

**March 10, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church**  
**Message Series: The Gospel of Mark**  
**Week 37: “Let the Children Come to Me”**  
**Text: Mark 10:13-16**

We’re unpacking and understanding the Book of Mark. We’ve stepped away from this Book for a few months and we come back to it today. We’ve moved just past the halfway point where everything led up to the moment where the disciples answer this all-important question of “who is Jesus?” The second half of Mark that really begins in chapter 8 verse 31 which is all about answering the question “what did Jesus come to do?”, and a third question comes out of that, which is, “what does Jesus expect of you?”

Reminder: Mark’s audience is Romans believers, and as theologian Danny Akin says, “he is telling them that Jesus is the Messiah King and suffering servant who actively ministers on our behalf and gives his life as a ransom for many.” That point is essential to remember and use as a lens through which we read and study this book. Mark, the writer of this book, is saying that if Jesus is the servant King who came “not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many”, then do we think He will call us to anything less.

We’re dealing with the second of three texts that involve Jesus teaching through interactions that He has about how self-sacrifice, dying to self, is really the key to enjoying Him and loving people.

As a people, we are very good at elevating or valuing certain parts of our beliefs, or the Scriptures and neglecting others. We often pick and choose what spiritual priorities we will have and what things are just “not how we’re wired”. It typically plays out by us valuing the things that come easier to us and excusing ourselves from the things that are more difficult. Now, I’m not talking about that we all have certain things we are passionate about and enjoy and serving or operating in those areas, but rather areas of truth that we ignore while at the same time thinking that we’re growing steadily in Christ. This could be like thinking we’re doing well because we are serving in an area of ministry, but not seeing how our being a gossip is killing our witness. Or to love the idea of reaching international populations across the world through missions while hating international populations across the street and refusing to be a missionary. We have to make sure our lives are not out of balance in a way that deceives us into thinking we are Christ-like while at the same time having anti-Christ feelings or desires. These hypocrisies are easy to spot in others, but often sit in our blind spots. It took Jesus’ disciples a while to understand this concept, and we’re going to look at a passage that shows us just that.

Let’s READ our TEXT

The disciples think they think they are serving Jesus, but, in reality, they are the objects of His anger. As we walk through these four verses, there are some things we can learn about the heart of Jesus and nature of His Kingdom, and hopefully understand that we are prone to these same kinds of sinful tendencies if we are not very careful.

## **Truth has to Change Our Hearts to See...**

### ✓ **Serving Jesus means loving like Jesus**

- Grow in loving & serving Jesus
- By loving & serving those He loves

Over and over we see Jesus serving, touching, healing, feeding, and just loving those that the culture and the religious people do not, yet somehow we end up thinking we get to decide who we will serve and whom we will not. Jesus had just taken the opportunity not long ago to teach His disciples about being a servant of all and He even used a child in their midst to illustrate His point. He said “whoever receives one such child in my name receives me...”. He didn’t say this because children are cute and innocent and wonderful. He said this because, in that day, children were not something special, good, or wonderful. They were given no worth, value, or dignity in the eyes of people, but Jesus said they matter and how you deal with them matters, and is a direct reflection of the condition of your heart. We do not get to decide who is worthy of our service. This doesn’t mean we have to serve everyone. We don’t have the time or resources to serve everyone, but we cannot look at some people as unworthy of our time or resources. Again, the disciples think they are serving Jesus, that they are protecting His interests and time. Rather than a “thank you” they get a worse rebuke than the one they are giving to the children and their parents. Jesus is angered by their actions. Jesus is never going to commend us for keeping people from coming to Him! Never! But we don’t see how we do this. We do this with anti-Christ words, actions, and social media posts. They’re not anti-Christ in that they deny Jesus’ existence, but they do deny that His love has affected us as deep levels. This doesn’t mean we don’t declare truth or say that something is sinful, but it would serve us well to ask the question “does this word, action, or post help people come closer to Jesus?” Serving Jesus will always mean loving like Jesus

## ✓ **The Kingdom of God is Received Not Earned**

- The Kingdom goes to the helpless
- The Kingdom goes to the dependent

This sinful imbalance in our lives – where we find confidence in our faith while at the same time walk in some unholy sin that hinders others from coming to Jesus – often comes from a failure to understand that we are recipients of God’s extravagant grace right now in this moment. You didn’t just receive grace, undeserved favor, when you trusted Christ for the first time, but you are receiving that grace right now. Somewhere along the way we begin to think that because of our service, knowledge, or position that we have earned favor with God and now we get to decide who deserves our favor. What is the Kingdom of God? It’s the rule and reign of God. It’s life in Christ – eternal life that begins when we trust Jesus and never ends, and our lives are now lived under the rule and reign of a new King. So here we see Jesus is angered over the disciples rebuke of the children and rebukes them and says “bring them here, you need to learn from them”. This story is recorded in Matthew and Luke and well and from there, we understand that these are most likely infants and small children; probably all younger than 4 or 5 yrs old. Jesus isn’t saying the Kingdom of God belongs to them because they are innocent or pure, because they’re not. They don’t realize their sin yet, but they are sinners in need of a Savior. What these little children are is helpless on their own. They are dependent upon someone else for virtually everything. If we think that the God loves you or likes you more based on what you’ve done for Him, then you don’t understand the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is received by those who understand if God doesn’t do this, then I’m going to die. In Matthew 5:3 and 10 Jesus says the Kingdom of God belongs to the poor in spirit and those persecuted for His names’ sake. Those who are poor in spirit and those who experience persecution know they are in deep need and they serve those who often respond with hatred, violence, and even by killing them. Matthew 6:33 says we are to seek the Kingdom of God above and beyond anything else. So there is a reality that we receive it and we never take it for granted.

Bottom line:

So here’s the picture... Jesus is angry with His disciples because they are hindering those they feel are unworthy from coming near to Jesus. He corrects their thinking and welcomes the children. He not only receives them, but He takes them in His arms and blesses them by laying His hands on them. To Jesus they didn’t just have potential and maybe they’ll matter one day, they mattered now as they are. We have to give thought to the places we are prone to be out of balance. Where we think we are serving Jesus, but we’re not loving like Jesus. We might think our right political views make us justified in hating those across the aisle. Or we may do or say things that hinder people from coming close to Jesus. The biggest thing that can help change all of that is receiving the truth that you are still receiving God’s grace in just as miraculous a way as you ever have or ever will. Be encouraged that Jesus didn’t get frustrated with His disciples and go find new ones. He wasn’t done with them yet. He didn’t leave them in their misguided sinfulness. He isn’t done with you yet. He isn’t giving up on you, but beware of ways you are prone to hinder others from coming to Jesus. Receive this grace of the truth of God’s Word.

### **Thinking it Through...**

- ✓ **Where do you tend to find a source of pride in your faith?**
- ✓ **What are you doing or saying that may hinder others from coming to Jesus?**
- ✓ **Will you stop to think about the truth that you are receiving just as much grace from God right now as you ever have or will?**

## Storying Mark 10:13-16

Spend a little time coming up with your own Observation and Interpretation questions. Look back at past message notes for help.

### Questions

- **Observation: What does it say?**

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- **Interpretation: What does it mean?**

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- **Application: How do I respond?**

**Use the “Thinking it Through” questions as needed**

- Why was Jesus “indignant” when He saw His disciples rebuking parents from bringing their children to Jesus? What are things we do today that hinder people from coming to Jesus?
- What are other attributes of children (especially during this time) that needed to possess the Kingdom of God?
- Why is the Kingdom of God received? How do you receive the Kingdom of God?
- What should our view of children be? How are children in our day neglected or hindered from coming to Jesus?