

Jesus and the Little Children

by Micheal Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being childlike in faith, caring for children, and humility in order to be great in heaven.

Duration: 58:56

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:10, Daniel 1:8, Daniel 3:16

Topics: "Childlike Faith", "Trust Jesus"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of coming to Jesus with childlike faith, focusing on the readiness, purity, boldness, faithfulness, and relationship seen in exemplary children from the Bible. It encourages readiness like Samuel, holiness like Daniel, boldness like Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, faithfulness like Mary, and relationship like David. The message highlights the need to trust Jesus in all circumstances and to be willing to receive from Him with gratitude.

Transcript

Good evening. What's up everyone? How are you doing? Good, I'm Michael. Welcome to Saturday Nights.

Are you all digging this new prayer thing? Getting used to it? Yeah? Sweet. I'm really glad we can pray for stuff together. And as I, if you join that Tumblr page, Tumblr is something new we're trying to do.

And right now we have a whopping two followers. So I love it if that improved. And I promise I'll be more diligent to blog.

But I'll start posting the different prayer requests we have in addition to the notes. So I post the notes from the studies on our Facebook group and also on Tumblr. And I think it's too big to tweet.

But be a part of our Tumblr group. Join the two that are part of it. And also be a part of our Facebook group.

We got 200 something in that, so it's a little more significant. But I'll post prayer requests and also notes on that, so you can continue to pray for the different things that are happening. But yeah, Paracletos, Tim Wiley is going to lead a team soon.

And they're going to that Jacq Bar, I think it is, place that has kind of missed a lot of the, a lot of the support is going to Port-au-Prince, which needs it. But this little city's got really nothing. They're kind of isolated.

And so he's talked to the mayor and they've got an airstrip cleared out. And he's just kind of in contact with some organizations that are kind of gathering supplies, but their most urgent need is kind of money. So thank you so much for giving tonight.

I told you a couple of weeks ago, I was really looking for some ways we could do some stuff as a group, whether that be supporting some underprivileged children as a group or trying to just get involved with some different kinds of ministries. I told you that Jesus's ministry, you notice through the book of Mark, it's twofold. It's preaching, which he does well and which is one thing we try to do well.

And we've got some good teachers along that work with me just to try to present clear, applicable biblical teaching. And then also the second part of Jesus's ministry is he did, he did stuff. He was rich in good works.

And I think the goal of a Christian is to be a combination of both. You know, you want to live it, talk it, and be able to share it. And so we want to look for some ways to do that.

So I've talked to Pastor Gaylord about getting a special box made for us that we can kind of lock up in the back that you could put different offerings that you want in there. And we can kind of have a fun that we can kind of collect to kind of do some different things together. So I'm in the process of doing that.

Aaron and Winston Tao, Aaron helps me out with Saturday nights and Winston's a really good director, cinematographer. They went to Haiti actually about six months ago. And I don't know if you recall, we showed you some footage from that trip.

That ministry, that orphanage they were ministering at is called Child Hope International. And I think he sent you a link on our Facebook group as well of a, they're a great orphanage to support godly people that left Orange County, sold everything just to go start this orphanage in Haiti. And Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa also has a donation website that you can specifically give to also.

But the cool thing about Child Hope International as we get through this earthquake situation, they have ongoing, I've been looking for something we can kind of give ongoing things to, whether it's clothes, diapers, toilet paper, practical needs. And they're actually a ministry we can support like that. Gospel for Asia has a lot of things we can do with them as well.

So working on that, I'm meeting with Katie from Camp Joy. She shared several months ago and that's a really cool ministry that her and a couple other gals started just to kind of create the cool high school camp atmosphere that we have for our, you know, this church has for junior high level, elementary school level, and high school level. But to make it available for kids who are just, could never afford it.

So they had hundreds of children come to it. Sometimes it's the first time they ever hear about Jesus. The crazy thing is a lot of them just brought, they didn't pack anything because they had nothing to pack.

So all they had were their clothes that they wore. So I'm looking for ways to partner with them to kind of support some of these children throughout the year. So it's just not, you know, hey, have a good camp.

See you next year kind of thing. Well, we can actually support some of them, get them school supplies, soap, you know, another set of clothes or two or three so that they can kind of, so we can kind of share Jesus throughout the year with them. So working on those things, home groups.

I want to let you know our website has a list of the 10 different home groups that we've got connected to our Saturday night study. I want to see more really badly start up. And so one of our home group leaders named Jason is very passionate about it.

He's got a real, he's really dialed in as far as home groups are concerned. So I wanted him to come up and introduce himself to you real quickly. And he's going to be our home group liaison.

He will plug it to you over and over and over again until you're so sick of it. You're going to join one or start one. All right.

Amen. So here's Jason. Well, my name is Jason Boucher and I do lead a small group in Orange right now.

And I just, I do have a good, great passion for small groups. And it wasn't always that way. About two years ago, the Lord started putting on my heart small groups.

And I was always like the person that would come into church and sit in the back and never really get to know anybody. And I thought that was fine. But the Lord has totally changed my heart.

And the small group that I'm a part of right now is a huge, huge blessing. We're like family and it's really neat. We talk to each other throughout the week.

We have hangout times together and it's just a good blessing. So I want to encourage you guys to get involved. We have 10 different groups right now.

And like Michael said, they're on the website. If you have any questions or anything, you can feel free to talk to me about it after the service. And next week, we'll have an opportunity to have some coffee in the back with the small group leader.

So if you want to meet us, you're more than welcome to come back there and ask us questions and hang out. So yeah. So we've got a couple in close proximity to the church.

Jason does one in Orange. Jeff does one in Tustin. So there's one in Anaheim.

So they're popping up. But with a church this size, we could have literally hundreds of them and it wouldn't be too weird. So I think they're really good because in a big church, you know, the megachurch thing, it is easy just to come in, like Jason said, listen to the study, which is great, and then leave, but never have anyone who really challenges what you got out of the study.

Or maybe they've got a different perspective that might be healthy for you to hear, both biblical, maybe an accountability partner, maybe someone who can just pray for you, maybe just a friend. I mean, there's so many cool benefits. There's so many other aspects of Acts 242.

Teaching the word was one of the things, but praying like we're doing and I think breaking bread together falls under that small group banner. So yes, next week we will have an opportunity just to meet each other and home group leaders. We'll be emailing you this week to kind of give you more information about that.

