

Bring Your Children To Jesus  
Luke 18:15-17

Too often, as we read these precious words of scripture, we simply receive them as being a collection of good principles for life circumstances and as instructions about how we are to respond to them.

They are that yes, but they are so much, much more. Above all else, these words speak about the heart of God and they reveal His heart to us.

Here, Jesus had been instructing His disciples and others who were listening about the ways of "true righteousness" and about how they could obtain it. But He wasn't finished with that instruction. That's because, our concerns about such things of God, such things as His Righteousness must never simply be for us personally.

As we learn about the things of God, they need to be immediately allowed to flow not only to us, but on through us to others, especially to our children and to our other family members. We are to ever and always be conduits of His mercy and grace, allowing His blessed holiness and righteousness to flow freely through us out into the lives of our loved ones.

And so it was in this circumstance taking place here on this day with the Lord Jesus. And here, we find that even and especially His beloved disciples were in need of the simplest of instructions regarding the pathway that this blessed Christianity would need to be brought into being.

Here, these little children that were being brought to the Lord Jesus were not only in need of salvation for themselves, for their own souls, these little children would also be the carriers, the vital and necessary conduits for the gospel to be passed along to the next generations to come, even to you and to me in our generation.

Listen to these brief, but so very important words of the Lord Jesus given here in Luke chapter 18, beginning in verse 15.

<sup>15</sup> Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does

not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."  
(Luke 18:15-17)

Each morning as I arise early to begin my study of the blessed words of these scriptures, it is part of my daily custom to pause and to quietly pour out a fervent prayer from my heart to God the Father for each of my own dearly beloved children, pleading with God the Father to draw my beloved ones up close to Him, earnestly begging Him to use any means necessary to bring them into a loving relationship with Him.

And one of the reasons that my morning prayers are so important and so fervent each day is that I did not do what I should have done many years ago, when I should have done as these parents here in this parable were doing. I did not insistently and persistently bring my children to Jesus and place them on His knee to receive His blessed touch.

In my first years of fatherhood, I did not know Christ as my Savior. And because of that, I didn't understand the need for such things. And sadly, even after I did come to know Christ as my Savior, it was still many years of slow growth in spiritual matters before I realized the vital importance of such things as bringing my loved ones to Him. And oh, I am so regretful of those errant behaviors.

And then as I read these words here in verse 15,

<sup>15</sup> Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them (Luke 18:15)

I now understand the hearts of these dear parents. These parents are like me now, wanting not only the very best for their children, but also wanting something far more, wanting something eternal, wanting blessed eternal life for their beloved children, and wanting that eternal life to begin now, as soon as possible.

Folks, that is the true heart of a loving father, a loving mother, to want God's eternal best for their beloved children. And it is no real mystery that we would desire such things. That's because, we really have been created in the image of God, and He has placed eternity within our hearts.

God, our Loving Father, our parent, wants the very best for us, so much so that He sent His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus, to suffer and to die on the cross for our sins so that we can have His very best, blessed eternal life.

So then, yes, I do now personally identify with these dear parents who crowded in closely to Jesus to beg Him to just touch their beloved children, because I now do that very thing each and every morning of my life.

Consider this circumstance for a moment, many of these parents had probably been present when Jesus would lay His hands on other people. And they had witnessed miraculous changes taking place, the sick were healed, the lame walked, even the dead had come back to life.

His hands were very, very special hands, loving and powerful beyond measure, able through only a simple touch to do things that no other hands on earth were able to do. Who would not want their child to be touched by the Lord Jesus?

But Jesus' disciples were not yet able to comprehend the special nature of this One that they followed after, His special plans, His special purposes. And because they did not understand, they mistakenly sought to prevent these dear parents from bringing their children up close to Jesus.

Reading these words and seeing Jesus' response, we can easily see the error in the disciples' handling of this circumstance. But does not the same sort of misguided handling take place often in today's church and family life. Well-meaning men and women, and especially church leaders, who earnestly desire the very best for their church congregations will do some of these very same things.

Sometimes, it might be a subtle hint by one of the church members that a family's small child is a distraction in the pew and might ought instead to be in the nursery. Or perhaps a fun youth-group program is substituted for a more meaningful kind of youth worship experience.

Sadly, it seems to be the mindset and desire of many of the adults to simply "occupy the time" of the children so that the parents can worship. And folks, that should never be! That should never ever be!

Our children need to be “touched” by the Savior at every opportunity. And yes, “fun youth-group programs” and “true worship” can sometimes be one in the same, but they should never be a substitute.

. . . . But notice here also within these words of our passage, the strong message that the blessings that are to flow to our children most appropriately begins with us, and through us, their parents. That is the special order that God has given to us. And He truly does pass along His blessings best within that manner and that flow of grace.

And that was the way it was intended to be from the beginning. From Adam and Eve on forward, mothers and fathers were intended to bring their children to God, teaching them to love Him and to keep His commandments.

Listen again to these familiar words given to us in Deuteronomy chapter 6.

<sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup>"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. (and listen!)

<sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)

Folks, please understand that it was the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who first gave these words to Moses about parenting and about children.

And here, He gave a clear order of things. In these words, God does not first speak about temporal plans for our children, how to educate and train them, and how to equip them to make a good living. He begins and ends with spiritual plans. Here first for the parents themselves to know and to be fully equipped with the truths of God, and then for them to teach those truths on to their children, perpetuating the nature and the heart and the ways of God on to future generations.

