

What about Children?
Mark 10:13-16 (07/05/15)
Ernie Godshall
Faith Bible Church
Evansville, Indiana

We had another young one come into the world this week – Logan Randall Cutrell, all 8 lbs, 21 inches of him. Every birth is a marvel! From conception when one out of millions of microscopic sperm unite with that ovum, through nine months of gestation, and then the birth, billions of blood cells, all kinds of muscles, with all the parts in the right places, up to one hundred million, million cells formed from that single fertilized ovum, a unique personality with his own genetic blueprint, how does this happen?

Here's how. Psalms 139:13-14 ***For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.*** God does it! Add to this that every child conceived bears the image of God, and you just have to praise God for His wisdom, design, power, providence, glory!

What does Jesus think of these children? We're going to find out this morning that Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world. Millions of children around the world are born into squalid and dangerous conditions. We're seeing lots of children in the Dispatches DVDs being shown here on Wednesday nights, whether in Southeast Asia, Albania and Kosovo, Western Africa – little children born into a world of evil, of war, of abuse, little children looking out with hopeful eyes, but our hearts break for them, as their hope gradually turns to hopelessness.

In the Old Testament even Israelites sacrificed their babies to the god Molech. Psalm 106:37-38, "They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, ***And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters,*** Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood." God judged them severely.

Right here in America, nearly 60 million little babies still being formed in their mothers' wombs have been savagely slaughtered as unwanted since 1973! In many countries little girls are rejected and destroyed. Parents want sons to care for them in their old age. In one city in China there's a "baby box" where people can leave their unwanted infant. A welfare home nearby comes and takes care of these unwanted souls.

But there are good stories. Here's one I just heard this week. British humanitarian Sir Nicholas Winton died this past Wednesday, July 1, at 106. He rescued 669 children from Nazi concentration camps, arranging for eight trains to carry these mostly Jewish children out of Prague, Czechoslovakia, bringing them to Britain. There are many stories, especially of Christian ministries, caring for unwanted children. The early church would go out and find unwanted infants exposed and left to die by Roman parents. Christians have been rescuing unwanted children through adoption agencies and caring ministries for the last 2000 years.

Let's see what Jesus thinks about children. This is right on the heels of His teaching on marriage as between a male and female, which is normally the only way you can have children. And while single parents can do a fantastic job loving and rearing their children in the things of God, the ideal is for a child to be reared by a loving mom and dad. So this fits the context perfectly with marriage. There are four lessons about children in this section.

#1 Bring your children to Jesus! v. 13a

And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them...

So here come all these parents, moms, dads, maybe even uncles and aunts, it doesn't say, but they are flocking to Jesus with their little ones. Luke 18:15 uses the word meaning infants, so these children were probably newborns up to maybe three or four years old. It was custom for parents to bring their one year

olds to a distinguished rabbi for his touch and blessing, so here they recognize Jesus as at least a teacher, or a prophet, or perhaps the Son of God.

What blesses me is that Jesus is the kind of person to whom these parents felt perfectly comfortable bringing their babies. They love their babies and want God's blessing on them. Jesus says nothing about their faith. But I can just picture that young mother with loving eyes watching every single move as Jesus picks up her newborn child and blesses him or her! How tender and precious was that?

Listen up – make sure you bring your children to Jesus! If all we've done is fed and clothed and taken our kids to sports events and educated them, but we haven't reared them in an environment where they learn about Jesus, what it means to believe in Jesus, where they see their mommy and daddy loving Jesus and loving each other because they want to honor Jesus, we've blown it. We can never guarantee God will regenerate the heart, but like these people, we can be determined that our children will know about Jesus! At home, in church, at VBS, in the car, at bedtime, as they follow you and watch you and learn from you, are they learning about Jesus? Do they know they are sinners and only Jesus can forgive their sins? Are you seriously bringing your children to Jesus? Do they see honesty and peacefulness and trust in you? I recall a pastor telling about a father who got back into the car at a fast food place bragging about how the lady had given him too much change. He failed in teaching integrity.