Anyway, we're going through the book of Mark. Turn there, if you would, we're at chapter 10. Last week we covered marriage and divorce and it's kind of a longer-winded study because it was a pretty broad topic with much, like I said, that chapter should have a wick coming out of it because it's very explosive.

My point though was, and I think what I was trying to convey, was that God loves marriage, that's clear from the book of Malachi. He hates divorce, that's clear from the book of Malachi. But he loves people and that's clear from the entire Bible.

And I think often people who are divorced for non-biblical reasons, maybe there was an adultery, maybe there wasn't abandonment, they just were divorced. They live under a huge, huge weight of condemnation, fear, fear of going to hell, fear of being an adulterer for the rest of their lives. And my point was, God's a gracious God and life is not perfect, marriages aren't perfect, divorce is definitely not perfect.

And while it is a sin and something that needs to be repented of, it is something that's forgivable. So often it's treated like this unforgivable thing. It's like taboo.

You're not allowed to blaspheme the Holy Spirit or reject Jesus and you're not allowed to be divorced. Either one will send you to hell. And I was just sharing that the former is true.

Rejection of the Holy, I mean, the Holy Spirit is, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is unforgivable in a sense because the Holy Spirit draws you into a relationship with Jesus. And if you reject Jesus, then of course that's an unforgivable sin. It's going to send you to hell.

But marriage, last time I checked, divorce along with any other sin falls under that 1 John 1, 9 banner that if you confess it, he's faithful and just to forgive it. Are there ramifications? Definitely. Is it a bad thing? Definitely.

Could it mess up your family and your children? For sure. Could it hurt your ex-wife? Yeah, I mean, of course. But is it forgivable? Yes, like everything, of course it's forgivable.

And I hope I wasn't coming across flippant. I had one email, a lady just said, well, your sermon just sounds like, you know, she's waiting for her husband to come back and he hasn't yet. I think it's been three years.

And she said, your sermon sounds kind of like you're just telling me to just to give up and hang up. No, not at all. I mean, if God's put on your heart, you need to wait.

If he's given you a gift of mercy for your husband who's being an idiot, then by all means, wait for him. And if God's given you the grace to forgive him, then I think God is a God of reconciliation. But if you've been abandoned, you know, in your family's falling apart because there's no closure.

I know what I was sharing was then, yes, you know, you have, you know, biblically speaking, grounds to move forward with that divorce. Is it sin? Yeah, it's always going to be sin. But your life is not over is what I'm saying.

And if you remarried and your last marriage was not a biblical divorce, you just didn't like each other in divorce. You're not an adulterer for life. When Jesus said that in context, guilty of the sin of adultery, it was singular.

And I think that's one of the sins of divorce. So it's a sin. Yes, but it is forgivable.

Definitely. And I hope I didn't come across flippant. I wasn't trying to at all.

I was trying to come across gracious because last time I said God's a very gracious God with all of us. And last time I checked, sin is messy. Life is messy.

Church people are messy, like it or not. And so God's a God of grace. And that was what I was trying to convey.

God loves marriage. He hates divorce, but he loves people. And I think that kind of trumps point A and B and that was kind of where I was going with it.

And I didn't get any death threats or anything like that. So I don't know if it seemed like most of you must have been somewhat on the same page. Anyway, we're moving forward.

I call this Jesus and the little children. It's Mark 10 verses 13 through 16. Let's read it and we will break it down and see what God has for us.

So picking it up with verse 13. Then they brought little children to him that he might touch them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was greatly displeased and said to them, let the little children come to me and do not forbid them for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them.

So God, as we look at this, we want application. God, if being childlike, having childlike faith, God, or just if it's necessary to properly receive your kingdom, God, if it's necessarily to be like a child, not childish, to be childlike in certain ways, God, in our walk with you so that we can better experience our, have a better experience in our relationship with you and also ultimately just have a better life in heaven with you, God, then show us what we can learn from these four verses, God. So we ask that in your name, Jesus.

Amen. So the first thing I think it's interesting, it's as they brought little children to him that he might touch them. And I love what Charles Spurgeon, I got a Charles Spurgeon quote.

I like using these once in a while. And right now you'd have to have like eagle vision to see how small the font is. Is there any way we can make this bigger for the non eagles in the house? While they're working on that, I'll read it to you.

I like this ProPresenter thing, but we're working on it. All right. So there's some glitches like size too font, but this is what Spurgeon said.

There we go. Hey, there we go. Now blind people can see that one.

Okay. This is what Spurgeon said. Will you be very angry if I say that a boy is more worth saving than a man.

It is infinite mercy on God's part to save those who are 70 for what good can they do now with the burnt end of their lives? When we get to be 50 or 60, we were almost worn out. And if we have spent all our early days with the devil, what remains for God, but these dear boys and girls, there is something to be made out of them. If they yield themselves to Christ, they may have a long, happy, and holy day in them,

which they may serve God with all their hearts.

Who knows what glory God may have of them. Heaven lands may call them blessed. Whole nations may be enlightened by them.

And if you know, that is big. If you know me, you don't have a real heart for young people, a real heart for college age students, high school age students. And I was a high school pastor here for about five years.

When I did my church up north, I had a real heart just to reach junior college students. And so I got my master's degree in biology just so I could teach them. My philosophy was if they're stuck in my classroom, they have to listen to me.

They can't escape me. And that was how I approached it. Things didn't work out up there.

Long story short, God led me back down here to try to, you know, reach young people at this church. And I teach at Vanguard University. And it's a great privilege to work with younger people.

And here in context, you see the heart of God for young people. You see the urgency that he has to reach the next generation. And I think Spurgeon and quite a lot of significant people used to God have a similar heart, you know, and the disciples, as we'll see, they don't have the same heart.

But I think it's cool. The parents brought the children to Jesus that he might touch them. Now, there's nothing wrong with them.

We don't read that they had ailments or they were sick or anything like that. Pretty much without fail. Anytime if you look up the word touch or you did like a concordance search, anybody that touched Jesus who was an adult had some kind of ailment or physical issue that they wanted to be healed from.

