



Parkway Fellowship

6 TRUTHS YOU CAN COUNT ON • JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN • MARK 10:13-16 •
10/11/2020

MAIN POINT

Children have a special place in the heart of Jesus, and He wants them to come to Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is one thing God has taught you about Himself from observing a child?

What was your level of involvement in spiritual activities as a child? What is the earliest memory you have as a child of thinking about God?

Walk into any Christian bookstore or do an online search and you will find books, articles and sermons about the nature of God's kingdom. These resources look at everything from the historical evidence for Christianity to modern arguments for its truth. While these things have their place, we shouldn't miss that Jesus talked about receiving the kingdom of God in very simple terms. Jesus told us that when we come to Him humbly and trusting, like little children, we will find Him ready to welcome us into His kingdom in His grace.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 10:13-16.

Jesus blessed children brought to Him to exemplify the childlike faith required of all who trust Him. Childlike faith should permeate every aspect of our relationship with God.

How did the disciples feel about all the parents bringing their children to Jesus? Why would they try to stop them?

What does this reveal about their understanding of Jesus' ministry and teachings?

In a time and environment plagued by childhood illness and death, parents brought infants and children for Jesus to bless and heal. The disciples made themselves the clearinghouse to Jesus. Too many adults needed His attention. There were already more than enough children. So the disciples sent the parents and children away to give Jesus time to do more important things. In their minds, the children didn't measure up in the eyes of the disciples. Jesus, though, had a different opinion.

What is the primary difference between the way Jesus and the disciples saw the children?

What kinds of things does this teach us about the nature of God's kingdom?

What kinds of things does it teach us about the nature of God's grace?

What childlike qualities are necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Is there a difference between childish faith and childlike faith? How are they different? What kinds of things would characterize a childish faith?

Jesus put a stop to the disciples' action. He held out His arms to the children, using them as an illustration: we must be like a little child to enter the kingdom. Childlikeness is not just one possible way among others to be part of God's kingdom. God builds His kingdom on childlike characteristics: trust, love, innocence, lack of power, lack of pretension, lack of credentials. Faith is the awareness of our spiritual helplessness that leads to humility before God, trust in Him, and obedience to Him. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talked about this kind of quality as being "poor in spirit."

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some ways we let Jesus love kids through us?

How has a volunteer helped you feel the love of Jesus? If that didn't happen, what do you wish a volunteer had done?

Why do hurt and disappointment lead to skepticism? Does it have to?

Why do you think God is not afraid of hard questions?

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for loving kids and ask Him to make your heart childlike so you can experience the fullness of His love, too. Ask Him to help you uncomplicate your approach to relating to Him, gratefully accepting His grace and kindness and inviting others to do the same.

COMMENTARY

| MARK 10:13-16

10:13-14. Rabbis were known to lay hands on children and bless them. The children in this incident could have been anywhere from infants to 12-year-olds. The disciples, who were tired and tense with the prospect of going to Jerusalem, were probably trying to protect Jesus' time. Note Jesus' anger in this verse. The Greek verb "aganakteo" implies deep, strong feeling. Jesus' service, and therefore the service of the disciples, was for such as these children (9:36). This is one more instance where the disciples failed to realize that there are no outcasts or unimportant people in the Kingdom.

10:15-16. Not only were the outcasts as important as others; Jesus also stated that everyone who desires the kingdom must be like these little children. Much has been written about how children act and what Jesus could have been referring to here. We could talk about a child's total dependence and trust—two qualities needed for the Kingdom. But Jesus' point was, how do children receive gifts? They receive with anticipation. They receive joyfully and thankfully. They receive without believing they did anything to deserve the gift. This is a picture of how we come to the Father. We know we do not deserve the great gifts He has in store for us, but He loves us and desires to give us good things. We need to receive the gift of Christ's redemption with joy and thanksgiving. The kingdom belongs to such as these. Therefore, not only are disciples to receive little children (9:36-37); they are to possess childlike qualities themselves.