

## Dedicating our Children to Christ

**Text:** Mark 10:13-16

### **Introduction:**

1. This account is also found in Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17. Historically, this custom finds its roots in Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons in Genesis 48:14-15. It was a common practice for Jewish mothers to take their newborn children to the leader of the synagogue for a prayer of blessing.
2. Context: Christ and the disciples are journeying to Jerusalem. Christ and his disciples have retired to their lodgings (Vs. 10) before recommencing the journey (Vs. 17). They have just discussed Christ's teaching on divorce and remarriage (Vs. 1-9). While they are in the house, parents come to seek Christ in order that He might bless their children. It is of interest that this account comes right after Christ's teaching on divorce and remarriage. In these two sections we really get a comprehensive view of Christ's design for the family from the husband and wife relationship to the parent and child relationship.
3. This account teaches us some important principles concerning raising our children for Christ. We will consider these under 5 headings:

### **Look firstly at...**

#### **I. The Desire of the Parents (Vs. 13a)**

##### **A. The Purpose of their Desire**

1. 'brought' = often translated 'offer'. This word was commonly used of sacrifices, hence suggesting the idea of dedication (Wuest)
2. "young children" = Exact age not mentioned but Luke uses the word 'infants'. Christ takes them in His arms (Vs. 16) so the plain sense indicates that these were little ones. They would be in what we today would call the pre-school age (Sorenson)
3. 'that' = indicates their goal, their specific desire
4. "touch them" = "*that he should put his hands on them, and pray:*" (Matt. 19:13) They wanted their little hearts to come under His gracious influence and power from a young age.
5. Getting practical: Bring your children to Christ...
  - a. In their infancy – bring them regularly before the throne of grace in prayer and surround them with a godly, Christ-centred home environment.
  - b. In early childhood – explain the Gospel to them and in time, challenge them to receive Christ as Saviour. Maintain regular prayer, family devotions and a Christ-centred, Bible-saturated home life (Deut. 6:7-8).

## **Christ the Servant – Mark Series**

c. Challenge: What is your number 1 priority for your child? Career? University? Money? To see our children saved and go on to fulfil God's plan for their lives should be our aim as parents.

6. Illustration: Moses – never underestimate the power of a godly home and its ability to shape a child at the youngest age.

### **B. The Persistency of their Desire**

1. Efforts were made on the part of the parents to bring their children to Christ for His blessing upon their lives. The disciples repeated attempts ('rebuked' in impf. tense) were met by a persistent determination by the parents to get their children to Christ.
2. Godly parenting is not for the faint hearted. It requires discipline and dedication to maintain a godly home.

*Look secondly at...*

## **II. The Disapproval of the Disciples (Vs. 13b)**

### **A. Their Inward Attitude**

1. The disciples tended to be too conscious of rank and position – see 9:33-38. They had an inflated opinion of their own rank and importance. "They acted with an officious sense of their own importance as His protectors." (Hiebert)
2. They thought these little ones too insignificant to warrant the attention of the Master. Your attitude and actions towards little children says a lot about how Christlike and Spirit-filled you really are as a believer.

### **B. Their Outward Actions**

1. 'rebuked' = to censure or correct
2. Getting practical: As Christian parents, we will encounter opposition as we seek to raise our children for Christ. Sometimes this opposition comes from Satan and the world.
3. Alarmingly, sometimes this opposition comes from the most unexpected quarters! In this case, the men closest to the Lord during His earthly ministry, completely got on the wrong side of the situation due to carnal thinking. Carnally minded Christians pose a real threat to the spiritual welfare of our children.
4. Challenge: we need to stand behind Christian parents and support them in their efforts to raise their children for Christ! Are you an encourager or discourager of Christian parents labouring for their children's spiritual well-being?