This is one of the only cases in scripture that I could find where these children just the parents just wanted Jesus to touch him just to touch him. It was like they were more concerned with their soul than the outside. And I think Jesus had a lot of people who were just following to get stuff.

They just followed him because they wanted to be healed. They just followed him because they wanted bread or they wanted, you know, more wine at a wedding or whatever you needed he could supply. And sometimes people follow Jesus because they want stuff, ulterior motives.

I mean, the prosperity movement hinges, it banks on that. You know, you're, if you're caught up in that, you follow Jesus because he's a means to an end. He's the means to get you, you know, to make you happier, to make you more holy or to make you wealthier, to bring you your dream wife or dream husband or, you know, Mercedes or whatever it is.

You know, you are following Jesus, not for relationship because he gives you stuff. I like how these parents bring their children to Jesus with no ulterior motives. They were more concerned with the soul of their children than they were anything else.

And I think that's really cool. I really, that encourages me, you know, and I want to be more like that and we'll, we'll get to that in a second. But notice the disciples forgetting what Jesus had told them before, forgetting the importance of the lesson that he said about, you know, not forbidding.

If you want to, if you really want to be great in heaven, you've got to be humble enough to care for these children. And they completely blow it. And they rebuke the parents.

And remember Jesus had also, you know, sternly rebuked them for being a stumbling block, you know, in their arguments. Remember, children were around them. And so the context of Jesus's rebuke a couple studies ago was that the disciples were bragging about who'd be greatest in heaven.

You've got all these children listening to these spiritual leaders who are close to Jesus. And they're totally being led in the wrong direction. And I think he's greatly displeased.

It says in verse 14, because he specifically told them not to do this in chapter nine, verse 37, go back. If you forget whoever receives one of these little children in my name, this is when he takes up a little child in his arms, whoever receives one of these little children in my name receives me. And who, whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me.

And remember, this is a, this is in a timeframe in life different than today. Kids weren't well liked back then. The average lifespan was about six, because quite often, I was actually reading, it was a letter from a soldier to his wife.

It was on papyrus and dated to a lady named Alexandria. But it said, if the child is born and it's a boy, keep it. If it's a girl, discard it.

And that was just how flippant he was about his own child. And quite often that was the case. Child abandonment was common.

And the early church was so huge on adoption and taking these kids in, because other people would take these kids that were abandoned and raise them up just to sell them off as slaves or make them personal slaves. They were mistreated. The church, under the leading of Christ and the example of Christ, was the first people to really create child advocacy, if you will.

And he's displeased with them because they just blew off what he said. I think sometimes God will say things specifically to you, and you go out of your way maybe to find someone who will unsay what God said. Have you ever done that? Where God makes it clear, you know, like, I just need somebody who's kind of spiritual, who God kind of talks to, to not say what God told me I know I should do.

And if I can get someone to not say it and undo it, then I can justify it that they heard more from God than I did. Isn't that, aren't we wicked? I mean, I've done that same thing. I just go, okay, not what I wanted to hear.

Go find another godly person who can tell me what I do want to hear, you know, and you just keep going down the line until you hear what God has already told you. And I think he's made it clear. If you want to be great in heaven, then I want you to look after these little children.

I want you to care about them. I want you to humble yourselves, break what's happened, break the mold, because in that day and age, nobody cared about children. I want you to break from that mold and to care about them and to humble yourself to do that.

And they didn't. They just forgot it. I mean, it's just been a few days, probably, and they're right back just to rebuking the people who are trying to bring their children to Jesus.

And also, I just think he's displeased because they didn't have the vision or heart of God. As we'll see today, Jesus, and if you look at the whole Bible, actually, I mean, there's about 2,000 verses dedicated, Old Testament and New Testament, just to the care of orphans. So, I mean, it's clear, Isaiah has much to say about this, that God, he cares about the oppressed.

He cares about the poor. He cares about the hungry. And he cares about little children.

And it's exemplified in the life of Jesus, because then God's, he's incarnated. He can touch these little children. It's not just in teaching.

It's not just through prophecy. It's hands-on. And he's always around little children.

He's wanting them to come to him. And we'll see that today. And they lack that.

They're supposed to be like Jesus, and they've completely missed that. They didn't have the vision or heart of God. And again, like I said, he had just told them not to be a stumbling block.

And how stumbling is that? I mean, you're a Christian, and you're hindering people from getting to Jesus. I mean, that's despicable. And sadly, even though we're Christians, sometimes our actions, our words, our lack of knowledge about Jesus, it just hinders people.

You know, we wear a Christian t-shirt. We think that's good enough. You know, like, what do you mean I need to know about God? I'm wearing, you know, I got my, you know, my not of this world shirt on.

I got my sticker on my car. That's all I need to know, right? I'm good. And you can't defend the faith.

And that's, you know, we've got to have answers for people who have questions. And we definitely have to have lifestyles that are different from the world. So people even want to ask those questions.

And the disciples were failing miserably on all counts. And so, of course, Jesus is very displeased. And he says, let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them.

For of such is the kingdom of God. And I think I like that statement. Let the little children come to me.

Because bringing up, bringing children to Jesus should be the heart of every Christian. With their own children, and other children that are near and far. And if you call yourself a Christian, then this has got to be somewhat of a burden on your life.

And if it's not, then pray that God puts it there. And I think with your own children, like how do you make this a reality? And believe me, I'm coming from, you know, a dad perspective. I've got two boys, one's eight, one's three.

Love them very much. But life's busy. I mean, we've got a lot going on between church and teaching at Vanguard.

Sometimes the last thing I want to do, when it's bedtime, honestly, is to pull out the little junior kids Bible, or the Explorers Bible, and figure out a way I can take this, decipher it, so my eight-year-old can understand it. You know, and especially when much of my life is teaching anyway. And I just, and I think it's somewhat demonic too, because you just, something, it's hindering you.

And I think what I found as a high school pastor was, parents were just quick to drop their teenagers off, and it was my duty to take care of their kids, not theirs. And it should be the opposite. A high school ministry should be supplemental from what's happening at home.

I mean, that's just the way it should be. One person who I think exemplifies that is John Corson. He's so dialed, and I talked to him just, his kids are all good.

A lot of times pastors' kids get rebellious, and his are all walking with God. And I was just asking, like, what do you do? I mean, I know there's no formula, because sometimes you do everything right, and it still goes wrong, and the kid turns out stupid. But he was just like, ever since they were young, I've done child devotions.

