

Little Children Can Be Saved

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Mark. The book of Mark, it's in your New Testament, it's after the first book of Matthew, then Mark chapter 10, and we'll be reading from verses 13 through to verses 16, verse 13 to verse 16, Mark 10.

This is the Word of God. Amen.

And in His arms, put His hands on them and bless them. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. that is while you are young. And no one loved children more than the Lord Jesus, this God who when he became man said this, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. So children, I want to speak especially to you today, whatever your age, and I want to tell you that the very best time for you to be saved is today without waiting a day longer.

[1 : 48] So the first thing we see is that children are important to the Lord Jesus. And this is a word both for children and for adults and for parents.

As we see in Mark's Gospel, chapter 10, verse 13, people were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

Now the term here for little children is used in the Bible for everyone from infants to 12-year-olds. Not necessarily limiting that, but that's how it is used in the New Testament.

Now we noted when studying chapter 9 that children were often regarded as of little importance in the first century Roman world. They valued people based on what they could contribute, what they brought to the table, the advantages, what they could do, what they could produce for society. But since young children could not bring something of value to society, they were often looked down upon as burdens to bear. Not only were they too young to contribute something, but they actually were a drain on the resources of adults who must take care of them.

[3 : 11] And so they were regarded often as an annoyance. That was their status in the world's eyes, if you'll remember, as Jesus brought a child and set him before the 12.

Well, this attitude seemed to have found its way into Judaism as well. At least here we find the disciples of Jesus rebuking people for bringing little children to Jesus.

In all fairness to the 12, we're not told why. Why they rebuked them could have been that they were well-meaning, sincerely concerned for Jesus, thinking of themselves as bodyguards to protect him from needless interruptions and distractions that would pull him away from his mission.

Not realizing that little children were at the very heart of his mission and why he came to this earth. And so it seems they thought Jesus was just too important, too busy with the adults to be bothered with little children.

And so they rebuked them. They shoed the children and their parents away. Well, if the disciples thought that they would be praised for their wise management of Jesus' precious time, they were greatly mistaken, as verse 14 says, when Jesus saw this.

[4 : 39] He saw what was going on. He was indignant. He said to them, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. Literally, stop hindering them.

You are hindering them. Stop it. This isn't the first time that we've seen these rebukers rebuked. It's just at the end of chapter 9.

Remember, they came to Jesus and John says, Lord, we found a man who was casting out demons in your name, but he wasn't one of us, so we told him to stop. Remember Jesus' words? Do not stop him. Same word is here. Do not stop him. Do not stop the little children. Do not hinder them from coming to me.

So Jesus was not at all pleased with what he saw. He was indignant. That's a strong word. The cause for it must have been something very big.

[5 : 38] It's a word of deep emotion, even anguish. It pained him to see what was going on. It hurt him. He was stirred in the depths with great anger for what they were doing, keeping the children from him, being obstacles in the way, hindering them from coming to them.

Think now where we're at. Jesus is just a few months away from going back into heaven. And he's leaving this great worldwide age-long mission of building his church to these 12 disciples. And they're shoos the children away. And Jesus is calling a time out. We've got to get this straight, man. If you guys are going to be the ones who build the church, you need to know it's also built with little children.

And so he rebukes them with indignation. You know, there are many ways to hinder the little children. Some do not bring them to Jesus by not reading the Bible to them, which is where Jesus is to be found.

Some do not take them to Sunday school or church where Jesus is proclaimed. And as we gather in his name, he is here with us. Some even forbid them to go to worship.

[7 : 12] Others hinder by their example, showing no interest in Jesus themselves, not encouraging them to seek the Lord. Perhaps taking them to church with one hand while pointing them to hell with the other.

Their own example of saying he's not worth following, kids. No, many ways that we can hinder the little children. A.T. Robertson says, surely it ought to be a joy to a parent to bring their children to Jesus.

Certainly to allow them to come. Oh, but to hinder their coming is a crime. There are parents who will have to give an account to God for keeping their children away from Jesus.

I think there are only three times in the gospel where the gospel writers tell us about Jesus' anger. And this is one of them. You know, there is a way to be angry and to sin not. Ephesians 4, 26. But you know, it's a rare thing with us.

[8 : 22] Because in us, anger is usually unleashed because of the wrongs that are done to us. Not so with Jesus. He had no sin in his anger.

