

100624 Sermon "Receive the Kingdom of God as a Little Child" Mark 10:13-16

In today's scripture, we witness a moment where Jesus draws our attention to the faith of children and what that faith means for all of us. With good intentions but a lack of understanding, the disciples tried to keep children from getting near Jesus. After all, children were considered to hold the lowest status in society in the ancient world. But Jesus was indignant. He made it clear that children are not only welcome but that we must all have the humility and trust of a child to truly enter the kingdom of God.

Here "kingdom" is translated from a Greek word "βασιλεια" which means "dominion or reign". The kingdom of God mentioned here is not a vague place in heaven where we go after death, but rather a place where God rules, where God's Word becomes flesh. If your daily life is ruled by God's Word, then you have already begun to experience the kingdom of God in this world. Because you live in the presence of God. Of course, since we are only humans living in a sinful world with weak flesh, that experience is limited.

In 1 Corinthians 13:12 the apostle Paul said, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, (Two thousand years ago, in Paul's time, mirrors were completely different from today's mirrors. At that time, bronze mirrors were used to barely check the outline of a face. And even those were only available to the rich.) but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known." So, someone said this about the kingdom of God: 'While we Christians live in this world, heaven must be within us, and when we die, we must enter heaven.'

The disciples' rebuke of those bringing children to Jesus reveals something important about human nature. It's easy for us to underestimate children, to see them as not yet capable of true faith or spiritual understanding. But Jesus

challenges this assumption. He embraces children, blesses them, and declares that they are models of the kind of faith God wants.

Of course, there were not only children who listened well and behaved well, then or now. But Jesus welcomed all the children to Himself. This shows us that every child has the potential for a deep relationship with God. Our role as adults is to nurture that possibility, to see the image of God in each child, and to believe that through their relationship with Christ, they can be transformed.

Children have a remarkable ability to trust, to believe, and to love with pure hearts. They do not complicate their faith with pride, self-sufficiency, or doubt. They simply trust in those who care for them. Jesus saw this quality in them and invited them into His presence, saying, "for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

This should challenge us as the church to take seriously the spiritual life of children. They are not just future Christians; they are present Christians, full of faith and loved by God. We must nurture their relationship with Christ and recognize that they have much to teach us about simplicity, trust, and love.

Our church's Sunday school and youth group have grown with God's blessing. 10 am and 1 pm Sunday school children now number over 20. And the youth group has grown to 14. Even if they are not your children or grandchildren, they are blessings that God has given to our faith community. Pastors come and go, but you all have a mission to acknowledge them as your church family, pray for them, and love them.

Secondly, just as Jesus calls us to welcome children, He also calls us to become like children ourselves. He says, "Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." This is a call to humility

and trust. Whether you are in your 70s, 80s, or 90s, remember that you are still God's beloved child. Remember who you are. You're a beloved child of God.

As adults, we often feel the weight of responsibility for our lives. We make plans, work hard, and often think that everything rests on our shoulders. We strive to control our future, to solve every problem, and to handle life on our own. But Jesus reminds us that in God's kingdom, we are not meant to bear the burden of independence all the time. We are children of God, dependent on God for every need in prayers.

This truth brings a deep freedom. When you recognize that you are God's child, you no longer have to live in the anxiety of self-sufficiency. Just as a child runs to their parent in times of need, you are invited to run to God, knowing that God will provide, protect, and guide us. We can cast our worries on Him because God cares for us.

The hymn "Spirit Song" speaks to this reality when it says, "Oh, let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love; Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul. Oh, let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit, like a dove, Will descend upon your life and make you whole." This is the childlike posture we are called to—a nearness to Christ, trusting in His love, and resting in His provision.

So, how can you apply these truths in your daily life? Whether you are a parent, a grandparent, or simply part of a church community, ask yourself how you are nurturing the faith of the children around you. Are you encouraging them to know Jesus personally? Are you learning from their simple trust in God? Let's commit to giving them space to express their faith, helping them feel seen and valued by God.

Also, you need to ask yourself, in your own relationship with God, where are you holding on to control? Where do you feel the weight of trying to do life on your own? Jesus is inviting you to come to Him, not with pride or independence, but as a child—dependent, trusting, and open to His care. Release your worries to Him and embrace the truth that you are His beloved child.

Jesus' words in Mark 10:13-16 call us to a new way of seeing children and a new way of seeing ourselves. We are to recognize the deep faith that children could possess, and we are to rediscover that childlike faith in our own hearts. As children of God, we can stop striving in our own strength and trust that our Heavenly Father will care for us, guide us, and bless us.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, just as we are called to have hope in the transformation of children, we are invited to have hope in our own transformation. Through our relationship with Christ, we can be renewed, healed, and changed. Our Heavenly Father expects us to come to Him as we are, trusting in His grace to work within us. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.