We've just done it. It was part of what we did at dinner. And I would say something to the older ones that was applicable to them, and something to the younger ones, so everybody had something.

And that was just what I did. I made it a part of their lives, and I thought about that. And so I try my best every night to read a little with my son, and to pray with him.

And Kristen does the same thing. We try to pray with each other. And just because I know it's an age, that's crucial.

I remember my own grandmother. You know how I know John 3, 16? Because my grandmom went over with me when I was six. She gave me quarters every time I got it right, you know, for God's sake.

And I nailed it at six, just because she was just there. And I never forgot that verse my whole life. I'm 37.

I've remembered it all this time. 31 years from that time in Orlando, just because I wanted quarters. The grandma had them, and all I had to do was learn a verse.

And so one thing I'm trying to incorporate is scripture memory with my family. That's my goal for 2010. Not just read, but try to get some Bible verses.

And it's worth, that's worth five bucks to me. You know, I give my kid five bucks every time he learns a verse. Maybe I'll be somewhat broke, but if he knows the Word of God, and I'm a little poor, I don't care.

You know, it's a good investment to me. So I think it's crucial. There are ways to fulfill this.

There are ways to bring your children to Jesus, practically with your own children, by reading the Bible with them, praying with them, letting them see you reading your own Bible, letting them see you pray. My dad, one thing I always remember seeing, he always knelt by his bed and prayed at night. Always.

Maybe some of the content that came out of his mouth wasn't always spot on. You know, he was no great orator of the Word, or anything like that, you know. But I knew he prayed.

With that fail, every night I saw him on his knees by his bed. It was just something I was accustomed to growing up, you know. And he apologized.

When my mother got saved, and he rededicated his life, he apologized to me, because I was kind of the first legit Christian in my family. He's like, I'm so sorry for the bad advice I'd given you about girls, and this and that. I'm like, I don't remember any of that.

I just remember you always praying, and you taking time to be with me, despite your, you know, busy schedule. And you know, you drove 50 miles one way to work, work, came back, and you still made time for me. I was like, those are the things I remember.

And so I encourage you parents, you know, find a way, find the Bible that's applicable to your child's age, and just get them used to reading time, and trying to make it fun. Like if they're playing ball, like stop the fun, it's Bible time. You know, don't do that, right? Because then they'll associate lameness for the Bible.

You don't want to be like that. Figure out a way to just integrate it. It works well for us just at bedtime.

It's part of the reading. I'll try to read something. Kristen will try to read, or myself will try to read just a book we're reading to read, Charlotte's Web, or something like that, and the Bible, and we'll pray.

And that's kind of how we finish it off. But you figure out a way to make that your own. And then I put supporting underprivileged children, which I'm proud to say a lot of you did when we had Compassion International out here.

I mean, it's staggering when you really realize 30,000 kids under the age of five die every day because they're just malnourished, and because of preventable disease. That's 30,000. I mean, that's great.

That's like as many people that funnel through here on a Sunday that are kids under five that die every day because they don't have enough food. And I look about, I just look at us. I mean, we've got like Denny's, and Karo's, and buffets, and all-you-can-eat.

I remember talking to Europeans and trying to explain all-you-can-eat with them, and they were just like, they're like, why do you want to eat more than one plate? I'm like, because it's good, and there's a lot of it, and you can. And they're just like, hmm, I don't understand this, you know. And I was like, well, it's an American thing.

But we have so much, and I'm just thinking, wow, you know, if I can just not get my soy latte every day, and five times, you know, seven, that's 35 bucks a week that I could, you know what I'm saying? I'm not trying to get legalistic, or weird, or overly philanthropical, but I'm saying there are ways. We support two children right now in Africa, and it's just so cool. I love getting letters from them, and hearing what they're doing, and hearing where our money goes.

And I love just, you know, pray about that. You know, I know times are tight, and I know this is a recession and everything, but I really see the heart of God being for children, and I want to apply that. And then adoption, I think, is huge, too.

And obviously, I'm plugging that because I'm in the process of adopting myself. Chris and I are in the process of adopting a girl from Kazakhstan. But I really look at just, wow, if we can get one girl from this country who probably will grow out, good chances in Europe, she'll grow up without knowing Jesus, and I can put her in an environment where she will know Jesus, you know, then that's awesome.

You know, so there are different ways to apply this verse. I just ask you to pray about how you can apply it. Start with your own kids, start with your grandkids, nieces, whatever.

Whenever they come to your house. My aunt was the same way. Whenever we was there, she always was just such a godly woman, and she always made time just to share Christ with me.

My cousin, one cousin was a pastor, the other was just a godly businessman. Same thing. They always took time.

When I was 16, 15, how's your walk with God going? Where is it at right now? How can I pray for you? And it was just cool having those influences. So look for ways you can do that in your own family, and consider just the different ways you can support children in the world. And one thing I think is cool, too, you never see kids running away from Jesus.

They liked hanging out with Jesus, you know. And I think media has a, they have a hard time conveying this. I always talk about the original Jesus of Nazareth, that film with Jesus with the creepy blue eyes that never blink.

He never blinks. I'm the only one. Does anyone notice that? It bothers me how Jesus doesn't blink in that movie.

Like, what does this make you spiritual? The word is that in scripture, you know, do not blink and you will be godly or whatever. But when I see Jesus in the Bible, I mean, the kids loved him. And kids are, they're hardcore.

It's hardcore. I mean, I used to be a Sunday school teacher in England, and crazy six-year-olds, and from newly converted households that had never disciplined. And it was crazy.

It's hard to get children to like you in some cases. It's a gift. But Jesus has got that dialed in.

They don't like sour, somber, mean, crabby, legalistic people. I mean, kids will spot that a mile away and they'll run the other direction. But anytime Jesus asks a child to come, they're there.

And they gladly go up in his arms. And I like that. I mean, that's my Jesus.

That's the Jesus I worship. You know, I hate when people take Christianity, and it's something so awesome and vibrant, and they make it something so lame, and so legalistic, and so dour. Can't have fun.

Can't do this. Cut the ruckus out. You know, all the poppycock.

