick path. Talks about denial. Very counter cultural. Very counter intuitive. If you want to be first, be last.

That's not the tune of our culture. If you want to be first, be last. Be the servant of all. Don't just serve on the side. Be always a servant. That's counter cultural.

Our culture values service. In fact, most companies put their mission statement out there and always has something about serving the people. Right? Because we like that as consumers, we want to be served.

Right? So, we want to know that they're all about serving me. Because that's what's most important. But in the long run, the companies, yeah, they're doing that. But they're doing that to make a profit. Jesus isn't talking about profiting.

[6 : 48] He's talking about giving. Giving. When you don't get a profit. When you don't get paid back. When it's not recognized. So, he's training them to reverse their selfish biases.

Their competitive spirit. Their judgmental spirit toward those who are outside. Rooting out the source of our sins. Not just dealing with the symptoms of our sin. But looking for the root of it. The cause of it. If it's the hand. If it's the foot. If it's the eye. Do some radical eradication. That you will feel. In order to overcome that.

And so, he's talking about a radical kind of life. What Paul identifies later as not conforming to this world.

But being renewed in the renewal of your mind. Reforming our attitudes. So, here in chapter 10, he continues with this counter-cultural teaching and training.

[7 : 53] Now, he's looking at values. Our values regarding marriage. We looked at that last week. He surprises them. He stuns them with his view of marriage. And divorce.

And yet, all he does is go back to scripture. He says, what was God's design? What was God's intention? And so, he slays us. With talking about what marriage is.

And the disciples react with. Well, it's better not to get married then. He's talking about something impossible. He's talking about something we don't culturally, worldly want to do.

We want ways out. When it gets hard. So, he's talking about rethinking our value of marriage. Now, he's going to talk about rethinking our value of children.

How do we think about children? That's what we're going to focus on today. Next, in verse 17 and on, he's going to talk about wealth and riches. And again, he's going to surprise them. And they're going to say, if the rich have a hard time getting into heaven, who can be saved?

[9 : 03] Jesus says, well, it's impossible for men, but not for God. So, he's talking about these kinds of values. What we value in our world, from our self perspective, to totally radically changing our attitudes, our values.

To God's way of thinking. So, now, in the present text and the next text, in verses 14 and 15, he mentions the subject not only of children, but of the kingdom of God.

He talks about belonging to the kingdom of God. He talks about receiving the kingdom. He talks about entering the kingdom. And then, he's going to talk about that in the same way in verses 23 and 24, in regard to riches.

That it's hard for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. So, he's bringing up kingdom a lot here.

And so, I want to remind us what we're talking about. What does he mean that this is what the kingdom is like and this is how you enter the kingdom? What are we talking about kingdom?

[10 : 21] Receiving the kingdom. Entering the kingdom. Well, remember, that was Jesus' subject from the beginning. In Mark chapter 1, verse 15, when he started preaching, after he was baptized, he started preaching.

And he said, the time has been fulfilled. The kingdom is at hand. And he begins preaching the message of the kingdom. Everything he preached was summarized as the gospel of the kingdom. Remember, he taught parables of the kingdom. And so, he gave different pictures and perspectives of what kingdom is. And it's not what we expected.

It wasn't something earthly. It's something more internal and thinking of a bigger word and it's gone. Something that's bigger.

I like Paul's concise description of the kingdom in Romans 14, 17. Paul says, the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking. It's not about these physical aspects.

[11 : 24] It's not outward. It's something else. It's the kingdom of God is a matter of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. So, what is the kingdom?

It's Holy Spirit ministry. That's what the kingdom is. When we pray daily, my kingdom come, we're praying for the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

So, in other words, we're praying about our walk with the Spirit. We're praying about God sending His Spirit to continue to teach me and convict me, correct me, empower me. Okay?

That's what we're talking about. When we pray, thy kingdom come, we're praying a big prayer. If you just do a word study of kingdom and then see all the things that are associated with it, it's huge. It's a huge prayer. We're not praying for something distant to come, for the world to end. That's the end of the kingdom. That's the culmination of the kingdom. But Jesus said, the kingdom's here.

