

## Bring the Kids to Jesus

I call your attention this morning to a text in the Gospel according to Mark. It will be on the screen for your convenience\_ or feel free to follow along in your Bible. In verses **13-16** of chapter **10** we read:  
<sup>13</sup> **People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them...** / Parents\_ and presumably grandparents or other guardians\_ were bringing their kids to Jesus to have Him touch them. Why? Though they didn't yet completely understand who Jesus was, they believed that contact with Him would be a blessing to their children. They'd heard He was a great teacher from God. Likely they'd heard of some of the miracles He had performed. Our story doesn't tell us if their kids had any special needs. Maybe some of them had serious illnesses. It's possible some had some severe handicaps. Could be that others were poor and malnourished. Perhaps some had behavior issues\_ what kid doesn't? Truth is that most of the kids they brought were pretty "normal."

Much like you might take a perfectly healthy child for their immunizations, some brought their children for a prayer of protection. Similar to how one might bring a child to a priest, a minister, or a rabbi for a blessing or to be dedicated, they brought their little ones to this man of God. I don't know if they formed an orderly procession, lining up single file, patiently taking turns, or if they **all ran together in a mob** like the Crossroads kids do whenever we offer a treat\_ but they were eager to receive what ever they could from the hands of Jesus.

**...but the disciples rebuked them.** Think on that. It was almost as if there was a **security alert**. *"James, there are some kids in the crowd." / "Copy that, Peter. What should we do?" / "Might want to form a police line. Wouldn't want them to get too close."* Jesus' followers didn't like this entourage of parents and children. I'm not saying they didn't like kids\_ but they didn't want to be bothered with them at the moment. More to the point, they probably didn't think Jesus wanted to be bothered with them. Surely He had more important stuff to do than deal with a bunch of snot nosed kids. So they *"rebuked them."* I don't know what they said. Maybe it was something like: *"Back off. Pick a number and wait till you're called."* Or: *"You've come a bad time. Don't call us; we'll call you\_ if and when Jesus has time to see you. In the meantime, go home and leave Him alone."*

<sup>14</sup> **When Jesus saw this, He was indignant.** When Jesus heard what was going on, He was more than a little miffed. He was angry. That might be hard for us to accept, since Jesus was so loving and kind. Yet, the Bible says **there were times that He got angry**. Take note that it wasn't the kids or their parents that Jesus was upset with. His problem was with the attitudes of His followers.

**He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."** <sup>15</sup> **I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never even enter it.** In essence, He tells them to knock it off. He says, *"Get out of the way, and let the kids through. They belong here."* Imagine trying to keep Malia and Sasha Obama from coming into the White House. I don't think their father would be pleased. Here's something else particularly worth noting: So often we want kids to act more like us\_ but Jesus says there are **qualities they possess** that we need to aspire to. Humility, innocence, and trust come to mind.

<sup>16</sup> **And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.** Periodically, parents come to me and ask me to baptize their little ones. I do not see any Biblical precedent for baptizing babies\_ for it is a rite reserved for consenting, repenting believers.

Yet, **the concept of bringing children for a blessing** is certainly supported in our text today. Anyone who believes in God and loves their kids will want His divine protection and provision for them. Yet, in practical terms, how does God fulfill that blessing? Today I'd like to challenge parents, grandparents, and caregivers of children to recognize the all important role that they have.

Though Jesus speaks of children having angels in heaven, guess who are their primary **guardian angels** on earth? When it comes to **feeding** the children, does God rain down manna from heaven or does He provide parents to nurture them? When it comes to their **education**, does God infuse them with knowledge or does He expect us to teach them\_ or at least, see that they are taught? When it comes to **protection**, does God place them in a plastic bubble or does He entrust us with the responsibility to hold their hand when they cross the road, put harmful or poisonous substances out of their reach, see that they have vaccinations\_ keeping them warm and safe for as long as they need and training them in the process to take care of themselves and eventually perhaps even their own children?

And **what of spiritual training?** We here at Calvary believe that **God calls for us as a church to come alongside** and help. If we didn't, we wouldn't be involved in Crossroads Kid's Club. Neither would we provide classes and care for kids during our gathering times. We do this to assist parents. Yet, we believe that the primary responsibility for teaching a child about God and His word still rests on the shoulders of the family. After Jesus placed His hands on the children and blessed them, He handed them back to their parents.

So, when **one of the Crossroads kids** runs up to me at Thompson Elementary or here at church for a hug or a high five or a fist bump, what should my response be? Throw up a road block? When they excitedly share the good news of a report card or tell me they earned a homework coupon, how should I react? When they tell me they got a new gadget or toy or had a fun experience through the week, do I turn a deaf ear or rejoice with them? When they come to show me that they got a reward for reciting their memory verse, do I celebrate with them? When parents bring them to an event like today, how should they be greeted? With open arms. After all, that's what Jesus would do!

So **bring the kids to Jesus**. He welcomes them. So do all those who have His heart. But, when you bring them to Jesus, linger long enough to receive a personal blessing. You'll need it. And realize that, Jesus is looking for more than a once in a lifetime visit. He loves your child\_ and He loves you, too. He invites your whole family into an everlasting relationship with Him.