Bring your children to Jesus! Teach them Genesis 1:1, that God created the heavens and the earth. Teach them Genesis 2, that marriage is between a man and woman. Attached to the end of this message is a list of things from Bill Goode, former pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Lafayette, IN, that parents should be teaching their children. Be faithful in your local church. We have EPIC for younger children grades four through six and YDM for teens here on Wednesday nights! And God is using these ministries. We are excited! How many of you are teaching Sunday School here in our church? Wonderful! We thank you!

#2 Jesus thinks children are important – vv. 13b, 14

But the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

I feel sorry for these disciples. They just don't get it with Jesus and He has to keep correcting them, but then again, that's what discipleship is all about. So here come the mothers with their little ones, and you know what mamma bear is like. Moms love their little ones! They aren't going to miss this opportunity, so there are probably some elbowing and some pushing, along with squealing babies and calls to clear the way! Or mom's back there urging hubby to keep moving his way ahead with little Jeremiah to Jesus.

The disciples, like security police, spring into action. "Hey, hey, get these kids out of here. Jesus has more important things to do than pick up these little rugrats. Come on, get along with you now." It says they rebuked them. And of course, the world's organizations don't have time for children. "Successful" enterprises are looking for the movers and shakers of this world. These disciples knew these children couldn't contribute a thing to the cause. They had no power, no money, no resume of accomplishment! Surely Jesus doesn't have time for them, or so they thought.

But we've got a problem, Houston! Jesus looks over and sees what's happening. "When He saw this." Look what it says, "He became indignant!" This is a strong word never used of Jesus. Indignant: a state of anger aroused by injustice. "Whoa, whoa, whoa! No, no, no, no, no! Stop it!" And Jesus unleashes three quick lessons for these fellows who must be smarting under this public rebuke! But they will have to learn.

First, "Let them come!"

Second, "Stop hindering them."

Third, "These little tykes are exactly what My people should be like"

Who doesn't love children? If you don't, then we doubt you love Jesus! Jesus loves children and in no uncertain terms lets us know it, right here. If Jesus thinks children are important, then we better think children are important, right? Woe to the person who abuses children. Woe to the person who mistreats

and verbally bashes children. Woe to the father who lets his anger rain down on his little ones when they get in his way! Children can push your patience, but when you pour out your anger on them, you need to ask them to forgive you. Jesus thinks children are important! And so must we.

3 You must have a child-like spirit to enter the kingdom of God – v. 15

"Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

Jesus utters a ton of truth here about faith and what it means to come to salvation. Notice it says unless you have this child-like spirit, you won't enter the kingdom at all! That's a double negative, and in no uncertain terms, if you don't come like a child, you simply won't get in.

Now what is it about a child that Jesus is talking about? He's certainly not saying children aren't sinners. They are born sinners from two sinners going all the way back to Adam and Eve. And it doesn't mean they are not guilty of sinning, since very shortly they come out with their lies, their anger, their selfishness. We don't have to go to conferences to learn how to teach our kids how to lie or have anger tantrums or be selfish. Have you ever served in the toddler nursery where two toddlers want the same toy?

But young children have two characteristics required to get into the kingdom: total helplessness and total dependence. Children bring nothing. They have nothing. They depend on mom and dad for everything; for food, clothing, going to the bathroom, everything. That is what salvation by grace is all about. If you try to bring all your good deeds and all your accomplishment, if you think you can impress Jesus with your spiritual resume, you aren't ready for the kingdom. You receive the kingdom the same way the great hymn says, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; **Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace;** Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior, or I die!" That sums it up! That's how you come into the kingdom! Naked and helpless, just like a helpless, totally dependent little infant, looking up in hope and faith.

#4 Assure your children that Jesus loves them – v. 16

And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

It only gets better here. You know how little guys lift their arms up when they want to be held? I love that. Jesus reaches down, puts His arms around each one of these precious souls, and holds them close and asks the Father to bless them. He probably asks the Father to draw their hearts to salvation as they grow older that they might know the living and true God in Jesus! He probably laid His hands on older ones, maybe the three or four year olds. Imagine the hands of the God-man, warm and caring, resting on your child's head, and Jesus praying for her!

