

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 10:13-16 | The Age of Accountability
April 18, 2021

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Mark 10:13-16
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we discussed Jesus' view of divorce.

You also heard my story on divorce.

^{we} You learned that God Himself gave Israel a certificate of divorce. — God also knows the pain of divorce

KEYPOINTS:

- When your approach to Scripture is wrong, your approach to marriage (life) is also wrong. *— fundamental of life*
- Divorce happens because of the hardness of our hearts.
- The Fall did not change the permanence of marriage.
- Marriage is supremely sacred.

Cor 3

We ended last Sunday talking about how the gospel frees you up from the ~~sin and~~ shame of sexual sin and divorce.

I really want to reiterate that this morning before we dive into today's sermon.

Because if you look at last week's Scripture passage, it seems like Jesus doesn't give any exceptions to divorce.

It appears from the text that if you are divorced and remarried that you remain an adulterer forever and ever.

Is that really the case?

So with any subject matter, we have to see what else the Bible says about that subject to understand it completely.

I will encourage you to do that - Read through the NT & learn what God says about marriage, husband, wife, anger, gossip.

One of the most famous Bible verses in all of Scripture is...

when it comes to our PAST.

cf. Romans 8:28—We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Scripture doesn't say "some things." It doesn't say "most things." *- Few things*

Every translation uses the adjective *all (pas)* "all things."

That includes your sexual sin and the stain of divorce.

Is your God that big? *☺*

Is your God big enough to take your adultery, your pornography use, your divorce and work it out for your good and His glory?!

He is! And He will if you allow Him.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're going to learn God's heart when it comes to children.

Last Sunday, we saw how Jesus elevated the status of women in marriage.

Today, we're going to see Jesus elevate the status of children. *in family*

It's not a coincidence here that we move from the subject of marriage and divorce to children.

It is written...

cf. **Psalm 127:3**—Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward.

cf. **Psalm 127:4**—Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth.

cf. **Psalm 127:5**—Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. → children

We see the importance of children - see through scripture.

Jacob's wife Rachel cried out to her husband, "Give me children, or I'll die!" (Genesis 30:1).

Hannah prayed in the Temple for a child. God answered, she named him Samuel, which means "God has heard." (1 Samuel 1:20, 28).

Throughout Scripture, God teaches how the family and children, specifically, are a blessing.

That is our topic for today.

Now today's Scripture passage is incredibly short. It's only four verses.

But don't let the brevity fool you.

This passage today is a theological key that unlocks the door to one of today's most asked questions about children and death.

What is that question? Let's find out.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:13-16 CSB

Mark 10:13—People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

Mark 10:14— When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:15— Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive, the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Mark 10:16— After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

****These are the very words from God for us this morning.****

PRAY:

EXEGESIS:

Mark 10:13—People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

There appears to be no change in location between last week and today with verses 12 and 13.

V. 12 from last Sunday

So Jesus is teaching about divorce in someone's home.

Parents find out and start bringing their children inside the house. *in V. 13*

It was common for Jewish parents to bring their children to the synagogue so that the Elders would bless them.

Your translation may say "touch or bless."

The idea here is that when Jesus touches the children—that they would be blessed.

This tradition comes from the OT.

Noah blessed his children in Genesis 9:26–27, although that was a bit strange.

Isaac blessed his son Jacob and not Esau in a story that would rival the best of soap operas in Gen. 27:1–41

Jacob blessed Joseph's sons by laying his hands upon their heads in Genesis 48:14.

And Jacob blessed his twelve sons who were the twelve tribes of Israel in Gen. 49:28.

This concept of blessing was all very proper, traditional, and wonderful.

There was absolutely nothing wrong with this.

The Twelve Disciples were very familiar with the tradition.

Now, this is a beautiful segue from last week.

Jesus had just emphasized the sanctity of marriage and the home.

But...for some odd reason, the Twelve turn into bouncers: for Jesus

~~The disciples enjoyed being in control and directing traffic for Jesus.~~

Verse 13: but the disciples rebuked them. PARENTS

So, the Twelve warn and punish the parents for bringing their children.

Evidently, Jesus is inside the house teaching on marriage and divorce, and all of a sudden, Jesus hears an argument outside.