[12 : 22] When I come, the kingdom's here. And after Jesus left, He left us the Holy Spirit, who brings the power of the kingdom. Okay? So, that's what we're talking about with kingdom.

I just want to remind us what we're talking about here. So, now in verses 13 to 16, in Mark 10, Jesus is correcting our view of children.

And He's teaching kingdom children. And what He does in this is confront cultural values. The disciples had a certain value system about children.

They had a certain view of children. And when the parents are bringing the children, they're saying, no, no, no, no. Children are not welcome. No, no, no.

Something going on there. And so, Jesus is correcting that and telling them, don't do that. Don't do that. And so, He reveals what I wanted to break down into two truths.

[13 : 25] He makes a statement in verse 14 about children. He makes a statement about who they are. That they exemplify what kingdom people look like.

And then He makes another statement in verse 15 about receiving and entering the kingdom in relation to children. He's going to teach us two things. Reveal two thoughts that need to get into our thinking in relation to children.

They're examples and that we learn from them. So, the first thing He says, verse 14, He becomes indignant with the disciples and He says to them, Let the children come to Me.

Do not hinder them. Why? For to such belongs the kingdom of God. So, let me say it this way. The first truth that He's teaching is that children exemplify the character of the kingdom.

Children model, illustrate for us what we see in children is character that characterize the people who are in the kingdom.

[14 : 38] That's what the kingdom people are like. They're like children. There's something about children that we want to be like. He's not talking about acting like children.

Okay? Because children can act in wonderful ways and they can act in non-wonderful ways. Right? Every parent knows that. He's talking about what they are.

Not how they act, but they are. Okay? So, let's think this through. So, I want you to see three things. In verse 13, we see the problem developing. Verse 14, first half of verse 14, Jesus gives a correction.

And then at the end of verse 14, He gives a reason. So, let's break that down this way. So, first the problem in verse 13. We see the disciples hindering the children. They were bringing children. So, must be parents. Were bringing children to Jesus that He might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them. They're hindering the children.

[15 : 45] They somehow think they're the gatekeepers. Or in modern lingo, they're the bouncers. You're not in here, youngster. And Mark doesn't tell us why.

There's something going on. There's an attitude here. He doesn't tell us what they were. But probably it's along the lines of Jesus is too busy for children. He's too busy.

He's too important. And children are not important enough. And they're too small. What's the song that Randy Newman sings?

Small people? It's a satire on racism. He talks about small people. You know, we need to get rid of them. Funny. Sorry.

It's all satirical to teach us to embrace them. That's kind of the attitude of the disciples. They're like, no, you're not important enough for Jesus. Jesus is too busy for you.

[16:45] Whatever is going on there, they devalue the children. They're too young. And so we tend to dismiss children, overlook children, push them to the side.

This is not for you. And I think one of the ways we do that in the church today, we could do that individually. You could ignore them, dismiss them. Or as a church, and there's a great tendency in the church today to dismiss children in the sense of, literally, dismiss them from the service.

And the thinking is, the motivation is good because they say, well, the children learn better in a different environment. Well, who says? One, does God say that?

Did Jesus dismiss them at the Sermon on the Mount? Okay, everybody sit down, put the children over there, ladies, Mary, Martha, you take care of the children. Don't see that? You don't see that in Israel?

We don't see that until about 70 years ago. It's a relatively modern experiment. When we used to do the Chautauqua service, you know, we'd have visitors come and we'd do the old 1880s style service.

[18:00] And I told them, no nursery today. This is Chautauqua. They didn't do that. They never even crossed their mind to have nursery back then. That's one of the ways I think we can do that, separate them.

Just think that, you know, they're too young for this. They won't get it. It's over their head. Is it? It's over my head sometimes. So how does Jesus respond to their rebuke of the parents here?

He corrects them. In fact, it's a very strong reaction, isn't it? Verse 14. When Jesus saw it, he was indignant. We don't see him get angry often.

And this is a word that has feeling. He felt anger. He was grieved. We saw back in chapter 3 of Mark when he was, remember, he was teaching in the synagogue and there was a man with a withered hand in the synagogue.

Jesus talked about healing him. And he looked around and saw the Pharisees and the scribes all kind of just, okay, let's see you do it.