And what stirred his anger was not what men were doing to him. And no one was treated worse than Jesus. But rather, his anger was stirred by what others were doing to God.

turning his worship into a marketplace. Remember? The whip. Or even caring more for their sheep that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath and they cared for this man with the withered hand who they thought should not be healed on the Sabbath.

Jesus was angry. Angry. But here Jesus is indignant because of what the twelve were doing to these children. Keeping them from him.

They're sending the wrong message to them about Jesus and his heart. His heart of love toward little children. And so hear me, children. When you see Jesus angry in this passage, his anger at what his disciples were doing is sending a message to you.

[9 : 42] To you. And he's saying to you, you are not a bother to me. You're not a burden to me. You're just as important to me as adults.

You're not an interruption to my mission, but a very part of my mission. I've come to seek and to save sinners, including young sinners like you. And I want you to come to me.

And anyone who hinders you will have me to answer for. children. The son of God feels that strongly about you coming to him.

So in controlled anger, Jesus rebukes his disciples. Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. And then he gives a reason why.

For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. The kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Notice he doesn't say the kingdom of God belongs to all of these.

[10 : 48] That's to twist the words of Jesus as if all children are saved just because they are children. No. Children are sinners and must come to Jesus and receive him just like every other adult must.

And if they do, the kingdom of God belongs to them just as much as it belongs to any adult believer. So they're not children.

Little children are not included because of their age, but neither are they excluded because of their age. Their age has nothing to do with being saved. So children, listen to me.

You're saved in the same way that mom and dad are saved if they are saved. You're saved in exactly the same way that adults are saved.

It's by repentance and faith that you must be saved. So, like all adults, children, you're born in sin. [11:53] You're sinners. You came into the world with your back toward God going your own way. And you've inherited Adam, his fallen nature, his sinful nature, as well as his condemnation.

And that's why children die. You see, they've inherited the sinful nature and the condemnation of Adam.

Romans 3.23 says, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That includes you children. sin. You've disobeyed God's commands.

And that's what sin is. Sin is not doing what God commands or doing what God forbids. So, God says, do this and you say, I don't want to.

And God says, don't do this and you say, I will if I want to. That's sin, you see. And you've done that. You've disobeyed your parents when God says to obey them.

[12:58] Some of you have lied. You've said, I didn't do it when you really did do it. Perhaps you've stolen, taken things that were not yours without asking.

You've been selfish, not wanting to share your things. You've been proud, thinking you're better than others, too proud to confess your sin to say, I'm sorry. Unloving, hating others, maybe hitting others, pulling their hair, calling them names.

You see, the reason you do these sins is because you were born a sinner with a sinful heart. And so, you, just as much as mom and dad, must be born again.

Jesus said that to a grown man, Nicodemus. I tell you the truth, that unless you're born again, you'll never see or enter the kingdom of heaven. And that's true of you, children.

You'll never enter heaven unless you are born again. You get a new heart, a heart that's not going your way with your back to God, but a new heart that wants to trust in the Lord Jesus, wants to follow Him and obey Him.

[14:10] You need a new heart. And only Jesus can give you a new heart. Furthermore, you've disobeyed God's command, so that makes you guilty. It makes you deserving of God's wrath and punishment.

You deserve to go to hell for your sin. You need a Savior to die in your place and take the punishment that you deserve for sin.

Or else you'll have to bear the punishment yourself. Children, think of this. you've disobeyed one of mom and dad's important rules.

You've not told the truth. You've lied. And so, you're going to suffer the consequences and dad takes you back to the room and you're about to be spanked.

But at the last minute, brother comes along and says, spank me instead. And so, you get off the hook as dad spanks that brother of yours. Now, that's just a picture of what Jesus has done for sinners.

[15:15] We deserved that wrath of God in hell forever. And Jesus willingly comes and says, I'll be punished in their stead. Punish me.

And so, Jesus himself went to the cross bearing the sins of all who would trust in him. Christ was there punished for sinners.

He died for sin once for all time. The righteous one, Jesus, for the unrighteous. Sinners who trust in him. And so, the father laid on Jesus the sins of his people and Jesus bore them to the cross, the place of punishment.

And there he bore the punishment. We would have suffered forever in hell. The forsakenness, the godlessness, the wrath of God.

He was crushed for our, he was bruised for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. And the punishment that was on him brought us peace. It was our punishment but God put it on him.

[16:24] And children, you need an atonement, a sacrifice to be made for your sins. There is only one. It is Jesus. That's why you must put all your trust in him.

You're sitting there on your chairs, your benches. You've got all your weight on the bench. You believe it will hold you. You must put all your hopes for heaven on Jesus.