~~We've talked before about what society thought of children in the first century.~~

In the Jewish culture, children were indeed a blessing, but they weren't gushed over like they are today in our culture.

It would be fair to say that, for the most part, small children were tolerated.

And we see this here with the Twelve.

The disciples felt that Jesus was doing real ministry inside the house and wanted to protect His time from trivial issues like blessings children.

We are not told that these children had any specific needs.

We don't know if they had any medical problems.

So, more than likely, this was not a time of healing.

It appears that these children were healthy, and the parents simply wanted Jesus to touch them for the sake of His blessing.

X Mark 10:14— When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Jesus sees His Disciples turn these parents away, and He becomes angry.

Jesus becomes angry at the Twelve because what they are doing is unjust to the parents.

What the Twelve Disciples are doing is wrong!

This wasn't just wrong. It was an injustice to the parents and the children!

Now, we've seen Jesus become emotional ^{two other} a few times as we've read through the Gospel of Mark so far.

For example

Jesus was moved by compassion when he healed a man with leprosy in Mark 1:41.

We also witnessed Jesus become angry at the Pharisees in Mark 3:5 when Pharisees cared less about a man with a crippled hand.

In this verse, however, it wouldn't be a stretch to say that Jesus was outraged or even irate. Why?

↳ Not A sinful anger = holiness + justice.

Because the Disciples were missing the basic principles of His ministry.

So the question becomes, "Why are the Twelve and Jesus on such different pages?"

"Don't stop them,"

The picture here is that Twelve are verbally assaulting these parents.

Possibly even physically restraining them from coming in the house.

This is not good. This is an ugly, unfortunate scene.

Verse 14 continues...

Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Wow, there's a lot at stake right here at this moment.

It doesn't get more important than the Kingdom of God. = Heaven

Afterlife
Eternity

This is very interesting.

Nowhere else in Mark's Gospel has Jesus ^{talked} spoken about the kingdom of God belonging to anyone.

John the Baptist? Jesus preached it - but they don't explain it.

The sense here is that children have a place in Heaven.

Keypoint #1
+

Children are included in the Kingdom of God.

Now wait a second... Jesus didn't even talk about the Kingdom of God with His Disciples!

So what is it about children that justifies Jesus' outrage at His disciples?

Well, This is the second passage that we've come across on children. *in Mark's Gospel*

The first one...

+ cf. **Mark 9:33**— They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?"

+ cf. **Mark 9:34**— But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest.

+ cf. **Mark 9:35**— Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."

+ cf. **Mark 9:36**— He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, *the Disciples*

+ cf. **Mark 9:37**— "Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent me."

↳ God the Father

Both of these passages deal with children as essential to the kingdom of God.

KEYPOINT: #2

Jesus loves children.

That may sound like a no-brainer, but as we can see the Twelve aren't showing much love here. *to the children is the parents*

Jesus healed ~~many~~ children.

Remember Jairus' daughter in Mark 5? He not only healed her but raised her from the dead.

Jesus healed a boy possessed by a demon in Mark 9 when He was coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

Jesus healed a politician's son in John 4.

So yes, Jesus loved children. And children loved Jesus, and we'll see that here in a moment.

Back to...

Mark 10:14— When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

What does Jesus mean, the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Was He saying that all children are saved?

No, Scripture tells us that no one is automatically saved.

For someone to be saved, they must repent from sins and believe that Jesus is God.

Suffered, died, ^{buried} was (resurrected) for the sole purpose of satisfying God's wrath for their sin

So this is not automatic salvation

But what Jesus is telling us here is that children are spiritual beings.

In other words, Jesus is affirming the spiritual capacity of children.

Sermon in a sermon...this is why I'm a big advocate of children being in the service with us today.

I'm not a fan of families being split apart.

I want children not to hear Bible stories, but to hear the word of God explained verse by verse so that they too will experience God day by day.

* End of mini-sermon

Now, nothing is said about the spiritual condition of the parents in this verse.

We don't know if they are Believers or unbelievers.

Obviously, the children's faith is a nonissue.

Infants and little children don't have the ^{capacity to make} conscious choice to believe in the gospel.