Jesus loved these children and gave them as much personal touch as possible. And if this doesn't sing of the kind of Savior we have, what does? Jesus could be severe with the religious hypocrites and the religious lies and scams, but here He is just the kind of Savior we want – gentle, loving, inviting, wrapping His arms around children and they are perfectly comfortable with Him. Now parents, this doesn't mean your children should rule the roost, or that you should be a child-centered home. That's a real problem today. Give Billy what you want him to eat, not what he wants to eat. You know better than Billy. I think modern parents ask their kids too much about what they want. Just take them with you and they'll follow you. Last thing you want is a selfish, demanding teenager, right?

You younger children sitting here today who may have seen some adult nastiness already in your young life, never forget that Jesus loves you and you need to come to Him just as you are, without one plea, but that He promised to save you if you trust in Him! He's a loving, kind Savior and Lord. Jesus is not just for grownups; He's for children, too!

SO WHAT? Let's draw three conclusions from this passage:

Do infants who die go to heaven? Yes. Jesus blessed these infants. If they die before they are even aware of right and wrong, we fully believe Scripture indicates they will go to heaven. God is sovereign and while they are sinners, they have not consciously rebelled against God's law. God even refers to them as "innocent" in Psalm 106:38. Scripture indicates that God's wrath abides on people who know the right

thing and don't do it. Judgment is always based on knowledge, and infants don't know the right thing. Read John MacArthur's book *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*. If indeed infants who die go to heaven, then there will surely be more people in heaven than hell, since billions of babies have been conceived and then miscarried, or were aborted, or died in infancy from disease or abuse. Infants are not held accountable for what they do not know. We can be certain that since God is sovereign over life and death, then God has ordained not only the death of an infant but also their election to salvation through the blood of Christ.

Should we baptize infants? No. As Charles Spurgeon put it so aptly with his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, "This text has not the shadow of the shade of the ghost of a connection with baptism." Even good commentators seem to find water in this passage when there's not a drop there. They brought their children to Jesus, not to the baptism fount. Roman Catholicism teaches that baptizing babies cleanses them of the guilt of original sin and joins them to the church. The Bible knows nothing of this. This is a dangerous doctrine since millions of Catholics think just because they were baptized they are bound for heaven. Covenant theology (except for Reformed Baptists) says infant baptism has taken the place of infant circumcision in the Old Testament and finds support for infant baptism in this passage. The Bible knows nothing of infant baptism. Baptism in the Bible is always for those who confess their sins and put their faith in Christ.

But most importantly is a question for each of you. Do you have a child-like faith in Christ? Helpless dependence and trust are what faith is, like a child resting in the arms of a parent, we must rest our souls in the arms of Christ by faith, believing He is the one and only way to forgiveness, eternal life, and a home in heaven. Is that the kind of faith you have?

For that parent who lost an infant, perhaps through a miscarriage or some other reason, you can be sure you will see that beloved child again, but only if you yourself have a conscious, genuine, child-like faith in Christ.

WHAT TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN

(Bill Goode, formerly pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, IN)

1. Attentiveness, obedience, honor parents – Ephesians 6:1-3

2. Doctrines

- Salvation – Romans 3
- Justification and sanctification – Romans 5-6
- Denial of self - Luke 9:23-26
- Yielding our lives to God - Romans 6:11-13
- Authority and profit of God's Word - 2 Timothy 3:15-17

3. Godly standards and values - Jeremiah 9:23,24

4. Purpose of life in Christ - Romans 8:29a

5. Good stewardship – 2 Corinthians 4:2

- Talents

- Treasures
- Time

6. Decision making – Matthew 6:33

7. To love and serve others – John 13:34-35

8. Problem solving – Romans 12, Ephesians 4:29

9. Respect God ordered authority – Romans 13:1-7

10. How to respond to hardship – James 1:2-4

11. How to begin the day with praise - Psalms 118:24

12. How to be content - 1 Timothy 6:6

13. How to be a good husband, wife, and parent – Ephesians 5:22-6:4