

Mark 10:13-16 – Putting Children In Their Place

Alexander, TSK, Handfuls, GreekLexicon, Geneva, Gill, Family, Robertson, Poole, PNT, Henry, Calvin, JFB, Spurgeon, Broadus Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: If you have a house with little children you understand how easily things get out of place. Toys are everywhere, Cheerios are under the couch, and lots of dishes are in the sink. As parents you know that you have work to do. You have to put everything in its proper place again. The toys have to go back in the toy box. The Cheerios have to go in the trash (if the kids don't see them and eat them first), and the dishes have to be washed and put back in the cabinet. When all is done, life becomes normal again.

But something happened in the church, especially in the last 75 years. Children were taken out of their rightful place and not returned. There was a growing tendency among Christian churches to see children as unsaved non-members of the church instead of seeing them as covenant members (圣约里的成员) and they were put out physically and spiritually from the congregation. This started because the Baptist's (浸信会的) false teaching became popular. Consequently, preaching was not geared toward children and they were put out of worship for fun time, story-time, or cutting paper, instead of listening to the preaching of the Word of God. Sadly, even Reformed churches bought into this idea. So children were put out of their place and have not returned.

Now it is easy to put the dishes away when they are out of their place. You wash and dry them and put them in the cabinet. But it is not as easy when you have to put back children from the place they belong: In the covenant. Baptist's false doctrines have taken deep roots. And when parents and pastors think how hard it is to raise covenant children, it is easy to simply treat children as pagans (异教徒) and leave them out. But let us hear what God teaches on this matter today – hear how he views children.

Our headings are:

The Plan for Children

The Place for Children

The Promise to Children.

Our goals are: That you **see the urgent and important need to bring your children to the worship of God** that they would receive his blessings, and, second, **that you remove obstacles (障碍) from their paths that they might not lose their way but always stay close the Jesus**, their faithful covenant keeper.

The Plan for Children

13 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

1. Who were these people who brought their children to Jesus?

a. People who believed in Jesus brought their children to where he was. If there had not been a deep-rooted conviction (信念) in their minds of their own adoption (收养) by Christ, it would have been unreasonable to present their children. They experienced Christ's touch in their souls and wanted their children to experience it also. **Luke adds the particle "also,"** indicating that the parents had already been with Jesus. He said in **Luke 18:15** Then **they also** brought infants to Him... This is still common practice around the world. In Bangalore and Chennai I had people come up to me and ask if I would pray for their baby...or their mother and father...after the worship services. They wanted others to receive the blessings they received.

b. How old were these children?

The word "children" here means "infants." (婴儿) This is what Luke said. These infants could not articulate 说出 the elements of the faith nor could they exercise faith.

2. What was this touching for...why did they want Jesus to touch their children?

Touching and blessing children was common practice among the patriarchs (族长), prophets (先知) and priests (祭司). It was intended to confer blessing on the children. Jacob did a similar thing to his grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 48:14 Then Israel **stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head**, who was the younger, and **his left hand on Manasseh's head**, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

The rabbis (拉比, 犹太教师) did the same thing. They would pray that 'he might grow up famous in the law, faithful in marriage, and abundant in good works.' Again, it was and is common practice for ministers to reach forward toward the congregation with outstretched arms to bless the people of God. There is symbolic (象征性的) touching of God's people on the head. And when an elder or minister is ordained (授予圣职) to ministry, all other elders and ministers place their hands on the head of the one being ordained as a conferring of blessings of the one being installed in the new office.

3. But the disciples drove the children from their place away from coming to Jesus.

The disciples did not chase the children away because they hated them. So why then did they do it?

a. The disciples did not want Jesus to be disturbed from what they thought were Jesus' important duties. **The disciples did not want the adult listeners to be disturbed** from listening to Jesus because they knew how important it was for them to hear the Good News. The children were a bother. The disciples viewed children the way Baptists do...and the way some Reformed churches are starting to view children: They are in the way!

b. The disciples thought children were too simple-minded to understand what Jesus was saying.

4. Lessons:

a. Parents know their children need a touch from God because of their sins so parents do not wait for their children to "make up their own minds." They bring their children to God! This is why children should be present when the benediction (祝福) is given with the raised hands of the minister. There are many who foolishly take their children out of worship to play games and read Bible stories instead of being close to Jesus' Word and Sacrament (圣礼) . The truth is, there is a mystical union when God's people worship. **So keep children in their place.** Let them have a connection with the source of their blessing. You cannot do better for our children than to commit them to the Jesus – to his care and service.

b. Even in your home you can bring your children to Christ by your teaching them of Christ, by your praying for them through Christ, and by setting an example of Christ. Pray like Monica for your profligate (浪荡的) child. He may become an Augustine. Pity children whose parents don't pray for them.

c. Matthew Henry: "Parents are trustees of their children's wills, [they]are empowered by God to transact for their benefit; and therefore Christ accepts their [parents'] dedication (奉献) of them as their act and deed...

d. Children will remember things, even though they don't immediately understand it. They will recall it at the right time.