[19:13] Come on, do it. Give us a reason. And it said he was angry, seeing their hardness of heart. They've already made a judgment.

And so similarly, Jesus is angry with his own disciples for their attitude toward children. He's grieved. He's displeased.

And then he says something. He says two things, in fact. He says let the children. So one positive, one negative. Let the children come.

Permit them to come. And do not forbid them. Forbid them not. So let them come and literally stop forbidding them.

Knock it off. Modern lingo. No. No. He, and what we see is Jesus wants children to come to him. He wants that.

[20:16] He desires that. He welcomes that. Don't you dare give the impression that children aren't welcome to me. He values them.

They're important to him. Now we think, remember now, this is the fourth year of his ministry. His time is winding down. He's coming down. He's coming to the cross.

He's got so much teaching to do, doesn't he? So many people to reach, doesn't he? And yet he wants to take time to be with the children. Come on, Jesus. We've got a mission to do.

Jesus was never in a hurry, was he? Children want to come? Bring the children. Absolutely bring the children. I think it was kind of a relief for him.

Dealing with these knuckleheads all the time. Give me the children. They're the soft hearts and the, you know. Yeah, I don't know. Clearly he loved them.

[21:17] And then he gives the reason. So here's the lesson, though. The end of verse 14. Let the children come. Do not forbid them. Why? For to such belongs the kingdom of God.

There's something about them that their presence is very important for us. Because of such, literally of such kinds of people, childlike people, is the kingdom.

The kingdom is made up of people who are like these children. Well, in what way? See, these children model and show the character of the kingdom.

The children teach us. That's why they need to be present. They remind us. They teach us. They keep in front of us a visual of what the kingdom people are like.

Not how they act, again, not how they act, but who they are. They are this kind of people. It's not that they act humble.

[22 : 27] But they are humble. It's who they are. They are helpless. They are weak.

They are dependent. They are needy. They are powerless. Now, wait a minute, pastor. What are you getting at? Saying we're that way?

Saying if we're in the kingdom that we're weak? That the people in the kingdom are needy people? I don't like that idea. People in the kingdom are dependent? Come on, I pull up my...

Go. Sorry for whoever is listening on tape. That probably incomplete sentences. What's he saying?

Yeah, it's exactly what he's saying.

Children exemplify the character of kingdom people who are helpless and weak and dependent and powerless.

[23 : 31] And again, it's not how they act. It's simply who they are. He's not saying go act like children. But are you childlike in your relation to God and to one another?

Are we lording it over one another or are we, I'm with you, brother. I struggle too. I don't know Jesus as much today as I needed him the very first day. It's still impossible for me to love God with all my heart.

It's still impossible for me to lay down my life for my wife like Jesus laid down his life for the church. I still need the Holy Spirit helping me to do that.

And it's still hard for me not to view outsiders a certain way because I have this baggage of prejudice that's in me. Huh? It's not natural for me to be patient.

We love that word. We like short suffering, not long suffering. So it's good for children to be present.

[24 : 46] They remind us and they teach us. They exemplify by who they are. Today it's typical to remove children from adults when we meet together.

It's typical to separate and to segregate them. Why do we do that? Well, I know the thinking. I grew up in a church that did that. I didn't get into big church until seventh grade.

And then it was hard. Because there's no more puppets. There's no more stories. And the black light cool stuff.

And, you know, they do all this cool stuff for kids. And then you're an adult. You just have to sit and listen to the pastor. On, on, on. Where's recess and crafts? And I'm not making fun of all that.

So that, you know, parents teach your children to do what you got. You know, that's great. I'm, I'm not against us teaching children in ways that they understand.

[25 : 46] I get it. We're doing that. But why would we segregate that when we're all meeting together? What we have learned when we, when I was first pastor, we were challenged with this.

Never thought about it before. We were challenged by this flood of, of, of homeschooled parents that came into our church and said, we want to keep our kids in church. Like, you're parents.

You can do whatever you want with your kids. Well, then we had nobody signed up for children's church. Except for the pastor's kids. Like, you know, maybe they, let's try this.

Never look back. Our kids benefited so much. They learned so many things. They could never learn children's church. We still taught them in other ways.

