

September 8, 2024 AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Luke 18:15-17 – Receive the Kingdom of God Like a Child

- A. Do you remember what it was like when you heard the gospel as a very young child?
- B. Jesus was received by the masses of ordinary Jewish people yet not by the religious elite.

You are to receive the kingdom of God like a Child.	I. PERMIT CHILDREN TO COME TO CHRIST II. RECEIVE THE KINGDOM WITH CHILDLIKE HUMILITY
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I. **PERMIT CHILDREN TO COME TO CHRIST** → **vv15-16**

- A. Many of the Jewish people had already witnessed the magnificent ministry of Jesus and wanted their children to have a part in it.
 - 1. Here in **v15** Luke said that they were “**bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them**” so that Jesus could lay his hands upon them and bless them.
 - a. **Mat 19:13** and **Mark 10:13** both use a Greek word that means “small or young children.”
 - b. **Luke 18:15** uses the Greek word for “infants.”
 - c. It is likely that the three gospel writers were recording the same event.
 - 1) If that is the case, it is logical to conclude that there was a mixture of young children and infants.
 - 2) Some rightly believe that very young children, if attentive and sitting still, can receive teaching and understand a prayer given by Jesus.
 - 3) It is questionable how much an infant can understand. Especially in the case of Luke’s account here, this is why some of the disciples were upset because they thought these parents were wasting Jesus Christ’s valuable time and theirs.
 - 2. The upset of the disciples is based upon the wrong assumption that a blessing must be understood by the one receiving the blessing.
 - a. Husbands and fathers, God can bless your wives and your children when you pray for their blessing even while they are unaware of it.
 - b. You can pray for God’s blessing on your children while they are still yet in the womb.
 - c. When you pray for a blessing in the name of Christ, it is most important that God hears and gives His blessing.
- B. Another major problem among the disciples was their overall view of children and babies as less important than adults.
 - 1. Despite Christian influence upon the western culture, some in Europe have culturally treated children as second-class human beings. They used a popular saying for centuries: “Children should be seen and not heard.” This is similar to another old saying: “Children should not speak unless first spoken to.”
 - a. Both sayings are distorted ways that some have tried to teach that children are to submit to parents and other adult authorities.
 - b. It is right that children should not talk back and not interrupt adult conversations; however, adults should not interrupt other adult conversations in a rude fashion either.
 - 2. We must be careful to not to go the way of these disciples and others in history who treat children and infants as less than important.
- C. Do everything you can to make children welcome in the church. Look again at **v16**.
 - 1. The OPC cites this verse of Scripture as one of many reasons why we baptize our infants.
 - 2. Children are the future of the church. Let us treat them with importance as such.

II. RECEIVE THE KINGDOM WITH CHILDLIKE HUMILITY → **v17**

A. We can learn to have a trusting faith as children do.

1. This is especially the case when we read the very word of God or straightforward preaching that teaches the truths of Scripture.
2. How do we receive the Word of King with a childlike trust yet still have a Berean spirit like what was commended in **Acts 17:11**?
 - a. The Bereans were “**more noble-minded... [because] they received the word with great eagerness [a childlike trust, yet they were also] examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.**”
 - b. An eager, childlike trust in Scripture is willing to cling to God’s Word as opposed to the student who goes off to a secular college and allows an atheist professor to persuade him or her to question the truth of God’s Word.
 - c. It is a simple, trusting faith that says in accordance with **Rom 3:4**, “**Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.**”

B. While adults can be set in their ways, children can have a humble willingness to be taught.

1. Adults in their pride can question God’s Word and put “God in the dock” as C.S. Lewis put it. In other words, they endeavor to put God, the King of the universe, on trial!
2. This lack of humility was largely why most of the scribes, chief priests, and Pharisees rejected Jesus during His earthly ministry. Jesus said in **Mat 11:25-26**, “**I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.**”

C. To receive the kingdom of God as a little child— especially as an infant— involves admission that we are weak, helpless, and unable to save ourselves. We need be humble enough to cry out to God for His grace and mercy through the saving work of Christ and His cross.

1. Matthew Henry wrote what it means to receive the kingdom of God as a little child, “receive the benefits of it with humility and thankfulness, not pretending to merit them as the Pharisee did, but gladly owning himself indebted to free grace for them, as the publican did.”¹
2. Dr. William Hendrickson wrote, “The only possible way to enter the kingdom is by receiving it readily and trustfully as a child accepts a gift. A child is not too proud to accept a gift!”²
 - a. Think about the people who say they do not need salvation in Christ because they are a “good person.” Largely that sort of argument comes from adults.
 - b. None of us are sinless in God’s sight. We all desperately need forgiveness in and through Jesus Christ. → **Rom 3:19-26**

Review, further application, and conclusion:

¹ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1891).

² Hendrickson, Wm. New Testament Commentary: Luke, p. 643