You know, it's just so, they make it so like, man, what a drag. You know, like, I think I shared this a while ago. We were watching, Chris and I are watching 101 Dalmatians, the old one.

And when Roger and what's-her-name get married, like, the priest is so boring. You know, we'll vow to love her, and we'll vow to forever cherish her. And I'm like, that makes me so mad that they make this priest so boring and stuffy.

And she's like, no, it's just a movie. I'm like, I don't care. That makes me mad.

That's a bad rap for my job, and what I do, my vocation. And I just think I like this about Jesus. The children liked to be around him, and so Jesus was always, he was obviously a likable person.

You know, never recorded laughing, but I'm sure he did. You know, kids like to be around people who laugh. I mean, anybody who's around children know that, and so I just think that's cool.

And then he says, Do not forbid them, for such is the kingdom of God. And I want to spend some time on 14 and 15. Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.

I want to read that again. The end of verse 14. Do not forbid them from coming to me, for such is the kingdom of God.

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. So what does that mean? Because this is kind of huge. I mean, we're talking, we learned a couple weeks ago, pretty clearly about how bleak of a place hell was.

A place that nobody wants to go, a place void of God, and any amazing characteristic that God embodies is not going to be there. There's no love there. There's no peace there.

There's no joy there. All these things that are only possible from God are not in hell. They're, it's just void of any hope of anything.

And we talked about the worm and the fire, you know, the torment on the inside, the torment on the outside. I mean, it's this horrible place. And so here, this is important to understand, because he's talking about, if you're not childlike in your concept of me, then you have the danger of missing out on the kingdom of heaven.

If you miss it on the kingdom of heaven, the other choice is hell. And so we want to understand what Jesus is saying here. And so I prayed about this, I looked at this, and I think I've come up with where I think he was kind of applying this, based on the context of Mark.

And so the first thing, I think the children had simply come to Jesus without saying or doing anything. I think part of understanding the kingdom of God, and what it means to be a part of the kingdom of God, is to understand the basic essential of just coming to Jesus. Just coming to him, having a relationship with him.

Corson, again, one of the famous John Corson saying, is so often people want to be like Jesus when Jesus just wants them. He said, don't be like me, just like me. God's more concerned with his relationship with you, than all the stuff that you can do for him.

And we've said this before, God's got angels. Millions of them. And they're way tougher than us, way more holy than us.

They can fly, and they sing good, and they don't have sin issues. I mean, they could do it. And with Saul, Jesus just did it.

He didn't even need anybody. He just showed up and converted him into himself. And so, God doesn't need you, really.

He wants a relationship with you, and he chooses to use you. But he wants you to come to him. And I just found it interesting.

I was looking at some of the examples that we've seen so far. But some adults felt too unworthy to come to Jesus. Like the woman with the issue of bleeding.

She didn't even want to talk to Jesus. She just was trying to grab him from behind all sneaky-like. You know, get a touch and get healed, and then just bail.

Kind of ninja, a little ninja action, in and out. Little snake eyes happen in there. And I just think, she just thought she was so unworthy.

And so, so often, people approach Jesus the same way. I'm not worthy enough to be a Christian. I need to, I've heard this one a lot.

I need to get my life sorted out first. And when I get my life sorted out, and I get things worked out, then I'll come to Jesus. I'm just not ready yet.

That's not the way it works. You come to Jesus, and then he gets your life sorted out. That's the way it works.

You come to him, issues and everything, repent, ask him to change you, and he will. You trying to change yourself in your own strength will never, ever happen. So, I like the fact that kids just came to Jesus.

Simple as that. Other cases, people were too proud. They were too proud, too prideful to come to Jesus.

The Pharisees, the scribes, they would have nothing to do with Jesus. They didn't want to come to Jesus, because they thought they were better than Jesus. And then sometimes people are over-qualified.

They think they're over-qualified, and they deserve to come to Jesus. Like the rich young ruler. We'll learn about him next week.

He's like, I've kept all these commandments, all these things, Rabbi. What must I do? And he said, sell everything, because that's the one thing, his riches controlled him. Give up your riches, give it to the poor, and follow me, and you'll have treasure in heaven.

And the guy went away, he couldn't handle that, because he thought he was dialed in. And sometimes you'll meet people when they're prideful, and they think, because I do this, because I do that, because I say this, Jesus accepts me. It's works-based.

So you're either too unworthy, and condemned, and you know, just missing the boat that way. Too prideful, atheist, agnostic, I don't need him at all. Or too over-qualified in your own mind.

Yeah, you know, I can, you should save me, Jesus, because I can do some stuff for you. I can help you, you know, I can do a lot for this kingdom. And none of those are right.

And they're like the children, they just came, because they liked him. That was it. They liked being around Jesus.

Number one, that's just the number one application to this. If you want to understand what it means to inherit the kingdom of God, it simply starts with coming to Jesus. For the first time, so he can, so you repent, and he can save you, and transform you, and regenerate you.

And then just consistently. And the rest of your life should be daily coming to Jesus, just like these kids did. So that's the first thing I see.

And the next thing, I think, is they endured opposition. Twice. On two occasions, sadly, the disciples had tried to keep these kids, or kids, away from Jesus.

And they fought through it. I mean, that might be a little scary. You've got one good guy saying, come to me.

Twelve gnarly guys saying, no, don't. And they still didn't care. They ignored the twelve, and they came to Jesus.

And I think that's great. So the second thing, we've covered this over and over again, is expect opposition. Come to Jesus, and as you come to him, expect opposition in your family, expect spiritual opposition, maybe in the workplace, from people inside.

And I think, again, in context, this is coming from the disciples. Expect opposition in the church. Can't tell you how many times they say, I don't want to be a Christian anymore.

Hypocrites. It's a lame cop-out. I mean, that's just life, you know.

Church is full of good people, sadly, it's full of bad people. But it's about Jesus, not you looking at someone who stumbles you, so you just bail out of Christianity. That's not what it's about.

You've got to keep your eyes on Jesus, and expect opposition to take place. These children had opposition twice already. What could be just under a month, they've had opposition.

But they fought through it, because Jesus was worth it. And so expect opposition. That's going to be part of the kingdom of God.

Opposition until he comes. And I think one of the biggest oppositions you'll face is just contentment. You know, just being content where you're at.

