

I want to begin this morning by reading a couple of verses from the Bible to you. (Using the Lection book, open it to Mark 10:15-16, but with the book turned UPSIDE DOWN.) Begin to read backwards. Hmm, I seem to be having trouble reading this morning. I wonder what is wrong? Can any of you help me figure out why I am having trouble reading? (Oh, my goodness, I have the book turned upside down! No wonder I couldn't read it. Let's try again. (Turn the book upright and read Mark 10:15-16.)

Much of what I share with you this morning comes from three sources – Working Preacher.com, GotQuestions.org, and 'A Pastor Sings' website.

My little mistake in having the book upside down reminds me of the mistake that the disciples of Jesus made on the day we just heard about in the Gospel reading shared with us this morning. People were bringing children to Jesus so that he could lay his hands on them and bless them. The disciples scolded the parents because the disciples thought the children were bothering Jesus. They thought that Jesus would be pleased with what they were doing because they were looking out for his well-being. But Jesus wasn't pleased at all.

From the website, 'A Pastor Sings, we read this, "There are two potentially puzzling elements to this story. First, why did the disciples try to keep the children away from Jesus? [And] what did Jesus mean when he said, "Let the little children come to me . . . for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"?"

So, why did the disciples not want the children to come to Jesus?

I am certain that the disciples prevented those children from approaching Jesus not because they hated children, but for reasons they believed were in everyone's best interests. [Now], some of these reasons might be:

- Because they thought that it wasn't socially okay for those children to come to Jesus at that time. It is more likely that they did that because of the respect they have for Jesus, who is their [teacher].**
- Maybe they thought that it would be inconvenient for Jesus to have all these children around when he had more important things to do [like healing the sick and teaching the disciples and the crowds].**
- They may have thought that there was no need for children to come to Jesus, because after all, they were only children and of little value to society.**
- Maybe they wanted Jesus to get some rest and they didn't need anyone to disturbing him with their kids.**
- And finally, children could be troublesome and maybe even a nuisance; the disciples didn't want any of them to bother Jesus.**

From the commentary GotQuestions.org, we hear this, "It is important to remember that children in Jesus' time were not necessarily regarded as special or particularly endearing, except in the eyes of their own parents. Many cultures today look on children as being especially sweet, innocent, and even wise. [Isn't that how we see them?] Jewish culture in Jesus' day probably did not see children

in such optimistic terms. The disciples most likely rebuked those bringing the children to Jesus because they felt bringing children to Jesus was socially improper or because they thought the children would be a bother to Jesus. It is likely that their move to hinder the parents from bringing their children to Jesus was motivated not by unkindness but by a desire to respect Jesus' position [as a teacher, a prophet and maybe even the Messiah]. But Jesus wanted the children to come to Him. He said, "Let the children come." And He did this because He truly wanted to bless them.

When Jesus saw that his disciples were preventing the children marked by sincerity, transparency, neediness, dependence, humility, teachability, and so on from coming to him, he did not remain silent but rather expressed his intention toward them. He said, let the children come to me for such as these are those who make up the kingdom of heaven."

So what was Jesus talking about with respect to children? What did Jesus see in them?

What qualities was Jesus identifying that made children special? Well, these might include some of the following:

1. **A Childlike trust (we might call this faith):** Children don't worry about their needs, and they also don't worry about how their parents will be able to provide for them. They simply believe in their parents' ability to solve all their problems.

2. **Sincerity:** Children are transparent and sincere. When they are in need, they cry to their parents, and when they are filled, they rejoice.
3. **Humility:** Children have nothing to boast about except the strength of their parents to provide for the child's needs.
4. **Open heartedness** – welcoming, accepting, loving, and ready to share.
5. **Teachability.** Children can learn from the world around them without all the trappings adulthood imposes upon their lives.
6. **Simplicity of heart, what we might label as innocence.**

As long as we come to Jesus as a child, Jesus is always ready to receive us.

Jesus' command to "let the little children come to me" reveals several truths: 1) Children need to be blessed by the Creator. 2) And God wants to bless children. 3) Parents should be encouraged to bring their children to Jesus and teach them His ways. 4) Jesus has love for the weakest and most vulnerable among us, just as we should be with those around us. 5) Jesus is compassionate toward all humankind, so why aren't we? 6) And finally, we all need to come to Christ in childlike humility, faith, and simplicity of heart.

Like children who implicitly trust their parents, we, as believers, have trust in God. Faith is not about knowing everything or doing everything right. Faith is about knowing that no matter what happens, our God will take care of us. God loves all of us as children.

Again from the commentaries which I sighted earlier, we read, “Children are needy and dependent, and they know almost nothing about life. They function mostly on emotion, rather than reason. Yet Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” ([Matthew 19:14](#)). Scripture often compares believers to children (e.g., [Luke 10:21](#); [Galatians 4:19](#); [1 John 4:4](#)). In fact, Jesus told those following Him, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” ([Matthew 18:3–4](#); cf. [Mark 10:15](#)).

Jesus was angry with his disciples and said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! The Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.”

I imagine that the disciples thought that they were being helpful to Jesus. He had been working very hard teaching, healing the sick, and feeding the people who followed after him. The disciples may have thought Jesus needed to rest, or maybe they thought the children might keep Jesus from doing something more important, like performing another healing, or driving out a demon from some poor soul. But, just like my mistake of having the lection book upside down, the disciples had their thinking turned upside down. They thought that the little children were a bother to Jesus, when instead, Jesus wanted everyone to be more like the little children. Fact was and is still - Jesus loves everyone — especially little children!

If you come to Jesus, you must come as a child and not as an adult. You must come to Christ with childlike humility, simplicity, and faith.

To the neglected children, Jesus said, “Let them come to me.” And Jesus would never want any of us to be turned away from His outstretched arms and His blessing. Come and be blessed you who are a child of God.

Amen.