And if they're on Jesus, they're not in anything you've done. Not by being good little boys and girls. Not by cleaning up your life first. No, you just come as a sinner and you throw yourself on Jesus and trust in him to save you.

He's just that good. He's just that kind. Wouldn't you want to know him, such a savior, to die in the place of the guilty? Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

That's his mission. And that includes little children who are sinners. So Jesus does not say the kingdom of heaven belongs to all these.

[17 : 30] He says the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. That is those who receive Christ with childlike faith. You see, it's whoever receives him that have the right to become the children of God.

It's receiving Jesus, but there's a special way you must receive Jesus. Anyone must receive Jesus. How is it? It's as a little child. Notice how Jesus goes on to say that in verse 15.

I tell you the truth. Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. Oh, but the opposite is true as well.

That if you do receive it like a little child, the kingdom of God will belong to you whatever your age. Young, old, middle-aged. How do little children receive Christ?

How do they receive the kingdom of God? Salvation in Him? Well, they receive it freely with nothing to give in return.

[18 : 43] Remember, that's the condition of little children. That's the way they are. They're helpless. They're poor. They're needy with nothing to bring or contribute of value, only receiving without giving, unable to repay.

And that's why the foolish world looks down on them. They have nothing to contribute, nothing to bring. Jesus says, I tell you the truth, this is precisely how you or anyone for that matter must enter the kingdom of God.

You must come to me as little children with nothing to bring, nothing to contribute to your salvation except the sin that makes it necessary. No good works, no cleaning up of your life, no religious practices, no reading the Bible, praying, obeying, none of it.

You must come with nothing to give and everything to receive. Christ, his kingdom, his righteousness, his salvation.

A receiver. A receiver has empty hands. You know, there's a position in football, isn't there, where the guy is called a receiver.

[19 : 54] You don't want him with something in his hands. You want him with empty hands. Why? So he can receive the ball. And those who come to Christ receive him.

They must come with empty hands. Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. Naked, come to you for dress.

I don't bring my own righteousness. I come to you to dress me in your righteousness. Helpless. I don't lean on anything of myself. Helpless look to you for grace. Fall I to the fountain fly.

I can't clean myself up. Wash me, Savior, or I die. You see, it's with empty hands. That's how children, little children, receive. And that's how everyone enters the kingdom of heaven.

That's how everyone receives Christ and his salvation. It is with the empty hands of faith. Be you five or fifty-five. Matthew 18, three, Jesus says, I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

[21 : 05] And how are you to become like little children? By bringing nothing and receiving all. The reason we must change is because at the root of our sinful nature is this idea that I do have something to bring.

Or maybe not everything. I need Jesus, but I've got some things to make it more likely for him to save me. I've got some things that are going on to the positive side in heaven.

Or like those in Laodicea that said, I'm rich, I've acquired wealth, and do not need a thing. Jesus says, you do not realize. You're wretched, you're blind, pitiful, poor, naked.

You don't have a thing to bring for your salvation. Therefore, come to me and receive me and my gift of eternal life as a little child.

So kids, if your parents give you an allowance, that's not a gift, is it? That's a reward for your work. You did the chores that you were given. But if at Christmas time, grandpa gives you an envelope with a brand new \$100 bill, that's not a reward.

[22 : 20] That's a free gift. And that's how everyone must receive Jesus. Not as a reward we've earned, but as a free gift. A gift of His grace. So we're not saved when we can make a good enough case for ourselves before God.

but when we do the opposite and own ourselves to have nothing and hold on to Jesus alone for our hope of heaven.

And with that, He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them warmly and affectionately welcomed them. Jesus, Spurgeon says, Jesus was never more at home than with children.

Can you see Him in the Gospels like that? The word on the street was that He welcomes sinners and eats with them. He's at home with children.

He loves children. Jesus loves the little children and invites them to come to Him. And so no more angry face on His face.

[23 : 28] Now the angry face went to His disciples. But now the warm, welcoming face goes to these little children and they hop up on His lap and He takes them in His arms and He prays a blessing upon them.

Boys and girls, this same Jesus is in heaven this morning. And He's no different. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. He still has this heart that loves children and wants them to come to Him.

He has open arms. Come to Him right now as a little child. Not later, as the devil says. Why should the devil have your best years?

Why should he have the strength of your youth? Why shouldn't Jesus, your creator, the Savior, why shouldn't He have you as a young person to serve Him?