The Place for Children

14 But when Jesus saw it, **He was greatly displeased** and said to them, "**Let the little children come to Me**, and do not forbid them; for of **such is the kingdom of God**."

1. Jesus became greatly displeased with the action of his disciples, a rare event.

The word "displeased" is a euphemism (委婉说法) . It literally means "having great pain of mind or body." The disciples were not intentionally being mean, the disciples simply had not learned everything yet; they still needed a teacher.

2. Jesus therefore rebuked the disciples for this error, for though they goal was noble, their means of reaching that goal was not.

This was a double rebuke: "Let them come," and "don't stop them." Nehemiah, Ezra, Numbers, Leviticus, Exodus – record entire families gathered for worship. Consider one example:

Nehemiah 8:1 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. **2** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women **and all who could hear with understanding...**

3. Jesus then demanded that the children be brought near to him.

4. Lessons:

a. Remember that baptism (洗礼) is a pledge (许诺, 担保) from God and figure of the forgiveness of sins, and adoption by God. Baptism, which is God's touch of the infant, therefore ought not to be denied to infants, whom God adopts and washes with the blood of his Son. **Calvin: "Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age,** till that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees, and becomes fully manifest at the proper time." So children can be saved at any time.

b. Even more convincing (有说服力的) is this: When Christ prays, God answers. He must answer. He always gives what Christ asks. Bring your children to Christ. He will pray for them. Being with Christ is the place for every covenant child.

The Promise for Children

15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God **as a little child** will by no means enter it." 16 And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

1. First, Jesus commands his disciples to learn from children and be like children.

...be docile (温顺的) at they, be simple as they, be free of avarice (贪婪) , and ambition. ...submit to the guidance and government of Christ with the humble spirit of a little child.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that **I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

2. Second, Christ is promising the kingdom to covenant children as well.

He is not simply saying to imitate the simplicity (简单) of the child, but the faith (信心) of that child also. The children of believing parents belong to the kingdom of heaven, and are members of the visible church. So he is commanding church membership of children. Remember, the promise is to you, and to your children, and so children have to be joined to the church.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse (弯曲悖谬的) generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Earlier, God said: I will be a God to you and your seed.

Genesis 26:4 "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

3. And then Christ held those young covenant children in his arms, expressing his love by this gesture.

You can see a great measure of tenderness in Christ's actions here – the God of all glory held those children in his arms. What joy that must have given their parents!

4. Jesus then blesses them.

He prays for them and he answers their prayers at the same time. And remember, according to John 17, Jesus does not pray useless prayers, and he only prays for those who are his.

John 17:9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.

5. Lessons:

a. How can Christians refuse (How dare they refuse?) to have Christ touch their children in holy baptism? How can Christians say that children are not members of the church, their proper place?

b. You must daily remind your children that they have a Father who paid for a great inheritance 产业 for them – an inheritance which he purchased with the blood of his Son! This is your duty. Doing this will guard your hearts against presumption-that false thinking that God will save your children simply because they are baptized.

Conclusion:

There are many who treat children as unimportant in their relationship to Christ and his kingdom. Baptists regard children as outside of the kingdom because they "can't speak for themselves." But God in his goodness is concerned not only for the parents, but their covenant children as well. So God brings them to himself, takes them in his arms, and blesses them. Yes, God has someone to speak for his covenant children, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Don't take your covenant promises lightly. Don't keep your children from enjoying the covenant promises of baptism. Don't wait to do that. There are parents who will have to give an answer to God for keeping their children away from Jesus. And you can begin to place those children before the Lord and in his arms before they are born! You can teach them. You can pray for them. You can discipline them.

2. If you fulfill your covenant duties, your children will "will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this." Psalm 22:30-31. In other words, they will continue to worship God.

3. Remember, you belong to Christ and you owe him. You became his through his work on the cross! And he continues to keep you today. Continue to work for his glory.

Finally, how do you view your children if you are not a Christian? Can't wait to pass on your wealth to them? That is fine. But is there something more? You need to pass on spiritual truths...truths that would make them rich in their souls and protect them forever. But you can only pass on truth which is a part of your life, truth which you

experience – the truth about who you are, the truth about who God is, the truth about what Jesus has done, and the truth about how you can have your sins removed and be given new life. Do you want that truth today so you can pass it on to your children? Then ask God.