*Look thirdly at...*

## **III. The Defence from the Lord (Vs. 14)**

### **A. Christ's Concern (14a)**

## Christ the Servant – Mark Series

1. Encouragement to parents: You may or may not have the support of other people as you seek to raise your children for Christ but you can be assured of one thing, **Christ is on the side of parents whose aim is to raise a godly seed for God!**
2. “much displeased” = a term of strong emotion, means to feel pain. His heart was pained by what he saw. Gives us a window into the Saviour’s heart.
3. The disciples had failed to learn what Christ had just taught them (Mark 9:36-37)

### B. Christ’s Command (14b)

1. ‘suffer’ = allow, permit
2. “forbid them not” = present imperative, “stop hindering them”
3. “for of such is the kingdom of God” = the kingdom is composed of those who possess these childlike characteristics.
4. Getting practical: When we have done all we can as parents to raise our children for Christ, we are ultimately dependent upon Christ to overcome the impossible situations we face and draw our children to Himself. We are reliant on the Lord in the battle for our children.

**Look fourthly at...**

## IV. The Discourse of the Lord (Vs. 15)

### A. The Conditions for Receiving Salvation (Vs. 15a)

Two key truths about salvation are presented by our Lord:

1. Truth # 1: Salvation must be received as a gift, it cannot be earned – “receive the kingdom of God” Salvation is not by works!
  - a. ‘receive’ = the kingdom must be accepted as a gift; it is not human achievement, is never gained on the basis of human merit. “Just as a child receives a gift from a loved one in guileless trustfulness, so the kingdom of God must be received as God’s gift in simple trusting faith. Here is the essence of the doctrine of justification by faith.” (Hiebert)
  - b. Eph. 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved...”
  - c. Titus 3:5 “Not by works of righteousness...”
  - d. Romans 4:4-5 “Now to him that worketh...”
2. Truth # 2: Salvation must be received with a child-like spirit
  - a. Children typify the qualities of heart that are required for salvation such as tender-heartedness, **humility** (lacking pride & self-righteousness), simple faith/trust, openness, receptivity, simplicity.
  - b. Matthew 18:3-4 “*And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble***”

## Christ the Servant – Mark Series

*himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven”*

- c. We need humility to admit our sinful condition before God (Rom. 3:10, 23, 5:12, 1 John 3:4).
- d. We need humility to accept that no amount of good works on our part will save us (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).
- e. We need simple, childlike faith to believe the Gospel message and receive the gift of salvation (John 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 6:23).

### **B. The Consequences for Rejecting Salvation (Vs. 15b)**

1. “shall not enter therein” = An absolute requirement. There is only ONE way to be saved and that’s by grace through faith.
2. The words “shall not” are from the double negative in the Greek text (ou me) and categorically exclude any other way of entry.

**Look fifthly at...**

## **V. The Dedication by the Lord (Vs. 16)**

### **A. The Placement of His Hands upon them (Vs. 16a)**

1. Christ now calls the parents and children to Him (Luke 18:16).
2. He takes these little ones in His arms, placing His hands on their little heads and praying for them. What a beautiful picture of the Saviour! “It reveals Christ’s love for children: - in its human side, as part of His character as man; in its deeper aspect as a revelation of the Divine nature.” (MacLaren)
3. Isaiah 40:11 *“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: **he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.**”*
4. Principle: the faithful efforts of these parents were blessed and rewarded by Christ. He fulfilled the desire of their hearts and honoured their attempts to bring their little ones to Him.

### **B. The Prayer of His Heart over them (Vs. 16b)**

1. ‘blessed’ = in imperfect tense, signifying repeated action. This was no mechanical, cold prayer. This was a prayer that poured out of the heart of the Saviour for these little ones.
2. Note: No special grace, baptism or salvation took place. Christ simply blessed these little ones.

## **Conclusion:**

1. Parents: Have you given your children back to God on a deep level, surrendering all your claims upon their lives?
2. Has there been a time in your life where you humbled yourself and with a child-like spirit, received Christ’s free offer of salvation?