And why shouldn't you have Him as your Savior and Lord and best friend all through your life with all the troubles and trials that you're going to face? Well, I trust you can see children from Jesus' anger at those who kept children from Him.

[24 : 41] You can see the love of Jesus that welcomes you to come to Him. But now a few words to the adults. Parents, first of all, your little children are sinners and need to be taught just that.

They're not innocent. They're not blank slates. They're not on their way to heaven. They must learn that they were born sinners.

And that means they're lost and guilty before God. And they'll never come to Jesus to save them from their sins unless they know they're sinners needing a Savior.

So you don't do them any favors by hiding their sin from them. You rather point it out that to hide it would do them great harm for you would be hindering them and removing the reason why they need to come to Jesus because they're sinners needing a Savior.

So that's the first thing. Teach your children. Teach your little children. They're sinners and need a Savior. Secondly, your little children as children can be saved just as adults by the work of the Holy Spirit.

[25 : 56] They too can be convicted of their sins. They too can confess their sins. They can turn from them. They can trust in what Jesus has done for sinners. They too can take Jesus at his word of promise.

That whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. They can believe that by the blessing of the Holy Spirit and be saved and have everlasting life.

Remember on the day of Pentecost, Peter's preaching to this vast crowd that is gathered for the feast. And he preaches and points out their sin and the gospel promise saying repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children. For all who are far off.

That is for all whom the Lord our God will call. So I want to ask you adults and parents, are you offering gospel promises to your children and grandchildren and Sunday school classes as promises that will save them right now if they will believe them and take Jesus at his word?

[27 : 16] Not telling them that when they grow up they should come to Jesus. The devil's telling them that enough himself.

Don't do his work. Call them to Jesus. So they're sinners and need to be saved. And by the blessing of the Holy Spirit they can be saved just as much as an adult.

And third, your little children if born again by the Spirit of God will have evidences of it in their little lives. You'll be able to tell that they've come out of darkness and into the light.

Out of death and into life. Out of just natural instinct of a sinful nature to the life of God in the soul of your child.

You can't have the life of God, the Spirit of God dwelling inside and it not show. And that's why I say if your child is saved you'll tell it.

[28 : 20] Proverbs chapter 20 verse 11. Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is good and right. So you can know, it can be known.

A different attitude towards sin. If anyone's in Christ, he's a new creation. Doesn't matter how old you are. As a five-year-old, a 55-year-old, if you're in Christ, you're new.

The old is passing away. All things are becoming new. So what are some of the things we look for then? Well, a different attitude towards sin. A different attitude toward Jesus.

Toward God's Word. Toward His worship. Toward obedience. It will be evidences fitting for a little child.

They'll not be perfect any more than yours are perfect adults. But they'll be there in reality. They'll still sin, but what they do about their sins will be different.

[29 : 25] Instead of hiding it, they'll come and confess it. They will pray for pardon and forgiveness. They will pray for God to help them stop sinning.

They will seek to kill it. Sometimes Christian adults can be too hard on little children coming to Jesus for salvation. Expecting that overnight in their little lives, they become like us.

Like us who've walked with Christ 10, 20, 50 years, growing in grace. Remember, if they're trusting in Jesus, they're still babes in Christ with much to learn.

It is a bit strange how we can expect them to become like us when Jesus expects us to become like them. It's strange that we would say, you need to grow up and become like me before you come to Jesus.

When Jesus is saying to you adults, unless you become like them, you will not be saved. So, it's not that they need to grow up and become like you, but that you need to grow down in this aspect of receiving salvation freely with nothing to give.

[30 : 43] A child can do that. Indeed, that's the example Jesus gives. So, as a church, let's be careful to do nothing to hinder little ones from coming to Christ by placing too high of a bar on what evidences they must give.

much wisdom, much patience. Forbearance is needed by parents, by the church, by its elders, as we together recognize the saving work of the Holy Spirit in these young lives.

And then receive them by way of baptism and membership into the body of Christ. But I want to end not on a negative note.

There's more than the negative here. It's not just that we as a church are to avoid something.

There's a positive to be pursued. And so, we, like the 12, are to be doing nothing to hinder little children from coming to Jesus, but we are to be doing everything we can to lead them to Jesus, to point them to Jesus, to urge them, to plead with them, to convince them to come to Jesus, telling them why to come to Jesus, telling them that if they come, Jesus will welcome them to come, that he's willing and able to save all who come, and as a church, to be praying for them to come to Jesus.