Jesus' statement is unusual... "the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Jesus doesn't place any qualifications or conditions on His statement.

In other words, there are also no restrictions to it.

* Important *

Jesus is referring to all children in this verse, because all children are in the same boat.

They are unable to believe.

So the natural question becomes, "When is a child able to believe."

In the Jewish culture, there is a celebration known as *bar mitzvah*.

At the age of 13, Jewish boys and girls are considered to become mature enough to fulfill the obligation of mitzvah (the commandments).

The bar mitzvah ceremony recognizes that they are now adults.

A boy becomes a man, and a girl becomes a woman.

As an adult, they now share the responsibilities of being a full member of the Jewish community.

So in the *bar mitzvah*, we see something similar to "the age of accountability."

So Today's Scripture passage really addresses one of the most prominent and most controversial topics today.

And that is... What happens to babies when they die?

So let's dive into this.

We never see the Jews bless people outside God's Kingdom.

What's that tell us?

~~Remember, there are no parameters.~~

It tells us that all children are inside the Kingdom of God until the age of accountability.

→ That term is not Biblical - I'm using it in a descriptive sense.

I think we would be hard-pressed to say that the age of 13 is that age for every child.

It's probably fair to say it's around that age.

Obviously it's going to vary from child to child.

All that to say this ...

Here's the point, it seems that this Scripture passage makes an excellent point that all children— before they reach the age where they can understand good and evil—are under God's special care that is wrapped up in grace.



Meaning, that if a child dies before that age, their souls will go to heaven.

But, once they pass this special age of accountability, God will hold them responsible if they fail to repent and believe the gospel just like the rest of us.

This is a very comforting truth for those of us who have lost babies and small children.

To think about every child who has died prematurely around the world.

Since the beginning of time regardless of culture & religion - in Heaven!

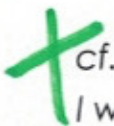
To ponder the 60 million babies who have been murdered in the womb, in the US alone.

That these babies & children are indeed in Heaven w/ the Lord.

Now, please don't hear what I'm not saying.

I'm not saying that children are perfect and without sin.

Scripture tells us that every child is born in sin.



cf. **Psalm 51:5**—Indeed, I was guilty when I was born;

I was sinful when my mother conceived me.



cf. **Proverbs 22:15**—Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth;

Now!

I'm also not suggesting that children have eternal life and then lose it once they reach the age of accountability.

Pastor John MacArthur summarizes this text nicely...

+ "God holds children in a condition of grace until they reach the age where they become accountable before Him. That temporary, conditional grace will become eternal for those who die before becoming accountable."

The point here is that all babies and young children are in God's kingdom because of His grace.

who have died → Heaven

Let me provide some cross references to bring a peace

closure to those of you who have lost children

There is an OT story that deals with the salvation of babies who die.

It's found in 2 Samuel 12.

King David committed adultery with a woman named Bathsheba.

If that wasn't bad enough, he had her husband murdered. to cover up the adultery.

A prophet by the name of Nathan rebukes David for these sins.

After David confesses his sins, Nathan gives David good news and bad news.

The good news is that Nathan reassures David that God has forgiven him.

The bad news is that sin always brings some kind of death, and in this case, it will be the physical death of a baby conceived in adultery.

Now for seven days, David fasted and prayed for the baby's life.

When David was told that the child ~~was dead~~ had died, Scripture says this...

+ cf. **2 Samuel 12:20**— Then David got up from the ground. He washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went to the Lord's house, and worshipped. Then he went home and requested something to eat. So they served him food, and he ate.

+ cf. **2 Samuel 12:21**— His servants asked him, "Why have you done this? While the baby was alive, you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food."

+ cf. **2 Samuel 12:22**— He answered, "While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let him live.'

+ cf. **2 Samuel 12:23**— But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him, but he will never return to me."

In other words, David knew that he would see his son in heaven again.

Now, on the other hand, David had a son named Absalom.

Absalom was a rebellious and defiant son.

Absalom tried to overthrow his father to be king.

Long story short, Absalom fails, winds up dead.

And yet, when David finds out, we see the most curious response.