We used all kinds of, of tools to help teach the kids. Bunyan and those kind of things. But man. How often we conform to the world.

[26 : 50] Lean on our own understanding. And don't trust his word. And simple little things like this. Makes a huge difference. And then as a youth pastor, I saw later what was happening in the church.

Is that, that, that kids weren't ready for the world. Not only were they brought up in children's churches, but then they had youth groups. And I'm not all against youth groups. I was a youth pastor, so I can speak about it.

We have to be careful how we do youth groups. But youth groups can unintentionally train our children to never be involved in the church.

Because what we find is kids that want their youth group experience to keep going. They've never learned to, to, to, to get, to desegregate.

They've never learned to be with adults. And they're, because, you know, youth group's fun and exciting and church is boring. And, and we've done a, done them a disservice.

[27 : 53] And now we've got a whole generation of folks, several generations of folks that are wandering around from, from new church to new church, which are using youth ministry methods to

keep people in.

A lot of churches are run just like youth groups. Because I did, I used to do youth ministry. I know how, I know how to build a crowd. I know. And then how do you got to keep the crowd?

All for good motives. It's just not thinking through. How do I get off on that sermon? So, so.

Consider the mindset of the Bible. Let me, let me give you one passage. There are several passages that talk about children being with the adults. Deuteronomy 31, when he calls the whole assembly to come together, men, women, and the little ones.

In Mark chapter 6, when, before Jesus fed the 5,000, he taught them for a long period of time. And we find out later that the 5,000 were just the men, not including the women and the little ones.

[29 : 01] Little ones were there for all that teaching. Paul writes to the Ephesians in chapter 6, verse 1. He addresses who? Children. That means children were in the audience.

They're hearing the reading of this letter. They're being taught the reading of this letter. Here, here's what Paul says to Timothy.

Listen to Timothy's example. 2 Timothy chapter 3. As for you, Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have been firmly, what have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it. And how, watch this, how from childhood, and that word there is not just childhood that means zero to twelve. It's actually a word that means infancy. It can actually mean fetus.

But talking about very, very little child. How from infancy you have been, what? Acquainted, familiar with, exposed to the sacred writings.

[30 : 01] Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. And all scripture, he says, is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

So that the man of God may be competent. Anybody here want to be competent? Anybody here want to be adequate? Anyone feel inadequate? The scripture will make you adequate.

Competent. Equipped for every good work. And by the way, everything that Paul says about scripture there applies to children. The scriptures. And at the time of Paul's writing, he's talking about the Old Testament scriptures, not the New Testament.

Because at the time that Paul's writing, the only New Testament books that we had were Paul's letters and the Gospel of Mark. The other Gospels were written later after Paul had died.

So he's talking about the Old Testament. The Old Testament scriptures are able to make children wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

[31 : 13] And they're able to teach them, to reprove them, to correct them, to train them. Timothy had been raised from infancy on the scriptures by a godly mother.

Remember, his father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jew. She did it on her own. She taught this boy. She taught this boy. She taught this boy. She taught this boy.

She taught this boy. She taught this boy. She taught this boy. Why is it important for children to be present? Because they exemplify for us what kingdom people are like. We need not to dismiss them, to push them aside.

We need not to look at them as a bother. They remind us. They're good for us.

They remind us who we are before God. Weak, dependent, helpless. Just as Jesus said to us, apart from me, you can do nothing. You're totally helpless without me to bear fruit.

[32 : 20] So then in verse 15, he brings up a second truth. A second declaration. He says in verse 15, Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

Whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child shall not enter it. It's a statement of fact. In fact, it's a double negative in the result part.

Shall absolutely not enter it. Whoever is not receiving the kingdom like a child is not entering it. So first he gives a warning. So let me summarize the statement in verse 15.

Children teach us how to enter the kingdom. They teach us. They model it. They exemplify it. How to enter the kingdom. So notice again, what are they receiving?

They're receiving the kingdom. That's interesting. He says the kingdom. Whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child shall not enter it. He doesn't say whoever does not receive me.

[33 : 28] Although I think when he's talking about the kingdom, he's talking about the very things that he's preaching about. The things that he's talking about. The word of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom. The king of the kingdom.