Aren't we so foolish! Many parents and grandparents first begin by putting away money into a college fund for their beloved child. And yes, that is a very good thing and it probably needs to be done. But that is not the first and the

very best and most important thing to do. Christ is the first and very best and the most important thing to do.

And here also, take special note that these children are still infants, unable to come to Christ on their own, unable to make decisions for themselves. Their parents must make those decisions for them.

Often, in this very secular culture that we live within, we hear parents say such things as, "Well, I will just wait until my child is grown and is able to make those kinds of decisions for themselves."

And yes, someday, the children must make such decisions for themselves. Every person must come to Christ on their own. God saves each one of us individually.

But simply to leave such choices to our children, without the loving guidance of the parents, is likened to turning a small child loose to play on a busy street. They are not equipped for the dangers they will face.

No, the order that is prescribed by God is clear. It must begin with us parents. We ourselves must first be equipped by God, with His salvation and with His truths flowing freely within our souls. And then we must, in turn, bring our children to Christ, teaching them the beloved truths of God.

Parents who are themselves blessed in Christ with His precious salvation will earnestly desire to have their children also blessed in him. And with the Spirit of Christ dwelling richly within loving parents, their lifestyles and their teachings will be a daily testimony to their children.

And may I say, the earlier that we bring our children up close so that they can be "touched" by the Lord Jesus the better. Older children, teenagers and adults will often have developed habits and lifestyles along the way that are hard for them to give up.

Note also in these words that Jesus is able to express several truths, all at the same time. Here, speaking about the "Kingdom of God", He said,

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Luke 18:16)

In several places in these gospels, Jesus makes reference to the “Kingdom of God” and each time, He gives us a slightly different description of it. And mysteriously, the “kingdom of God” is all of those descriptions, all at the same time.

Here, Jesus describes the “Kingdom of God” as being an environment where church leaders freely invite children to come to Him for salvation, with parents, both of them, bringing the children, parents, with a childlike faith themselves, bringing their children to the Lord Jesus.

On another occasion, when Jesus was teaching His disciples about who would be greatest in God's kingdom,

<sup>2</sup> . . . calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them <sup>3</sup> and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:2-4)

Whether you be a child or an adult child of God, humility and childlike faith are the prerequisites to entering into and enjoying being a part of the “Kingdom of God”.

Think about these words for a moment. Both in the days of Jesus and in our own days, church leaders make a much bigger set of demands and requirements for being a Christian. We have more “do this” and “do that”, and “don't do this” and “don't do that” than God ever intended.

Yes, there are a lot of “do's and don'ts” that are very legitimate ones, but the doing or not doing of those things needs to take on a different context.

Here, Jesus is saying that a simple childlike faith will both get a person into the “Kingdom of God” and will sustain them there all the days of their lives.

One might ask, “But where then is learning and bible study and even perhaps going to seminary?” Here, Jesus fully implies that in a child's life, they will need to grow and learn and become equipped for daily life. And all such additional learning is simply a natural part of a Christian child's growth and maturity process.

Notice too, Jesus' warning here,

<sup>17</sup> 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)

Again, Jesus is able to say several things all within the same words. Here, we might be focused only on the thought that it is us who enter into a place called the "Kingdom of God". But note that Jesus said,

<sup>17</sup> 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)

Note carefully the word "receive" in this verse. We are not only ourselves to enter into the "Kingdom of God", we are also to "receive" the "Kingdom of God" into ourselves. Those are the same words, but they are also very different.

You will recall that we just studied in Luke chapter 17, the words of Jesus when He said,

<sup>20</sup> . . . "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)

We are not only to enter into and live daily within the "Kingdom of God" here on this earth, we are to invite the "Kingdom of God" to enter within us, into our heart, into our soul and into our spirit. Yes, these things will take place all at the same time. But here, the Lord Jesus is telling us that we must be active participants within all that takes place. The kingdom of God will live within us.

And yes, these are strange words, words too mystical for the natural mind to comprehend. But as Jesus fills our hearts and souls with His Holy Spirit, we will be able to know what these words mean, and we will be able to think and to say and to do things that we would not otherwise be able to think and say and do.

Folks, I am fully aware that the words I am saying did not come to my mind naturally. No human mind can comprehend such truths as these. It is only as the "Spirit of Christ", His Kingdom, dwells within us that we are able to think such thoughts as these.

But that is also true for all of the blessed attributes of God that He puts into each of us, attributes like faith, hope and love. I cannot love my wife and my children in the way that I should love them. It is only as the "Spirit of Christ", His Kingdom, dwells within me that I am truly able to love them.

And the power and the plans and the purposes of the "Kingdom of God" in us goes on and on, enabling and equipping and blessing each of us who have done as Jesus describes here.

<sup>17</sup> 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)

We must receive the "Kingdom of God" into our souls. When we do that, things change within us. We change.

And it is humility, and it is childlike faith that makes all of the difference in a person's life. We must ourselves enter into God's Kingdom and we must receive His kingdom to enter into us.

And then, we are to reach out to our children and we are to bring them to Jesus, to beseech Him, to beg Him to lay His hand upon them, to touch them with His sweet loving, and powerful and healing touch.

And as He lays His hand on our child, our teenager, our adult child, they will be immediately changed, truly changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. And then their lives will be forever different, blessed for all eternity.

May I close with these simple words again! Jesus said,

<sup>16</sup> . . . "Let the little children (your children) come to Me, (bring them to me yourself) and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Luke 18:16)

Pray with me.