

Pentwater Bible Church

Gospel of Mark

Message 39

January 11, 2015



Let The Children Come To Me by Fritz von Uhde Cir. 1884

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark
Message Thirty-Nine

JESUS, LITTLE CHILDREN & OBSTACLES TO SALVATION

January 11, 2015

Daniel E. Woodhead



Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me by Carl Heinrich Bloch Cir 1834-90

JESUS, CHILDREN & THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Mark 10:13-22

¹³ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, |Let| the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. ¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

¹⁷ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. ¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. ²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. ²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. ²² And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions (KJV).

ACCEPTING CHRIST IN A CHILDLIKE MANNER

Mark 10:13

¹³ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them (KJV).

There is a complementary progression from Jesus teaching of the sanctity of marriage, its permanence and the production of children out of that bond. Children should be brought to the Lord as early as possible and dedicated to Him. This is not infant baptism, which has no biblical basis. But this is simply the parent's responsibility in the bond of matrimony to produce children and bring them up in the nurture and understanding of the Lord. The commandment to Adam to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth has never been abrogated (Genesis 1:28). When they are of an age to make decisions for themselves they should be encouraged to submit to Him in belief and place Him in authority over their lives. It was customary for Jewish parents to be brought to the rabbi for blessing along with their parents. So it was understandable that the people who came for His teaching and healing brought their children for His blessing upon them. Jesus was very receptive to their requests for blessing. Unspoiled children exhibit and model the appropriate mindset for all who come to Jesus in belief. They are humble, dependent on others and filled with potential. Jesus will show all around Him that the receptivity of a little child is a strong guideline for the kind of response required of anyone who would enter God's Kingdom through salvation. Pride, argumentation, doubt and indifference do not allow God's Spirit to enter one to receive Him.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (NKJV).

Jesus' disciples must have thought that the children were unworthy of receiving special attention from Him as they rebuked those who brought children to experience the Master and His enormous love and blessings. The first century Jewish culture was so strongly patriarchal that the children had a lower status than women who were easily discarded through divorce laws. The disciples were telling the parents not to bother Jesus with such insignificant matters as children. Mark here is emphasizing the disciple's attention to the flesh and not to the spirituality of the situation. They were missing the mark.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Mark 10:14

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, |Let| the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God (KJV).

Jesus was indignant to say the least of the disciple's attitude toward the children coming to Him. The parents were asking for a special blessing on their children and the disciples were discouraging them from bringing the children to Jesus. It is important to get a sense

of the degree of anger Jesus was showing over this incident. Mark uses a Greek verb *aganakteo*, which implies a deep, strong anguish over the action of His disciples. Later in His ministry He will rebuke the Pharisees for keeping people from becoming a believer (Matthew 23:13). This amounts to a similar situation. Here He gives the disciples a double command. *One, let the little children to come unto me, and Two, forbid them not.* The disciples were failing to realize that there are no outcasts or unimportant people in the Kingdom. Jesus then goes on to explain that this is exactly the kind of faith and trust required to enter the Kingdom of God. Children exhibit a humility, powerlessness and faith as well as trust. This is the essence of the attitude God requires for entrance into His Kingdom. Unless we can completely trust in God we will never get into the Kingdom of God. Little children and especially their trusting attitude are the true heirs of the Kingdom, which He was inaugurating during His first advent. Jesus is God in the flesh. During His time on earth He showed the world that God had indeed come to this earth.

Mark 10:15-16

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. ¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them (KJV).

Jesus goes on to say that anyone's attitude in receiving Him if it is not exactly as the little child *shall not receive the kingdom of God* and as a result *shall not enter therein*. Children are small, powerless, and without any sophistication or pretenses. They have not been molded into the ways of this world. They can be viewed as having no position in society and bringing absolutely nothing in to the offer of the Kingdom. Whatever a child receives it is by grace on the basis of sheer neediness rather than by any merit inherent in him- or her. Not all children are going to have this attitude and willingness to accept truth. But generally they will trust the adults God has entrusted them to. The children and adults in this passage were coming to Jesus for blessing. The main focus on this passage is not only on the attitude of coming to Jesus but also on the fact that one has to come to Jesus as the object of one's faith. Mankind cannot save itself. *One* Jesus can do this and *two*; we must come to this realization as early in life as possible. We must place complete trust in Him for our salvation and security while we are in the world. There is no other way.

Acts 4:12

¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (NKJV)."

The degree of blessing that Jesus bestowed upon the children is characterized by a unique Greek verb used only here in the entire New Testament. It is *kateulogei*. It is vividly emphasizing the warmhearted fervor with which Jesus blessed each child who came to Him. After embracing them in His arms He proceeded to provide a "laying on of hands" which is a traditional symbol of blessing (Genesis 48:14-18). It had become known as a natural sign of healing (Mark 1:41; 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25) but more likely used here as the blessing applied to those who came to God in love and without pretense. The receptiveness of these children was a stark contrast to the religious leaders of Israel who let their personal pride of education and sophistication along with their position and status interfere with the simple faith needed to believe in Jesus. Even though He continually

proved Himself to be their Messiah their self-centeredness blinded them to Jesus. The disciples exhibited a dullness of mind toward His mission and they needed his rebukes.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER – TRUSTING IN WEALTH

Mark 10:17

¹⁷ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life (KJV)?

