

“What Jesus Really Taught about Children”

Mark 10:13-16 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

STARTING LINE: The real Jesus gave real attention to children.

Mothers' Day. A sermon on parenting. Two groups of people and their actions regarding Jesus and children. Two groups: good guys and bad guys.

The good guys are the parents. *Isn't THAT good news today!*

The bad guys are the other adults: the bystanders: the disciples: (As at other times, their role seems to be to get things wrong and be corrected for it. *A tough job but somebody ...*)

So this is NOT a sermon designed to help parents feel bad about their parenting! (*Good news!*) NOT that every parent has no room for or need of improvement. Of course you do! [*“Any regrets?” “Well, yeah!!!!”*] We are talking about parenting. It's hard! It's just about the hardest job in the world! It's VERY expensive And not just in money! (Even harder than marriage.... *You get to noticing that just after your baby is born!*)

But the parents in this story got some very important things exactly right. So let's have a look.

Mark 10:13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them

NOTES & ACTIONS:

NOTE 1: Many adults are positioned to bring children to Jesus. Parents: positioned because responsible. “Bystanders”? Maybe!

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Bystanders maybe! **Psalm 78:1-8** Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. **We will not hide them from their children**, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which **he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children**, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and **that they should not be like their fathers**, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. The disciples got this wrong and were rebuked. Opportunities to play a part in permitting children to believe in Jesus are sometimes a sign of a responsibility to do so.

ACTION a) Whenever we are positioned to do so, we should help children to believe in Jesus. “bringing children to him” ... “he might touch them” ... There is more to “positioning” than geography! Giftedness. A call from God. Permission from God. An invitation to get involved in a church's children's ministries.

THE FINE PRINT:

Mark 10:14 Jesus ... was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them..."

We help them rather than hinder them by teaching them the Bible. ("Parable of the Sower") So *Way to go!* for every time you have "sown a seed" in a child's life. (*Way to go!* on not making your children stay in the car while you came into this church service!)

We hinder them rather than help them by failing to inform them of their real need and Christ's unique ability to meet it.

"Everyone needs a savior and there is only one who is really able to save!" And so every child needs a Saviour. No one has ever been born innocent, except Jesus, which is one of the many reasons why he is alone qualified to be the Saviour. The one and only Saviour.

We help them rather than hinder them by serving as good examples of what Jesus can do for a person who believes in him. So we help them whenever we serve as a good example. "Fruit": *love and joy and peace and patience ...* Sounds like the description of an ideal parent!

And do we hinder them rather than help them by failing to act like a good example? **Yes!** But we can serve as good examples of apologizing and seeking forgiveness and trying again to get this right! (*So way to go to all of you parents who lost your cool this morning and then apologized to your kids!*)

NOW there is another side to this real attention to children...

Mark 10:14-16 ... to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

NOTE 2. A child "receiving the kingdom of God" serves as an example to all ages.

To receive the kingdom of God is to receive Jesus as the king. Children are sometimes wonderfully able to accept the truth as stated and then act accordingly. They can sometimes demonstrate very clearly what it looks like to not be stalled or stopped by a lack of understanding.

ACTION b) Whenever we are positioned to do so, we should learn from the example of children how to honour and serve Jesus as king.

Are you needing to humble yourself and simply, like a child, obey Jesus? Even if you can't understand why he commands you as he does?

THE FINISH LINE: The real Jesus calls us to teach and to be taught by children! Another whole reason to consider accepting an invitation to get involved in children's ministries!