

Mark 10:13-16
"Jesus Loves Me This I Know"
WRCoB 9.12.21

A little girl had just finished her first week of pre-school and told her mom, "I'm just wasting my time. I can't write. I can't read. And they won't let me talk! So what's the use?"

As a young mother was trying hard to get the catsup to come out of the bottle, the phone rang. Her 4-year-old daughter answered it and say, "Mommy, it's the preacher." Then quickly blurted into the phone, "Mommy can't come to the phone to call right now. She's hitting the bottle."

A Sunday School teacher asked her class, "Does anyone here know what we mean by sins of omission?" A small girl replied: "Aren't those the sins we should have committed, but didn't?"

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We've come a long way from the era
 When children were to be seen and not heard
 To speak only when spoken to

To be useful only when they reached the age
 When they could help on the farm
 Or in the kitchen.

Today, children in the United States

Hold a more prominent and visible place in society.

Their education, extra-curricular activities and social life

Require a lot more time and energy than ever before.

It used to be children served their parents

Now it's the other way around

With parents running up and down

Catering to their child's every need.

Times have changed, better for the most part, for sure.

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We of the soccer mom generation

Would have a hard time appreciating

Just how strongly the disciples felt

When they saw all these parents

Letting their kids climb all over Jesus.

They were shocked!

They scolded the parents for their leniency.

They scolded Jesus for allowing it

It embarrassed the disciples to see the parents
Let their children interrupt
What should have been adult time.

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I mean, we've all seen this!

I'm guilty of it myself.

Parents permitting their children
To interrupt conversations between adults

Dropping everything when a child
Demands immediate attention

Spending all kinds of time and energy
Devising entertainment for their children.

The disciples viewed Jesus' attention to the kids
As misguided, misdirected and mistaken.

There were more important people, adults namely
Waiting for Jesus to attend to their needs
Than a bunch of kids on the playground.

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Our first lesson, then, is this.

Jesus considered time with children important.

Jesus loved children. He welcomed them.

He took them in his arms and laid his hands on them
He blessed them and cared for them.

Perhaps it was as special time for Jesus
As it was for the kids
To play ion the playground

Leaving for the moment the adult problems behind.

The passage says that Jesus was annoyed
The disciples rebuked the parents.

He called them out on it!

To us, it wouldn't have been a big deal.

But we have to remember this was during a time
When children were considered
More like property than family.

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Dr. Offit wrote a book, entitled *Bad Faith:*
How Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine.

In his book, he was out to prove
That religion was bad news particularly for children
Whose parents were against modern medicine.

But in the process, he changed his mind.

He studied the history of medicine
From a biblical perspective.

And when he came to Jesus
And Jesus' love for children
It moved him to tears.

Dr. Offit concluded, *independent of whether you believe in the existence of God . . . you have to be impressed with the man described as Jesus of Nazareth.*

At the time of Jesus' life, one historian said that child abuse was "the crying vice of the Roman Empire." Infanticide was common. Abandonment was common. That's because children were property, no different than slaves.

But Jesus stood up for children, cared about them, when those around him typically didn't.

Offit now calls Christianity "the single greatest breakthrough against child abuse" in history.

The fact three of the gospel writers recorded this incidence
Shows that Jesus' behavior with children
Had a tremendous impact on them!

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It was the criticism of the religious leaders
That Jesus spent way too much time
With the wrong kind of folks!

Earlier in Mark 2:16:

The Pharisees took note of who Jesus hung out with
And asked his disciples

Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

THEY wouldn't do that.

They wouldn't dare be caught
Associating with people like that!

And now this . . .

Children climbing all over Jesus
Like he was a Jungle Jim!

I mean, for them, it was down-right disgusting behavior!

But here was Jesus enjoying every minute of it!

They thought a real religious leader
Should spend time leading.

Perhaps offering seminars on spirituality
Creating podcasts, writing books and speaking tours.

This is what religious leaders do!

Instead Jesus was more interested
In spending time with the people
At the margins of society..

People the rest of society ignored!

And so, seeing an opportunity for a teaching moment
Jesus explained to those around him

That time spent with children was not wasted!

And that the way these children responded to him
In love, in faith, in trust, and enthusiasm
Was the way everyone should come to him.

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Lesson #2,

We are to receive the kingdom of God like a child!

The way the children came to Jesus that day
Is the way we are to come to Jesus.

Not with a list of questions to alleviate our doubts
Nor with a quest to understand all mysteries
Nor seeking proof of his credentials

And certainly not

Expecting Jesus to align with our political views.

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Our relationship with God should be childlike not childish

Simple not simplistic

Trusting and not testing.

In other words

We don't have to UNDERSTAND everything about him

Before accepting Jesus as Lord of our life.

Jesus calls us to come to him as a child

To simply and fully give ourselves to him

In faith and trust.

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Karl Barth, the famous Swiss theologian

Wrote a book entitled, *Church Dogmatics*

An astounding 13 volumes.

It is considered the largest writing on systematic theology.

He was at Rockefeller Chapel

On the campus of the University of Chicago

During a lecture tour of the U.S. in 1962.

After his lecture, during the Q & A time

A student asked Barth if he could summarize

His whole life's work in theology in a sentence.

Barth said this. *“Yes, I can. In the words of a song I learned at my mother’s knee: ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.’”*

Sofia Cavaletti is a researcher

Who has studied spirituality in children.

She confirms that children have an amazing sense
Of spiritual things.

One three-year-old girl, raised in an atheistic family with no church contact at all, no Bible in the home, asked her father, “Where did the world come from?”

He answered her in strictly naturalistic, scientific terms. Then he added, “There are some people who say that all this comes from a very powerful being, and they call him God.”

At this, the little girl started dancing around the room with joy as she said, “I knew what you told me wasn’t true—it’s him, it’s him!” (Source: Colleen Townsend Evans)

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Our Scripture lesson teaches us two things.

It teaches us that Jesus loves children

And welcomes them unconditionally into his kingdom.

And secondly; that we are to accept Jesus
Like a child trusting in him simply and fully.

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I mean, isn't there something in all of us
That yearns for a simple faith?

And isn't it like us adults that complicates things
That needn't be complicated?

Jesus declares that anyone who doesn't receive
The Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.

That is the challenge before us.

It's not a call to dumb down our faith in Jesus.

The challenge is to come to Jesus
With a childlike trust and faith.

Colleen Townsend Evans writes

*Faith is an area where growing up means we must become
more like a child. (Source: Colleen Townsend Evans)*

Why not simply accept the Bible's indisputable claim
That Jesus loves us?

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A young couple invited their aged Pastor Dave for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, Pastor Dave asked their son who remained in the living room, what they were having for dinner.

"Goat," the little boy replied.

"Goat?" replied Pastor Dave, "Are you sure about that?"

"Yep," said the youngster. "I heard Pa say to Ma, 'Might as well have the old goat for dinner today as any other day.'"