

ARCC

Elders

Jim McCracken Jr.

# The Invitation of Jesus

To parents and grandparents and the children they love...

“Let the little children come unto me...”

Matthew 19:13-15

*“Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands upon them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, “Let the little children come unto me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”*

My wife, Beverly, and I have, for years, been strangely blessed, and inspired and encouraged by the picture painted in Jesus’ loving appeal to the parents and grandparents and the extended spiritual family in the crowd...”Don’t hinder the children...let them come to me...for to children of faith in me belongs the Kingdom of heaven...both now and forever. I can see Jesus’ kind face...his welcoming smile and the encouraging wave of his arm and hand to the children. There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus was glad to see those young ones...and glad to impart a spiritual blessing to them.

Jesus loved and loves the little children. And he wants to bless them. And I believe that God ordained their simple trust in him in order to inject hope and love

and most of all, childlike faith in Christ into their families and friends so that they too would want to believe the Savior of their souls.

Jesus was passing through the region of Judea beyond the Jordan and many people were following him. Pharisees who were hoping to catch Jesus in some falsehood or some theological error were among the followers that morning. A rich young ruler was in the crowd and made his way up to Jesus. The young man asked Jesus what good deed he needed to do in order to have eternal life. Jesus said that he would have to trust him enough to do what ever he said, even to the giving away all that he owned and begin to follow Jesus as his master. The Pharisees trusted Moses, but not Jesus. And the young ruler could not trust Jesus that day either. But there were some who believed him. There were some parents in the crowd that day who believed Jesus and who had begun to respond to the truth that he spoke and the love that he was offering them. And those parents wanted their children to know Jesus and his love too. So they took this opportunity to introduce their kids to the Messiah. They showed them Jesus.

Perhaps there were many people pressing in and around the Lord as he traveled the Jordan valley on his way to Jerusalem. Apparently the disciples thought that they were helping Jesus by guarding him from the pushing crowd. But when they got in the way of the children, Jesus spoke up and said, “Get out of the way, and let the children come to me...they are not too young...let them see me and believe me and enter the kingdom of heaven.

Oh parents and grandparents and church family, let us all be joyfully intentional in showing our children Jesus...Jesus, God the Son, along with the Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit...Jesus, the Creator of heaven and earth and

all that is in them... Jesus, at his birth, every bit God and every bit a baby boy, sent from heaven to save his chosen people of faith, Jew and Gentile, from their sins... Jesus, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and telling the people, "I am the Kingdom of God in your midst, believe me and receive eternal life... let us show the children Jesus, on the Cross, paying for our sins and giving us his righteousness, his right standing before God the Father forever... let us show the children Jesus' empty tomb and his many appearances to people after the resurrection proving that he did indeed rise from the dead as he said that he would... let us show the children Jesus ascending into the heavens upon promising his disciples two things: that he would return to earth one day, and that he would give them the power of the Holy Spirit to help them make more disciples in every nation, even to the ends of the earth.

Oh church family, let us smile at the Invitation of Jesus. Many of us were those little children. And faith welled up in our young hearts and we ran to Jesus. But many of us were not. We were adults when saving faith in Jesus was born in us. Yes we were older, but our hearts were childlike and our trust in Christ was just as eager as any one of those little ones jumping into the arms of Christ the Lord.

Brethren, especially parents and grandparents, be assured that your elders are praying for your children... praying for God's constant grace of protection over and around them... praying to the author and finisher of eternal salvation to bless the children with saving faith in Jesus early in their lives so that they can enjoy a fellowship with Him that will result in much spiritual fruit that will bless the whole family, from childhood throughout adulthood.

Maranatha, He comes!