But let me ask this. See, here's the interesting part. Whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child. How does a child receive a gift? Think about that.

When you give a gift to a child. And how are they different than adults? Okay. How does a child receive a gift? Oh, no, you shouldn't have done that.

Shouldn't have done that. Right? That's what we do. Oh, you know, now I've got to give you a gift. What do children do?

They receive the gift happily, eagerly, freely, openly, genuinely, without filters. Without hesitation.

[34 : 34] Isn't it? That's how they receive the kingdom. Peter talks about, be like infants in the sense that you long for the pure milk of the word.

Picture an infant. Hungry infant. Longing for the pure milk. How does that baby let you know she needs milk? Thinking of Charlotte.

She lets you know. Like that. Longing. It's who they are, not how they act.

It's who they are. They haven't learned how you're not supposed to act with gifts. Grab that puppy and open it. It's clothes.

Where's the gift? Or Abby used to get a doll from grandma. Where's the bugs? Even from the little. She didn't. Dolls?

[35 : 34] What's that? So what's the result? Whoever does not receive like a child does not enter the kingdom.

Whoever does not accept Christ does not enter the kingdom. Whoever does not surrender to the king of the kingdom does not enter the kingdom. To receive. To receive. The word to receive there means to welcome, to accept, to embrace.

And it's another synonym of faith. You know, we're saved by faith. Well, Jesus gives lots of pictures of what faith looks like.

It looks like coming to Christ. Remember in John 6, come to me. It looks like receiving, accepting.

To welcome and embrace. And what are you receiving? You're receiving the word. Faith comes by hearing.

[36 : 44] Faith comes by hearing. And particularly hearing the word of Christ. The message of Christ.

And this word is that which is why is able to make you wise for salvation through faith. So, you talk about receiving the kingdom. So let's look at one of the kingdom parables.

In fact, the very first one, back in Mark chapter 4, verse 11. Jesus taught parables. Remember? He started to teach parables because there began to be a distinguishing between the insiders and the outsiders.

And one of the ways he distinguished insiders from outsiders is the insiders were really interested. The insiders were seeking the truth.

The insiders would ask questions. The outsiders wouldn't. And so Jesus told this parable. In Mark 4, verse 11, he said to them, To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God.

[37 : 51] But for those who are outside, everything is in parables. So that they may indeed see but not perceive. They may indeed hear but not understand. Lest they should turn and be forgiven. And he said to them, Do you understand this parable?

Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? And then he gives the explanation of the parable of the sower. The sower sows the word.

And these are the ones alongside the path where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

And these are the ones on the rocky ground. The ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves.

But endure for a while. Then, when tribulation and persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns.

[38 : 53] These are those who hear the word. But the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things enter in and choke the word.

And it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it, receive it, embrace it, and bear fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

Now, we spent time in that parable a year ago, however, whenever it was we were in Mark 4. What we saw is all of them hear the word.

The path, the rocky soil, the thorny soil, and the good soil. They all hear the word. The word's heard. And then something happens to the word. In the first case, along the path, where it doesn't take root or seed or anything, it's just on the path.

That one's snatched by Satan and taken away. Then the rocky soil, it actually does start to grow.

[40 : 08] But it has no root. It's shallow. And so, when the sun comes, when the persecution comes, when the tribulation comes, it falls away. It doesn't, it dies.

Then there's the thorns who also hear the word, but it's the cares of the world and the riches of the world and the desires for other things that choke the word.

It's the word that's affected in each one of these cases. And it's only the good soil that also hears the word just like everybody else, but the difference is they receive it.

Now, it's said that the one on the rocky soil received it, different word. They kind of take hold of it.

It's kind of like, ooh, I like that. It's not a embracing, it's a, you know, I like that concept.

I like, I'm going to adopt that for a while. See if it works. Whereas this word received means to welcome, embrace, take it, take it in, accept it, embrace it.

[41 : 16] So what does Christ do next? Here's how the story ends. Starts hard, ends. We start reading the story, we're going, ooh.

And then we get to verse 16 and we see, ah, there's Jesus. What does he do in verse 16? After he's said all this stuff, then he takes them in his arms.

