

Morning Sermon August 24, 2014

Luke 18:15-17

“The Dark Rebuke vs the Daylight Smile”

“The opposition between the friendly countenance of the Master, and the contracted brow of the disciples, is indescribably beautiful.”

J.P. Lange

I. Notice the different attitudes –

1. The Mad-it-tude of the disciples, displayed in their attempted “rebuke” of those who wanted their children blessed by Jesus –

¹⁵ Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

REBUKE - ἐπιτιμάω epitimao {ep-ee-tee-mah'-o}

Meaning: ... 4) to tax with fault, rate, chide, rebuke, reprove, censure severely 4a) to admonish or charge sharply

I believe this verse is better translated by the New American Standard version –

^{NAS} Luke 18:15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. (Luke 18:15 NAS)

Two conative imperfect verbs, conative means attempting / striving - yet to be doing such without success -

While the parents were attempting and striving to bring their babies to Jesus ... at the same time the disciples were attempting and striving, by rebuking and chiding to keep the children away!

2. The Glad-it-tude of our Smiling Savior ends this silly tug-of-war –

¹⁶ But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them ...

I believe His greeting, His smile, was like a bright shining SUN coming out from behind a dark cloud to these parents after they had argued with His disciples -

^{NKJ} Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. ² The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:1-2 NKJ)

A. *In this, the parents were right*

B. *In this, the disciples were wrong*

Our Christianity is very serious stuff; Jesus was on the way to the Cross Yet, let it never be so serious that children are outlawed or excluded!

II. Notice different attitudes have different doctrines or thinking behind or underneath them –

and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Jesus has reasons for His attitudes toward children:

REASON 1 –“ for of such is the kingdom of God.”

Notice Jesus says things about God’s Kingdom and children, even babies, that we might not normally THINK –

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:7-9 NKJ)

We might THINK that the Kingdom of God would be attained by maturity, advancement, learning MORE, definitely more than a baby could know!

1. *Who are our candidates for the kingdom? Maybe Nicodemus? We’d think he’d be well on his way at least –See John 3:1-10*

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? (John 3:10 NKJ)

What did Nicodemus LACK? God's Spirit? The New Birth?

2. *Who had God's Spirit? John the Baptist! Even very young -*
¹⁵ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15 NKJ)

⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
⁴² Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" ⁴³ "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" ⁴⁴ "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. (Luke 1:41-44 NKJ)

3. *Who were Jesus' candidates for the kingdom, HE included children -*
NKJ Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, ³ and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. ⁶ "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:1-6 NKJ)

4. *We are wrong to think people are less likely candidates for God's kingdom because YOUNGER or in any way INFERIOR to us*

Nicodemus was saved, and yet the Woman at the Well seems to get into the Kingdom, faster, easier, sooner - compare John 3 & 4

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NKJ)

² Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. (Psalm 8:2 NKJ)

REASON 2 - ¹⁷ "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Luke 18:17 NKJ)

Question: How can a child, infant or babe in the womb become a believer? Answer: Not through his or her own power, maturity, wisdom!

Question: How can a teenager, 20 year old, 40 year old, 60, 80 or 90 or more year old become a believer? Answer: Not through his or her own power, maturity, wisdom!

*"Not what these hands have done
Can save this guilty soul;
Not what this toiling flesh has borne
Can make my spirit whole."
Horatius Bonar*

⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: `Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6 NKJ)

III. Applications:

- 1. This is partly why we baptize infants / more so it sheds light on the error of our Baptist brothers, especially those who call babies: "unbelievers" "goats"*
- 2. This is a big reason not to give up on young people / as an older church we may have more difficulty bringing in youth, but not because God CANNOT reach, change or inspire them*
- 3. This also applies to the elderly, the sinful or anyone whom people may doubt would come - God's Word, His Spirit, His Arm these are not limited ... who would have THOUGHT Saul the persecutor would become Paul, the passionate servant of Christ?*

Arnold A. Brevick