Never giving the impression that they're too young to come to Jesus. If they're old enough to know that they've sinned against a holy God, they're old enough, intellectually, to know I need a Savior, and there's only one, and he's Jesus, and to put their trust in him.

[32 : 35] Moms and dads, your work is more important than the work of presidents, because your work has a direct impact upon the eternal destinies of your children, and for this critical work, God has given you four main tools.

I just have time to mention them. First of all, he's given you a book, and you need to make good use of this book, and just pour it into their lives, and it's never too early to start.

You know, Timothy turned out to be a great servant of the Lord, and there were two ladies in his life that did just that. From infancy, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

They didn't say, well, when he gets older, we'll start teaching. I mean, what can he learn as a young infant? Oh, he can learn to respect this book. There's no book like it anywhere.

This is the book that teaches the way to life. God's given you a book. Use it. God's given you a rod. A rod. Do not withhold discipline from a child.

[33 : 40] If you punish him with a rod, he will not die, though he screams like he might. He will not die. Punish him with the rod, and save his soul from death. Proverbs 23, 13 to 14.

Even before they understand words, they can understand a firm slap on their back end. Can't they? Don't wait. Pour the scriptures in when they're young.

Discipline. They must learn to make the connection between disobedience and painful consequences. And you are to be the first one to teach them that. God will be the last one to teach sinners who have not repented that.

That there's a consequence, there is a hell to pay for sin. So you're to start teaching that connection. Disobey pain. Disobey pain. You live in God's world, child.

I know you don't understand me, but you need to get this lesson early. He's given you a book. He's given you a rod. Bless God, he's given you a throne. A throne of grace to bring your children to Jesus at the throne of grace.

[34 : 47] Even when they're still in the womb, you can pray for them. When they're infants, when they're going through a tough patch where they're rebelling, you've got a throne.

A throne of grace to appeal to. A higher throne. And even when they've left home and they're far, in a far country, far from you and far from God, you have access to the throne that has access to their heart.

Use the throne of grace. A book, a rod, a throne, and a church. Let me say to you, Wednesday evening and Sunday school teachers, what a blessing you are to parents of this congregation.

That they're little ones who hear it from them all week long, I trust. And are having the Bible poured into them at home, I trust. Then they come along to their little class and they see someone else.

A different voice. A different loving face. One they look up to and they hear the same thing. And you're just pounding that stamp, that brand deeper into their flesh, you see.

[35 : 58] Praying God would drive it home to their heart. What a blessing to have you giving them the word of God. And a word to all of us here at Grace Fellowship to engage the children in conversation.

To take a genuine interest in them. To love them. To talk with them. To find out what makes them tick. What are they doing with Jesus? What are they doing for their everlasting souls?

We can join the parents, you see, in this labor of love and join them in praying for their children.

Children are the mission field under our very noses here week by week, day by day.

Let's not overlook them. So what have we seen today? Well, we've seen our Lord wants children's early impressions of Him to be different than what the disciples were dishing out.

We might think, well, what can these little, tiny little ones learn so early in life? Well, early impressions are often the deepest. And Jesus did not want the earliest impressions of these, even the little, little children, to be of frowning disciples.

[37 : 13] Chasing them away from a Jesus that's only for adults. Jesus doesn't want that to be their early impression. He wants their early impression of Christianity to be of Jesus welcoming them, welcoming eyes and words and arms and hands, saying, come to me and don't anyone stop them from coming to me.

He wants that ringing in your ears, kids, that you might know He wants you to come to Him. And you know, not everybody does come to Him as a young person.

And they go off. Now they've got burdens of guilt in their lives and heavy loads of consequences and scars of sin. And Jesus has a word for them and it's still, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.

And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me. I'm gentle. I'm humble in heart.

You'll find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

You see, the same message. Little children, come to me. Older children who've wandered far, come to me. And we as a church are to be saying, come, come to Jesus.

[38 : 39] They're to be hearing that invitation often. Revelation 22, 17, the Spirit and the bride, the bride of Christ say, come, whoever's thirsty, let him come and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Maybe that's you. You still haven't come and we're saying to you this morning, come, you thirsty, you haven't found satisfaction from your sin and guilt, you have the burden upon, come, come to Jesus and thirst no more.

And then we come to the last day, the day of final judgment in Matthew 25 when all men who have ever lived are assembled before Jesus Christ as he comes back in great glory with all his angels with him and he sets up his throne and he gathers everyone who's ever lived before him and he