Jesus and His disciples were on the way out of Perea with the ultimate goal of Jerusalem for His kangaroo trial and execution. As they were leaving a young wealthy and influential man came running up to Him, keeled down in recognition of Jesus' authority and asked Him, *what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* This episode contrasts sharply with the previous episode with the children's attitude. They had to quail or personal needs that kept them from accepting Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Interestingly he calls Jesus *Good Master*. Most of the establishment was calling Him *rabbi* or *teacher*. This indicates that he was earnest in his question and had profound respect for Jesus as a spiritual guide. He asked Jesus about eternal life as if it were attainable through something we do as in a work or achievement, which is earned.

Mark 10:18

¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God (KJV).

In Jewish thought God is preeminently good (1 Chronicles 16:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Ezra 3:11; Psalm 118:1; 145:9, etc.). It was unusual to apply the term to anyone else. That was the main reason for Jesus' question and statement. Initially Jesus did not answer this young man's question. Instead He questioned his use of the term "Good" as applied to Jesus. Jesus was not taunting him He simply wanted him to realize that only God is truly good and to think about God's absolute goodness. Jesus was directing the man to think that only God is good so he could focus on God's nature and not Jesus who he identified as a good teacher (Master). Jesus was essentially veiling His Deity without denying it. Since only God is truly good the man was unwittingly calling God good in Jesus!

Mark 10:19

¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother (KJV).

After Jesus established the origin and author of true goodness He began to recite six of the Ten Commandments. Jesus realized that this man did not realize the nature of and how to attain eternal life so the commandments He cited all deal with people's relationships to each other. The commandments demonstrate the basis of right behavior and direct one to God. Jesus was doing this as a focus on the man's lifestyle and not just his knowledge and understanding of these commandments. Jesus is going to show him that the spiritual nature of the Law is far more important than the letter. The Law was a teacher to draw the

Jews to God. It was not just a set of rules to be kept as the Pharisees and Scribes saw it. At the heart of rabbinic Judaism was the belief that a person could keep all the commandments (613) of God. Which in fact is impossible. Along with this misbelief came arrogance and pride over one's achievements, which in fact is sin itself (Proverbs 16:18).

Mark 10:20

²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth (KJV).

This man sincerely believed that he was without sin and kept the commandment for the time he learned them as a boy. He did not have any assurance though despite his assertion that he was able to keep the commandments. He had a deep discontent over his ability to keep the commandment but had no assurance of his salvation. Matthew's gospel adds, "What do I still lack?" If he had really kept all the commandments he claimed to have he would have had the peace of mind that he so desperately wanted. At this point it is important to observe that even though simple child like belief in the Gospel of Jesus saves a person in the Church, the sin nature has not left us. It is important to be reminded of our relationship to the Law as given in Paul's teaching in Romans.

Romans 7:7-25

⁷ What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. ⁸ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of [coveting]. For without the law sin was dead. ⁹ For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. ¹² Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For that which I do I [understand] not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil, which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (KJV).

Mark 10:21

²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me (KJV).

Jesus seeing the man and knowing that he truly viewed his ability to keep the commandments felt a strong love for him as He looked at him. Jesus then let him know the obstacle he had which kept him from the true relationship to God, his material possessions. Jesus told him to sell what he owned, give the proceeds to the poor and then take up his cross and follow Jesus. By doing so he would receive the sought after treasure in heaven of eternal life. This exposed the barrier the man was embracing which kept him from a spiritually mature relationship with God. Jesus was showing him the true path to heaven, which he claimed he sought after. By ridding himself of his material possessions and following Jesus, which meant forsaking his own life for eternal life, he would receive eternal life. This in no way implies that personal possessions are sinful, nor a work such as this will get one to heaven. It just means in this case Jesus realized that the man loved his wealth more than Jesus and that was the barrier that kept him from belief in Jesus and a true relationship with God. Everybody that follows Jesus must not let any barriers stand in the way of following Him even if it means death for remaining faithful to Him in adverse circumstances. In becoming a believer one may have to give up other things in order to follow Jesus. Some examples are a particular vocation, a style of life, a sinful passion, or a relationship. The lesson here is not a call to poverty but to discipleship, which takes many forms. Discipleship, however, is costly. It involves sacrifice. It involves obedience. It involves following the example of Jesus. If one is not totally surrendered to Jesus and looking forward to being in His presence above all earthly goals then the obstacle blocking that must be removed in order to receive a clear sight of our eternal reward. God must be our number one focus and interest in this life.

Mark 10:22

²² And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions (KJV).

The young man could not part with this aspect of his life that for him provided his security and identity. Wealth brings power, privilege, and prestige. For this man the price of eternal life was too high. He could not turn his whole life over to God. The man came to Jesus to find out what he could do to receive eternal life. Jesus told him what he had to do and he went sadly away unable to remove the one obstacle to his desire for eternal salvation. Many people since the time of this event have been unable to remove an object of affection that was greater than their love for God. It kept them from salvation or the blessings that God had for them.

JESUS TEACHES THAT WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

E-mail info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com Toll Free 877-706-2479