Paul said, godliness with contentment is great gain. And I really think you'll never really find true contentment in this sense, until you get to heaven. Because, I mean, that's what you're created for.

That's what your pilgrimage is on earth. Your citizenship is in heaven. So there'll be aspects of earth that just don't satisfy, that are frustrating, and you can't quite wrap your arms.

Why am I completely not satisfied here? Well, part of that's just because you're a child of God, destined for heaven. And so these are some of just many things that you'll have to deal with. But I think it's important that you endure opposition.

And that's what children like to fight. My son's the number one thing they like to do. We've got a trampoline, they want to wrestle me anywhere.

And I have to be ready, because Ryder uses weapons, and he'll throw them, and you never know when they're coming. You're always on guard. But they want to fight.

This is what boys do. Some girls, to an extent. But boys, if they pick up a stick, if it's kind of like a gun, they will make it a gun.

If it's long and skinny, it's a sword, no matter what. It's not a baton, it's a sword. It's just how boys are.

And they want to hit stuff with it. And so my boys, they love to fight. Anywhere.

Any way they can. Jump on my back, and it's fun. It's what boys do.

I'm used to it. So we do it. But I just like that.

Children like to fight. And it's usually a negative thing, but if we're learning from them, in context, we need to be ready to fight as Christians, because it's a spiritual battle. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but principalities, powers, forces of darkness in high places.

And so I encourage you, be in the Word, know the Word, be prayed up, have accountability, be part of a small group like we're sharing, you know, take notes in church. Much of what I know, I sat under Pastor Brian in Europe when I was in London, and I just took notes. Volumes of notes.

Anything that he said that I didn't know, that I thought was cool, and I could share, I wrote it down and would try to learn it. And that was kind of like my seminary, in a sense. Still interested in going to seminary, but much of what I knew was just from reading, and just sitting under Pastor Chuck, Pastor Brian, any, you know, Mike Fenizio in New York City at Harvest Christian Fellowship, and just taking notes, because I wanted to learn to be strong.

I wanted to know how to fight spiritually, and that's part of it. And so, endure opposition. The third thing I think is cool is they just received it.

They were good at receiving. Look at what it says. It says, Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means inherit it.

Kids are very good at receiving stuff. You ever notice that? They like presents, no matter what. I mean, anytime we're in Target, my kids gravitate towards that ghetto dollar bin area.

And I'm like, no, no more dollar junk that's going to cloud the house, please. No, Daddy, I need it, I need this. And I'm like, no, I know, you're going to play for, it's going to be 20 minutes, and then it's just junk, and I've got to recycle it, or something like that, and it's just what I'm going to have to do.

But kids love stuff. Gifts, when you get older, you know, you know how it is. It's not as fun to get stuff anymore.

You like to give and see the reactions of kids, but they are excellent at receiving. It doesn't matter if they're naughty, nice, skinny, fat, whatever. They love to receive.

And I think that's something we need to learn. We need to learn to receive from Jesus, and I think that's something it's easy to forget as a Christian. I think it starts off maybe like that, but it quickly, you either learn, you either start feeling like you don't deserve anything, and you shouldn't receive it, or like I said earlier, you start feeling like you do so much for God that you do deserve it, and you begin to be upset that nobody's noticed in church, you know, your, you know, your great humility.

Nobody's offered you, you know, a guest spot to teach on Wednesday nights in place of Pastor Chuck, as you said, you know, or whatever. And sometimes I used to, my office is right there. It's funny when you sit somewhere for a long time.

I would see so many people like that would walk around, I swear, with Walkmans, and sing really loud, because I'm pretty sure they were hoping to be like, whoa man, you get the voice of an angel. You need to do worship here, bro. That is good.

One guy would just, every day, just belt singing, you know, trying to, little melodies, you know, kind of get his hands into it, and I'm like, you have nothing better to do than to sing like worship songs here, but as I got to know the guy, he just wanted to, he wanted a spot on the worship squad here. He sung terrible, so it would never happen, but it's just interesting. People sometimes, they feel like they deserve stuff, you know, but when you really realize, no, I don't deserve anything.

I just get to receive it. Jesus is my, you know, He's my loving Father, and He wants to bless me, and I need to sit back and just accept it. Never be so prideful where I feel I deserve this.

Never be so, like, self-condemning where I feel like I don't deserve anything, but I think that's really interesting. We receive the Kingdom of Heaven. It's a gift, and gifts you're just thankful for, right? You don't be like, well, it's about, you know, I really, you know, I earned this gift, so I'm glad you hooked me up.

I mean, your kid would be a real brat if he said, well, I'm glad I got these 10 presents. I'm glad I got the Xbox Elite and not the other one, because I've been really good all year, and you better have gotten Halo, or I'm gonna be mad. You know, you'd be like, oh, what a brat, you know, but because gifts, you're grateful.

It's a thankful thing, not an earning thing, and I think we miss that sometimes, and then I think they trusted Jesus. You know, they weren't worried once in his arms. They just wanted to be there, and I wish, you know, we don't see the reactions, but they're just content there.

They trusted Jesus enough to be made an example. Remember the first time the child came up in his arms, and he's using them as an example, because he's rebuking the disciples, because they're arguing about who's going to be greatest in Heaven. He says, you know what, if you want to be great, you've got to receive children like one of these, you know, and that's maybe a little scary.

This little kid, this stranger picks you up. He's loving. He's God, and there's a whole crowd of people just watching you, but you trust him enough just to not wriggle out and bail.

You just stay there, and I think that's significant. You know, we've got to trust Jesus to when he's making an example of us. You know, maybe you're going through some serious pain in your life, and God's getting you through this pain, because he wants to use you as an example someday.

When he gets you through it, when he's got you through it, and you meet people that are going through it, you're an example, because you've already been there, done that. You've been restored from it. God's taught you from it.

It's made you stronger, more effective in your ministry. You've got to trust Jesus and stay in his arms. In the other case, slightly different, but these kids we read about today, they had to trust Jesus as well, because they're just getting prayed for and getting blessed.

He blesses them, you know, and maybe you're in a season of blessing. Well, you've also got to trust Jesus and not become prideful, again, like you deserve it or anything like that. You've got to be humble, like, wow, who am I that I deserve this blessing right now for this season? Because it's cyclical, right? You've got seasons of blessing, and then seasons of example making, and it's just one or the other consistently until you die, because God's wanting you to be a more effective, and he wants to bless you, but he wants to use you also, and even though he's blessing you, you're not going to be able to reach that many people.