So we are picturing little children, ones he can hold in his arms. He doesn't just kind of, okay, puts his hand on this child, this child, you know, he takes them in his arms.

And he touches them. And he blesses them. Literally, calls down blessing. It's a strong word for bless. He calls down blessings on them.

So it's a prayer of, Father, bless these children. Make your face shine upon them. He's up your countenance story.

[42 : 16] You know, probably something along the lines of the Aaronic prayer back in number six. Something like that. Something full. You know, it's Jesus. He loves these kids.

So he's praying for them. He's holding them. There's a picture of tenderness and genuine love.

What does that show us? Where's Jesus today?

Don't we need that? We need that. We need Jesus today, don't we? To hold kids like that and pray for kids like that. Where's Jesus today? Trick question. Where's Jesus today?

In the church. We are the body of Christ. We're the hand in the arms of Jesus. Are we not? What? It's us now who embrace the children.

Bless the children. How do we bless children? Well, certainly we can pray for them, but how do you regard them on a Sunday morning? Or when you come across them at the store?

[43 : 27] Do you ignore them? Dismiss them? Just talk to the parents? Do you talk to them? Do you greet them? Do you enjoy them? I'm getting older.

My kids are getting older, so I gravitate more and more to younger ones. It's like I miss those young kids. I love it.

I love being with kids. And that's the heart of Jesus. That's, you know, instead of being a congregation and we're not this way, I don't think.

I think we do pretty good. But I've been in churches where the children are ignored and boy, if they're present, it's kind of like, oh man, would they take that child out?

You know, they're kind of a bother and a nuisance. It's like, no. And I think most of you are with me on this. It's like, no, leave them here. They're okay. We're family.

[44 : 28] We're family. We're family. Oh, we've got a cry room. You know, if you've parents, that's up to the parents. We've got a downstairs where you can watch, you know. If you're, we don't want to call it a cry chapel.

We want to call it a training chapel. Right? Not a cry room. We don't want to encourage crying. It's training. We're training.

You know, we do that. You know, we provide nursery. We try to do that. Try to help the kids.

Anyway. Okay. So how do we apply all this?

Does any of this relate to me? You know, God, I got it. It's supposed to value children. Okay. Well, two questions. One, do you recognize childlikeness in yourself? Do you see yourself honestly, helpless, needy, dependent, without Christ?

Do you see yourself that? Because that's who the kingdom people are. It's not a shot against your manliness. It's not a shot against your, your strong personality or things like that.

[45 : 42] It's just a real fact about who we are before Almighty God and who we are every day of our life to walk this road.

Do I think I can just do this without Him? I can do it for a little while. Stronger my personality, I'm more type A. I can do it a little longer. But like Peter, I will hit bottom.

And I will learn. Jesus will teach me. Second question. Do you receive the kingdom like a child? Do you receive the kingdom eagerly and openly and enthusiastically, readily, without hesitation, without qualms, or without kind of the filter of, okay, I owe God, or I need to earn this?

Because everything else in life I have to earn, right? So just even accepting the gospel is so counter-cultural to us. Are you there?

Do you learn from kids? Are you willing to learn from kids? No? Yeah? Did I lose you a while ago? You okay? All right.

[47 : 07] Good. Thank you, God. Fun. Next week we get to talk about riches and wealth. Yeah. Yeah, I want to hear what Jesus thinks about that.

Is Jesus behind the prosperity gospel we hear today? Well, let's find out. Let's listen to him, what he has to say about this. All right, let's pray. Father, we thank you.

We thank you for your teaching. We thank you, Lord, that you love us as your children. That you recognize in us our helplessness, our neediness, our dependency.

And you want us to come to you as children. And so we thank you, Lord, that you teach us these things.

Continue to remind us. Forgive us, Lord, when we think outside ourselves, when we think that we're more than that, when we think that we're somehow able apart from you. Forgive us, Lord, when we have attitudes toward others that are not reflective of your attitude.

[48 : 18] So continue to teach us. Continue to train us. Continue to speak to us through your Spirit. And help us, oh, Father. Anyone here today, Father, we pray who has not entered the kingdom, who has not received the kingdom, we pray that you would teach them, show them, draw them, and reveal to them.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.