

Packing Your Child's Suitcase

Ticket Home

Luke 18:15-17

October 15, 2023

HDBC

On October 30, 1980 Jan and I entered a new world; the world of parenthood. Early on that Fall morning God blessed us with the first of three daughters. We were as prepared as we could be but had little knowledge of what the next few decades would bring. That little girl will turn 43 in a few weeks. Her sisters are 35 and 37. Together they have given us 9 grandchildren. The era of direct parenting for us is over. We love the empty nest, but sometimes we miss those wonderful days when our kids were young.

To know that **one day they will leave the nest** can be a difficult thing to handle. But it will happen. Every parent has experienced what it is like for their child to leave for a few days. **Spend the night with a friend, go to camp, school field trip, or off to college.** Whenever your child leaves home, even for a short time, you have to pack their suitcase. If your child is going to camp for 5 days, the essentials are clear. Soap, toothbrush, clothes, etc.

At some point children will leave not for a few days, but for the rest of their lives. They will be entering the frightening world of adulthood. And parents have the opportunity and responsibility for packing their suitcase for them. It is our job to place in that **suitcase the essentials** that will enable them to succeed as they become adults.

I want to make something clear. **You cannot pack this suitcase at the last minute.** We pack our kid's suitcase all throughout their childhood and teenage years. Their suitcase is packed as principles and truths are taught and reinforced over time. So, let's get started with the first thing that must be there.

The most important thing every child needs: **A Ticket Home.** Not talking about to your house. I'm talking about their ultimate home. You need to make sure that in their suitcase, they have a ticket to get home, to heaven. Your child's **greatest need is to be born again** by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus. The greatest gift that you could ever give to them is to lead them to Christ.

You may give them toys that will cause their friends to burn with envy.
You may give them **cars** that will impress their school mates.
You may provide them with the best college education the world can offer.
You may leave them **money, property and advantages** when you die.

But if you fail to give them **JESUS** you have left out of their suitcase the most essential thing of all. So, make sure you give them **A Ticket Home**.

Read Text – Luke 18:15-17

Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem for the final time during his life on earth. He has set his face toward Jerusalem and his date with the cross. **His mind must have been consumed with thoughts of all that was to come.** Along the way some **moms bring their children to him.** Each one hoped that he would touch and bless her child. And he did so.

***Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.***

And they must have loved him. This is not surprising. Children are **drawn to sincerity** and shun that which is hypocritical. This was a special time between Jesus and some precious little ones. **He held them, touched them and blessed them.** And in the process taught us some important things about our children.

1. Children need to be saved

These moms are to be commended. **They were so wise to bring their children to Jesus.** Every child needs to be touched by the Son of God. All people, even our children, are sinners who are separated from God. Therefore, they all need the saving grace that comes only from Jesus.

There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

I want to say a **word about the safety and security of small children.** Do they really need to be saved? What happens to a small child if he dies? Will he go to heaven? Important question to every parent who has miscarried or who has lost a young child to death. The Bible does not say much about this

issue. But we can find hints. For example . . . **When his baby died, David declared that the baby could not come back to him, but he would go to the baby.**

I believe God provides a special grace to those too young or so mentally impaired that they are incapable of trusting or rejecting Christ. **(Susan)** The very heart and nature of God provides for the security and safety of young children who have had no ability to understand salvation.

However, there will come a time in your child's life **when the Holy Spirit will bring the realization of sinfulness and lostness.** At that point that child will be responsible and accountable.

2. Children are often hindered from being saved

The disciples rebuked the moms who were bringing the little ones to Jesus. In other words, they were hindering the children from coming. **Probably only trying to protect the Lord.** Jesus stepped in and spoke for the children, warning the disciples not to hinder the children (16)

There are all kinds of hindrances preventing kids from coming to Jesus.

Lost parents who are unconcerned about spiritual things

Parents who come to church but who are critical and unsupportive.

Hypocritical leaders in churches.

Competing philosophies and other religions.

Peer pressure from friends who are not believers.

Activities that keep kids out of church and teach that it is unimportant.

The bad thing about this scene in the Bible is that the hindrances came from the very ones who should have been bringing them to Jesus.

I praise the Lord for those in our church who are not only bringing their own children to Jesus, but who are **also bringing other children to Jesus.**

Ministry of sacrifice and it is wonderful. Keep bringing them!

3. Children are able to be saved

If you think the best thing for your child is to stay neutral and let them make this decision when they get older, you are foolish. The enemy is not neutral.

From the moment of their birth he works to capture their hearts and draw them away from the truth and away from the God who loves them. Why would stay neutral on this issue? You're not neutral on whether or not their education, their manners, their morality, or most other things. **If you remain neutral, you have severely damaged their chance of ever being saved.**

This experience reinforces that kids can be saved. Notice that . . .

A. Children Belong in the Kingdom

He was not saying that only children are allowed into the kingdom.