So it's a mixture, but no matter what it is, through the high times of blessing, through the low times where you're being made an example, we've got to trust Jesus, and that's something that I think kids have dialed in as well. Just so to review, I think, what does it mean? I think you come to Jesus simply. You endure opposition to get to Jesus and maintain your walk with Jesus.

This is what it means to inherit the kingdom of heaven. You fight part of the opposition, part of that, you know, enduring opposition. You become good at receiving, just being thankful for the things that he blesses you with, whether it's a little, whether it's a lot.

There's always something to be thankful for. There's always someone out there who's got less than you, particularly in our little paradigm here, and there's so much to be thankful for, and then we just trust Jesus. In good seasons, in low seasons, we trust Jesus, keeping our eyes on him, because of the study I did a while back, you know, because of all that he's already done.

If you're saved and you're a Christian, you have so much to be thankful for already. You're not going to hell. Jesus is never, he's never leaving you or forsaking you, ever.

He promises he's going to provide for you, and then you go to heaven. I mean, what can you complain about there, really? I mean, when you really think about how good you have it, there's much to be thankful for, many reasons to trust Jesus, and then I just started thinking, my mind got all crazy, and I started thinking, well, what are some exemplary, since we're on this whole child topic, what are some exemplary children in the Bible, and what are some things we can learn from them? I usually don't, I usually don't like character studies. Why? Because everybody's pretty much a loser in the Bible except Jesus, even the good ones, even David in his old age.

He's a man after God's own heart, but I just, I was reading, like, I was reading, like, his last years. He full tells, like, Solomon to, like, kill, like, Abner. Like, that's not, that's kind of creepy old, you know, usually it's supposed to be all peaceful, you're old, you're dying, you know, give my love to Bathsheba, but no, hey, that guy messed us up, make sure he goes down to the grave dead and bloody, you know, and then you're dead.

This is weird to me, you know, he puts a hit on Abner, and Solomon obliges, but a little character flaw there. I mean, you look at Abraham's life, awesome father of Jews, you know, he's lied, and, you know, he lied with Sarah, and his son learned from it, and he lied with his wife, and so you see issues there. Noah gets drunk after the flood.

I mean, character studies, unless you're studying Jesus, they're usually awash to an extent, but these children I wanted to do anyway, because it rolls with what we're talking about here. Samuel, I think, is interesting. If you look at 1 Samuel 3.10, when Samuel hears the voice of God, and he's a kid, and he says, speak Lord, for your servant heareth, you know, what an odd thing for a young Jewish kid to say, but this kid's ready, you know, speak Lord, I hear you, speak, because I'm ready to move into action, and I think, wow, from him we can learn readiness, always being ready, never having this cruise control mentality, where I'll get serious with God later, I'm saved, I'm content with that, that's enough for me, I just want to make it to heaven.

No, we don't want that attitude at all. He was ready, and I think from Samuel, I want to embody that readiness. I always want to be ready to give an answer to the hope that I have, ready if Jesus wanted to rapture me tomorrow, ready to serve, ready to help, I mean, ready however I need to be ready, Samuel's

ready.

Daniel, if you recall in Daniel, when he's offered this food, it says he purposed in his heart, he's a teenager, purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's delicacies. I mean, he's got the best food Babylon had to offer, I mean, top chef quality food offered to him, and he doesn't want it, because he knows it's not kosher, and it's probably been offered to demons, and so he purposes in his heart before it's there, because if you didn't purpose in your heart, and you're hungry, and you've got this big steak set before you, you know, forget the whole demon kosher stuff, who cares, when in Babylon, you know, and just, you know, but he doesn't. Why? Because he made a decision to obey before the sin opportunity happened, and so from him, we learn holiness.

He's never recorded sinning, him and Joseph, only two in the Bible besides Jesus, but we know he did, because everyone sins, Romans 3, Romans 3.23 makes that clear, but nonetheless, I like his desire to be holy, and I think holiness, if we want to be ready for the kingdom of heaven, we want to be ready, we want to be holy, and then it's, you know, his friends, Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah, I think from them, we learn boldness, because I love when they're about to be thrown in the fiery furnace, and they tell Nebuchadnezzar, we're not going to worship your gods, and they say, our God will deliver us, but then they say something profound, they say, but even if he doesn't know this, we will not worship your idol, we don't worship your gods, and I think, wow, and that is serious boldness for some teenagers facing a fiery furnace, they're going to be thrown into and burned alive in, and all they have to do is butter up this Nebuchadnezzar guy, and they're like, you know, we don't care, and you know, God's going to deliver us, but even if he chooses not to, we still trust him, almost like Job, though he's slimy, I will trust him, but these are teenagers, we will not serve your gods, even if he doesn't, and I think that is boldness, and I want to be bold like them, I want to be ready like Samuel, I want to be holy like Daniel, and I want to be bold like Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, in any situation, I want to I want to shine for Jesus, regardless of what the opposition thinks, and then Mary, we talked about her when we were doing our Christmas study, you know, crazy, she's a teenage girl, Gabriel shows up and tells her she's going to be impregnated by the Holy Spirit, God's going to get her pregnant, she's going to give birth to God, literally the Messiah, and she just, I mean, this is life-changing, because she's getting married to Joseph, her life's mapped out, he's a good chance he's not going to want to marry her, by law she could be stoned to death, she's going to be considered a harlot for her whole life, and this is heavy, I mean, she's 14, 15 years old, all these things that the angels sang to her could have been, are going to be socially just detrimental, completely annihilating, anything she had going for her, she's going to be considered that, and Jesus is going to be considered an illegitimate child for her whole life also, she'll hear these things, these whispers at the market, all these things her whole life, yet her response is what?

