

Introduction

1. 'Tis the season for little children to come sit on the lap of Santa Claus.
 - a. It's one of the most precious sights for a parent.
 - b. Most little ones, not all of them, love to sit on Santa's lap to tell him what they want for Christmas.
 - c. Can you imagine someone blocking children from sitting on Santa's lap? That would be ridiculous and would make me angry.
 - d. Well, that's what happens in today's passage, but it's even worse.
2. Jesus' disciples hindered little children from coming to Jesus for which they received a severe rebuke from Jesus and a lesson about being members of God's kingdom.
3. **Read Mk 10:13-16.**

A. An Encounter with Children (13-14,16)

1. Parents wanted to bring their children to Jesus. (13)
 - a. The parents wanted Jesus to "place his hands on them" as means of blessing them.
 - b. Warren Wiersbe notes, "It was customary for parents to bring their children to the rabbis for a blessing, and so it was reasonable that they would bring the little ones to Jesus. Some were infants in arms (Luke 18:15), while others were young children able to walk, and He welcomed them all" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 120).
 - c. Remember the power of healing touch with the woman with an issue of blood and Jairus' daughter (cf. Mk 5:21-43) and also the blind men (cf., Mk 7:31-37, 8:22-26).
2. The disciples "rebuked" (Gk., *epetimesan*) them. (13)
 - a. Again, the disciples reflected worldly thinking rather than kingdom thinking.
 - b. Perhaps they believed Jesus was too busy or too important to be bothered with these parents and their children.
 - c. Perhaps they were selfish and wanted to keep Jesus to themselves. He is OUR teacher! (cf., Mk 9:38 – The disciples selfishly commanded an unknown man to stop casting out demons in Jesus' name.)
 - d. Wiersbe muses, "Why would the disciples rebuke the people and try to keep the children away from Jesus? (See Matt. 15:23 and Mark 6:36 for other instances of the disciples' seeming hardness of heart.) They probably thought they were doing Him a favor by helping Him protect His time and conserve His strength. In other words, *they did not consider the children to be important!* Their attitude was strange, because Jesus had already taught them to receive the children in His name and to be careful not to cause any of them to stumble (Mark 9:35ff.). Once again, they forgot what He had taught them" (Wiersbe, 120).
3. Jesus responded to the situation. (14,16)
 - a. When Jesus saw what the disciples were doing, He was "indignant" (Gk., *eganaktesen*) with His disciples. (14) He was filled with a righteous anger and gave the disciples a public rebuke.
 - b. James Edwards says, "The object of a person's indignation reveals a great deal about the person. Jesus' displeasure here reveals his compassion and defense of the helpless, vulnerable, and powerless" (James Edwards, *Mark*, 306).
 - c. He immediately called for the parents and children to come to him—"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (14).
 - d. Daniel Akin notes, "Jesus does indeed love the little children of the world. Sadly many people do not share Jesus' love. In Jesus' day children often were viewed as a liability until they could contribute to society. Some people today treat children as little more than a commodity to be used and discarded" (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 212).
 - e. Jesus did exactly what the parents wanted, "And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them." (16)

B. A Spiritual Truth from the Encounter (15)

1. In the midst of this encounter, Jesus delivered a kingdom truth.
 - a. Jesus looked for teachable moments and used object lessons (e.g., Mk 9:35-37 – Jesus used a child as to represent all who are in need of care) to communicate kingdom truth.
 - b. The scene before Him now is transformed into a mini-parable.
 - c. The words “Truly I tell you” (Gk., *amen lego umin*) indicate this saying is a kingdom truth (cf., Mk 9:41).
2. We must receive (Gk., *deksetai*) the kingdom of God like a child (Gk., *paidion*).
 - a. How do we do that? Children give us a pattern to follow.
 - b. Wiersbe notes, “In what ways are children a pattern? In their humble dependence on others, their receptivity, their acceptance of themselves and their position in life. . . . We enter God’s kingdom by faith, like little children: helpless, unable to save ourselves, totally dependent on the mercy and grace of God. We enjoy God’s kingdom by faith, believing that the Father loves us and will care for our daily needs” (Wiersbe, 121).
 - c. Akin notes three parallels between children and those who wish to enter the kingdom of God.
 - 1) “We come helpless and hopeful (10:14)
 - 2) We come trusting and dependent (10:15)
 - 3) We come for affection and blessings (10:16)” (Akin, 211).
 - d. James Brooks adds, “The ultimate focus of the passage is not only on the attitude with which one comes to Jesus but on *coming to Jesus*, the object of one’s faith” (James Brooks, *Mark*, 160).
3. Receiving the kingdom and the king is critical if we hope to enter (Gk., *eiselthe*) into the kingdom both now and in eternity.
4. Brooks notes, “. . . the kingdom is both to be received and entered—two ideas that stand side by side throughout the Bible. The blessings of the kingdom are to be received as a gift, yet we enter the kingdom through responsive faith and obedience” (Brooks, 160).

C. Questions for Reflection

1. Jesus met needs even when the timing might have been inconvenient. How about you?
2. Do you look to the needs of others before you own, like Jesus, or do you often look first to your own interests, like the disciples?
3. Do you have your eyes open to the needs of others around you each day? How is not seeing their needs tantamount to sending them away?
4. Who do you see hindering the needs of others from being met? What can you do to stop this injustice?
5. Are we bringing children to Jesus or sending them away? Note the importance of adding a Minister to Students to our staff to better meet the needs of our younger ones.
6. Will you work with children in our church and community to draw them to Jesus?
7. Will you stand with Jesus against the evils of abortion, sex-trafficking, and child poverty?
8. Have you received the kingdom of God like a child?
 - a. As you come to the Lord are you helpless, hopeful, trusting, dependent, in need of God’s affection and blessing?
 - b. Or are you self-sufficient, skeptical, doubting, independent, and aloof?
 - c. Come to the Lord again like a child.
9. Do your words and actions each day exhibit the faith and obedience of one who is entering the kingdom of God?