+ cf. **2 Samuel 18:33**— The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber above the city gate and wept. As he walked, he cried, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!"

Now, why on earth is David so distraught over Absalom, who was trying to kill him for the throne?

And Why was David at peace with the baby's death and not with Absalom's?

It's because of God's special grace on children.

The baby had not reached the age of accountability, but Absalom did.

David knew that he would see the baby in Heaven, but he also knew that he would never see Absalom again.

Absalom did not repent - He did not come to God by faith alone.

Mark 10:15— Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive, the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." *X*

Truly—*"Amen!"*—Let it be so."

The sense in verse 15 is powerful. *Serious.*

"Whoever does not receive."—We're actually not seeing the double negative in this verse—"no, not." *X*

In other words, there is no other way into Heaven except to come as a little child. *through Jesus*

Little children—are thought to have a particular type of innocence. *X*

However, innocence is not why Jesus blesses the children. *It's not why He says this.*

The emphasis is on the children themselves.

The focus is not on their morality, whether their "goodness" is real or imagined.

The main point here in verse 15 is a child's helplessness.

What Jesus has in mind here is a child's helpless dependence on others.

In other words, every child who has ever lived, regardless of race, culture, or background is totally dependent on someone else to care for them.

Jesus is saying the same thing is true for every person born into the Kingdom of God.

Scripture is crystal clear on how to get into Heaven.

It's by one way and one way only.

Theologically...

X cf. **John 14:6**— Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus is the mediator between God the Father & man!

Practically, coming to God as a child looks like this...

X cf. **Romans 10:9**— If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

That's how you become a child of God.

~~Now watch what happens to the waiting children.~~

X **Mark 10:16**— After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

The parents simply wanted a blessing. Jesus did much more.

~~In keeping with Jewish rabbinical practice, Jesus was fervently praying God's blessing upon them.~~

This tells us a great deal about Jesus.

He was unlike the Rabbis, who never touched anyone.

Jesus physically touched everyone.

*MARKS:31
Jesus walking to Jairus' home - woman w/ hemorrhage.
Jesus said who touched me?
Disciple JAY, who hasn't touched ya?*

Jesus is often portrayed as a stern and joyless man, but that's not true.

other parts of scripture - children want to be around Jesus. - "children"

Jesus didn't just place his hands on the babies while the parents held them.

He took them in his arms as if they were his own children.

This embrace was a public demonstration of the child's acceptance and value in the Kingdom of God.

Picture this...the baby has his head against Jesus' chest, and Jesus is praying for this precious little child.

The spiritual picture here is that adults are not entitled to eternal life.

The kingdom of God must be received as a gift from God.

When do we enter the kingdom of God?

Belief, Baptism, Death?

cf. Ephesians 1:13— In Christ you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed.

So we enter the Kingdom of God not by our resume but only by simple faith and obedience to the Word of God.

Eternal life starts the moment you repent from your sins and believe that Jesus died, was buried, and walked out of his own grave.

What did this accomplish? Jesus Paid your sin debt.

Jesus endured the Father's righteous wrath against your sins.

Someone had to pay them. It's either going to be you in a very real place called hell for eternity...

Or you will accept Jesus' payment on the cross.

for your sin

*+ Key Point #3
Preach*

PREACH:

D. L. Moody once returned from a Church service and reported two and a half conversions.

Someone said. "I'm guessing Two adults and a child?"

"No, two children and an adult. The children gave their whole lives. The adult had only half of his left to give."

Today's Scripture passage proves that children are indeed a part of God's Kingdom.

3 that God loves them more than we can fathom - Parents/grandparents - catch that? God loves your children more than you

The salvation of children and adults is by grace alone, faith alone, in Christ alone.

Next week, we're going to see the very opposite.

We're going to read the story of the rich young ruler who seemed to have everything going for him.

He was ^{young} wealthy and religious, and yet after his conversation with Jesus, he chose to remain outside the Kingdom of God.

Probably that God taking his hair.

Why is that? You'll have to stay tuned!

PRAYER ROOM:

And you have questions; we are available after the service. There is a prayer room through the foyer and to the right.

PRAY:

*- only four verses!
- grace*

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