She sings a song about this, and that blows me away, I mean, she has got so much faith, so much trust in God, that she doesn't care what anybody's going to say, doesn't care what anybody's going to think, she sings a song to God, giving thanks and praise to God, because of the news, that although she's going to be obedient, she's going to, it's just going to ruin her social life, and I think, wow, that is pretty huge, to have faith like that, and so I looked at Mary, the same thing, conclusion I drew a few weeks ago, faithfulness we see in her, and then David, sure he wanted to whack Abner when he was old, and you know, dying, but one thing I like, when he's a child, and he's about to fight, you know, Goliath, and he talks to King Saul, and he's like, well, you know, I was a shepherd for my father, and sometimes a lion would come, and try to devour the flock, and I would fight it, you know, I would kill it, and this is the, and then Saul's like, okay, we'll fight him, and then he fights Goliath, and Goliath is like, just how dare you come

against me, and then he says, the God who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hands of you Philistine, I'm like, wow, not only is that bold, but it implies relationship, and trust, you know, he had a great relationship with God, all those years in the field, he was cultivating that heart, he was described as a man after God's own heart, and a product of that, I think, was just his time in the field, as a shepherd, just having a relationship with God, that was it, you know, so I look at these children, you know, readiness, purity, or holiness, boldness, faithfulness, relationship, I couple it with what we learn from these children, that we've seen in the last chapters, how their willingness to come, their willingness to endure, their desire just to receive, to fight, to trust, and I think we get a pretty good picture of what it means, when Jesus says, if you want to really understand what it means to inherit the kingdom of God, you've got to be like one of these children, does that make sense?

So God help us to do these things, and wherever you're at, I pray that you're able to do that, I pray that you're able just to come to Jesus, without any inhibition, without any false expectation, you know, where you're just coming to him for him, not so he can give you stuff, that was a trap I fell into early in my walk with God, I became a Christian, and I memorized all these psalms, it just dealt around blessing coming from holiness, and I was holy, not because I wanted to please God, I wanted God to hook me up with stuff, and that was why I was holy, and that was the wrong attitude, I was serving God, you know the saying, like I always use it, you know, I didn't seek his face, I sought his hand, I wanted stuff from God, I wanted him to hook me up with whatever, and if being holy is what it took, that's why I do it, and that's not why we're supposed to be holy at all, we're holy because we get to be, because God saved us, and he wants us to be, and I want to have a relationship with him, I know that sin is going to hinder that, and I can grieve the Holy Spirit, I don't want to do that, that's why I am holy, not because I get stuff, it's because I've got Jesus, and it's a response to knowing him already, and so I encourage you, come endure, some of you have been enduring stuff for a while, don't give up, continue to endure, these children did, and it's just, you know, God never gives you more than you can handle, and in the end you win, you're going to heaven, and God's going to use these seasons, he's going to use it in your life, I promise you, read 2 Corinthians 1, it tells you to do, and then be good at receiving, you know, when God blesses, receive it, when you've got something difficult, the good news is, and you're walking with God, if anything difficult comes in your life, you know it's from the Lord, this is my number one fear, anytime I didn't walk with God, I didn't know what was from the Lord, and what was my doing, what was the devil, what was the world, it's a miserable feeling, you know, when God said, Abraham, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward, it's the idea, wow, okay, as long as I stay under the shield, it's all good, because I'm protected from a lot, yes, but if a couple arrows come through the shield on purpose, and they hit me, I know it's for a purpose, I know the suffering has a purpose, and God's using it in my life, why?

Because I'm under that shield, anytime I veer away from that, I don't know anymore, you know, is this God, is this me, did I cause this, am I fair game for the devil, because I'm not abiding in Christ anymore, that's a miserable place to be, so I encourage you, get use, and understand what it means to receive from God, and again, just trust Jesus, trust Him in the seasons that are good, trust Him in the seasons that are bad, the children did, they trusted when they were being made an example, and they trusted when they were being blessed, but they trusted Jesus, so to none of you have any problems doing any of those things, you know, anything I've shared about, your faith is not childlike, you're very much more like an adult, the ones you looked at, the bad examples, the rich young ruler,

the Pharisee, the woman with the bleeding issue, you know, you have issues coming to God, you don't understand that He's your loving Father, then I'd love to pray for you, and I encourage you to find

someone, we've got different people that are scattered, that are just here mainly just to pray for you, so get prayer if you need it, we're gonna respond to God in worship now, communion's here, Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me, and that's why we do it, we want to remember what He did, He makes you a child, He couldn't have done this if He didn't go to the cross first, but because of what He's done on the cross, His blood that was shed, His body that was broken, to save you, and to cleanse you, and to regenerate you, now you get to be a child of God, that's what you get to be, in my

son's class, he's telling me, if you do something bad to a girl, and you apologize, you have to take a knee and say, I'm sorry princess whatever, Sophia, I'm really sorry I did this to you, and if you're a girl, you do something bad to a guy, you say, I'm sorry Prince John, I shouldn't have done this, and I think it's so cool, because she's getting them used to understanding that because of their relationship with Jesus, they're all princes and princesses, and I mean that's a product of being a child of God, because of what Jesus has done on the cross, so I just pray, reflect on those things tonight, and find prayer if you need it, so God we come before you, and are thankful for how much we have God, we're so thankful that we could give and support just Haiti, I think about all the

children that are going through so much there God, and we just pray for that country God, we pray Lord that you would get just the relief that needs to get there, would get there God, the corrupt aspects of the nation, wouldn't divert any of the food or funds for selfish reasons God, but it would go to the people, and the people who need it God, so we pray for the teams that we have or paracletus that'll be going out there soon, that you keep them safe, and you just use them while they're there God, we pray that you'd use this whole catastrophe God, just to soften people's hearts God, so they'd be saved God, we pray that a huge revival would take place in Haiti, because of this God, so and comfort the people that are grieving, who've lost loved ones God, we pray for Calvary Chapel Haiti

there, just I know that their main prayer was just that the country could recover God, and the church could recover Lord, and they'd know what's next, because so many things are uncertain God, so I just pray you'd give them that peace God, peace that transcends all understanding God, and just I pray for anyone in this room God, who's lost just what it, who's lost the whole concept of God, of being a child, of being your child God, and I pray that we'd all remember just the simplicity of what it means God, just to receive, and to trust, and just to come to you God, and we do so many things to make that all weird, and complicated, it's so simple God, so if anyone's lost sight of that God, if anyone's entangled by sin, or anything God, I pray you'd work tonight Holy Spirit, free people God,

I pray that people would repent, and I pray that people would just accept you, we ask that in your name, Amen.

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