Heaven is not like Peter Pan's never-never land. But the Kingdom is not for adults only. It is for kids. Kids illustrate the utter dependence that saved people have on Jesus. Children come into this world knowing they must trust others. Totally dependent upon others. All participants in kingdom are dependent upon God.

B. Children Reveal the Way to Enter the Kingdom

Jesus went on to say that saving faith was very much like child-like faith. Children can be so trusting, especially when that trust has been proven.

Child can be scared to death and then fall peacefully asleep just because she is now in mom's arms. We enter the kingdom through complete faith in another, who is Jesus.

4. Children are welcomed by Jesus

Jesus told his disciples to let the children come. **He is on his way to Jerusalem.** He would teach his disciples some of the most important principles they would ever learn. He would heal the sick. He would face the hypocritical religious leaders. He would share a final Passover meal with his disciples. He would be arrested and crucified. He would rise from the dead. All within a matter of days.

Yet, **he was willing** to set that aside and focus on those children. Children were and continue to be important to the Lord. And whenever one desires to come to Him, nothing else in all the world is more important.

Jesus is pretty busy, even now.

Keeping the stars and planets in place.

Ruling governments of the world.

Keeping the forces of Satan in check.

Interceding for believers.

Keeping the flowers clothed and the birds fed.

Yet, when one child calls out to be saved, that gets his full attention. In spite of all the other important things he is doing, He takes time to open his arms and welcome them into His family.

5. Keys to packing a ticket home

Let's get practical.

A. Make sure of your own salvation

The most important factor is to make sure that you are saved, and living out what salvation really means. Kids can spot a phony, especially in their home, and will reject the person and

Author, pastor, and onetime atheist Lee Strobel says in one sermon: My daughter Allison was 5 years old when I became a follower of Jesus, and all she had known in those five years was a dad who was profane and angry. I am ashamed to think of the times Allison hid in her room to get away from me.

Five months after I gave my life to Jesus Christ, that little girl went to my wife and said, "Mommy, I want God to do for me what he's done for Daddy." At age 5! What was she saying? She'd never studied the archeological evidence [regarding the truth of the Bible].

All she knew was her dad used to be hard to live with. But more and more her dad was changing. And if that is what God does to people, then sign her up. At age 5 she gave her life to Jesus.

B. Keep your kids involved at church

Take advantage of every opportunity to have them exposed to the Gospel. Small Groups, Worship, Kids Church, Kids' Camps, youth trips, youth activities, special events. **You be the parent.** They have all of their adulthood to make their own decisions. You make them for them at this point and in doing so, demonstrate what the priorities are.

C. Talk about what the Bible Talks About

God, Creation, Sin, Jesus, Church, etc.

Give them a general overview.

Recite the great Bible stories.

D. Respond to their questions

Each question deserves an answer. Keep it simple and specific.

Find out why the child is asking the question. Fear? Someone has been baptized? Under Conviction?

E. Lead them to trust Christ

Let your child lead, within reason. Don't push, but don't hold back.

How to know when they are ready?

Do they understand and believe the facts of the Gospel?

Do they have a sense of sorrow and repentance over sin?

Share the Following:

1. What the Bible says about sin.

All have sinned. Romans 3:23

Sin leads to death and separation from God. Romans 6:23

2. What the Bible says about Jesus

He is God's son. John 1:49

He died in our place, for our sins. Romans 5:8

He rose again and lives today. 1 Corinthians 15:4-5

3. What the Bible says about Salvation

Confess and repent of your sins. 1 John 1:9; Luke 13:3

Believe in Jesus. John 3:16

Receive Jesus as Lord. John 1:12; Romans 10:9

You may not have noticed what immediately followed this event. Right after Jesus' encounter with the children, **he encounters a young adult man who is inquiring about salvation. You know the story. This man was not willing to let go of his money and things, and therefore rejected Christ.**

Clear reminder of **how easy it is for youth and adults to get so attached to the things of this world that they are not willing to make preparation for the next world.** That is why it is so important to bring them to Jesus when they are young.

In the summer of 2004, Warren Beamer, a missionary from San Antonio, Texas, visited an orphanage in Nigeria. Beamer was startled when one of the children at the orphanage spoke to him with a southern accent. The girl quickly shared that she was from Houston, Texas. To convince the missionary that this was true, she recited her social security number. Then the girl led Beamer to six other children in the orphanage, whom she described as her brothers and sisters.

The children, who ranged from eight to sixteen years-of-age, had been sent to a Nigerian boarding school by their adoptive American mother. When the woman stopped making tuition payments, the children were sent to the orphanage, living in squalid conditions. Gradually the children gave up hope of ever returning home.

When the children saw Beamer, they began singing the "Star-Spangled Banner" in an effort to convince him of the truth of their claim. With the assistance of Beamer's pastor and a U.S. congressman, the children were back in America within eight days. **They needed to get home!**

Your kids are captured by an enemy. They need to be saved!