



World Christian Fellowship

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Jesus and Infant Baptism!

Matthew 19:13-15

Matthew 19:13-15, *Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." ¹⁵ And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*

A significant passage to have been given full involvement by all the synoptic writers.

It appeared to the disciples that the whole idea of bringing little children to Jesus was an intrusion of a trivial nature.

Parents in this scene wanted Jesus to touch their children, to bless their children, to pray for their children.

They are not the only parents who wanted to bring their little ones to Jesus we as a parent was our desire as well.

There are parents throughout all the countries of the world who know the Lord, who have the same longing as these parents, in a spiritual sense, to bring their children to Jesus.

As a parent, I have always lived with a tremendous, almost overwhelming, desire to bring my children to Jesus.

I want nothing in life more than that.

Ephesians 6:4, *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

When you have the confidence that you have brought your child to Jesus.

- If they die, you know where they are!
- If they live, you know to whom they belong!

V 13, *Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.*

It begins with the word **then**.

The word then links things up with the prior passage.

We don't know how long was the time gap between these two things.

According to Mark 10, they were inside the home and the Lord was talking to the disciples about marriage.

Mark 10:10, *In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter.*

Then it would have been very easy for the conversation to have turned to talk about children.

Maybe He was talking about family. Out of the crowd that had gathered, no doubt accompanying the disciples now, there came some parents, and they brought their children to Jesus.

V 13, *Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.*

Mark and Luke use the imperfect tense verb, they were bringing. They were in the process of bringing.

There was a flow of people bringing their little children to Jesus, and while that flow was going on, the disciples were watching. They felt it to be an intrusion.

They felt it to be a violation of the important things.

The word them at the end of verse 13, them refers to the ones bringing the babies, no doubt their own parents, and the them

is in the masculine form, indicating that it was not just mothers. It probably fathers.

They were bringing their children.

Matthew 18:2, *Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,*

Our Lord had gathered into His lap a little one and used that little one as an illustration of spiritual truth.

No doubt the parents saw the love in His heart, the tenderness and gentleness of His personality and His character.

When they knew Jesus was the unique prophet of God when He spoke and He did in His healing ministry and His teaching ministry, that they would have longed to bring their children.

In the Jewish tradition it was customary to bring their children to any great teacher of the law, that he might bless them and pray for them. They did this regularly according to the Talmud.

For example, a father would bring his child in infancy to the synagogue. He would pray for his own child.

Then he would hand that child to an elder.

The elder would pray for the child.

Then hand it to the next elder.

The little children would go along the line of elders, each one praying for the child.

Because they believed that these men who specially served and represented God's kingdom, who specially taught God's Word. They had a proximity to the heart and soul of God, had a prayer life that had more faith, power than normal people.

They longed to have their children prayed for by such.

Today we have three parents who desire to bring their babies to be dedicated to Christ, to be prayed for by their pastors and elders.

A very special thing in the heart of a parent.

The term ***Brephos***, means a suckling, a nursing baby, an infant.

They were bringing in their arms their infants, and we know they must have been infants by our Lord's response.

Mark 10:16, *And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.*

They were bringing babies to Jesus.

They wanted Him to pray for them, with His unique divine power, with His unique proximity to God.

They wanted His prayers on behalf of their little ones.

What power of holiness must these parents have believed to be in His touch of prayer?

What life to be in and to come from Him?

What gentleness and tenderness must His love have been, when they dared so to bring these little ones to Him?"

Sometimes Jesus was fearful.

Sometimes He was very threatening.

But sometimes He was very tender, and even children found comfort in His arms.

These are babies, and they are brought to Jesus.

Jesus was not shallowly sentimental about children.

He knew they were sinners.

He knew they were born of the flesh, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

John 3:6, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Psalm 51:5, *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*

So, there was no shallow sentimentalism about children.

There was no idea that children are righteous, or holy, or pure, or innocent, or undefiled.

Matthew 11:16-17, *“But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,¹⁷ and saying: ‘We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.’*

The children are peevish, stubborn, kind of bratty little kids, that won't get on with it and be good sports. So, the Lord uses them as an illustration of the peevish, stubborn attitudes of Israel.

No matter what the tune is, no matter what the game is, they won't play either.

Our Lord is not shallowly sentimental about children.

Jesus doesn't make them into some kind of perfection that isn't true of them, but He does acknowledge that they have a special place in His heart.

V 13, *“The disciples rebuked them.”*

The substantive form of this word has been used for the term punishment.

The disciples were really going after them, threatening them. Interrupting the Lord by bringing up these babies.

Very disturbing when we are trying to teach.

V 14, *But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Mark 10:14, *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."*

Jesus uses the word indignant (**KJV**)

Only two- or three-times Jesus really got mad at them. Frustrated and disappointed a lot, but angry just a few times. Jesus was very angry with them for trying to stop these parents from bringing their children, and it is expressed as to why He was angry with them, if you just think about the scene.

Jesus was angry with them for these reasons:

i) Jesus loved babies.

He loved them.

He knew they were a creation of God, a creation of His.

He felt a tender affection for them.

He felt sympathy for them, for the world in which they were born.

ii) Jesus also loved adults.

He knew full well that if you say no to people's children then you are going to have a tough time getting their attention.

Politicians learned that long ago. He knew the first and foremost way to a parent's heart was through their baby, and He wanted to demonstrate the genuineness of His tender love and care for the little ones.

iii) No one is outside the care.

No one is outside the concern of God, not a baby.
No one ever coming to Jesus Christ intrudes on Him.

iv) They were used for illustration.

Children provided Him a tremendous picture of tremendous illustration.

An analogy for salvation.

He took advantage of it every time He could.

v) Don't decide who can and who can't enter.

You don't ever say who can or cannot come to Christ.

That's not within your prerogative.

If you follow the life of Christ, you will find that He refused some people they brought. He sought some people they rejected. A lesson of who's in charge.

Jesus was eliminating their misunderstanding, their lack of concern for little ones.

V 14, *But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Jesus takes care of the present and the future. He doesn't rebuke the parents at all, so it indicates to me that their motive was pure.

- They weren't coming for some magical rite.
- They weren't coming for some magical ceremony.
- They weren't coming to get baptized.
- They came because their hearts were right.

They wanted this man of God to pray over their children, that their children might grow up to be what the Talmud said: "Famous in the law, faithful in their marriage, and known by their good works."

Jesus says, "*For now, you permit them to come, and for future, don't ever forbid them to come.*"

God has used in His church throughout the years. God has seemed to give the heart of His people a heart for children. We have that heart here.

All the things that we do with children are done because we believe that Jesus wants the little children to come to Him. When they come to Him, they come so readily, and they come so eagerly.

The coming of babies to Jesus, the coming of children to Jesus, very important.

“For of such is the Kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus is not saying these children are in the Kingdom of heaven, these children belong to the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus goes beyond those little children to embrace all in that category. These are the kind who have a place in the Kingdom.

There is no baptism here of babies.

There is no indication of the faith of the parents.

There is no parental covenant here.

“Babies such as these” prior to the time when they can understand and respond to Christ and exercise their own faith, these little ones belong to the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of heaven is the sphere of God's rule in Christ through grace, and He says these have a place.

1 Corinthians 13:11, *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Paul told us there are two different times in life. There's a time when you can't understand and you can't speak, and then there's a time when you do understand.

When you are in the time when you don't understand, like a little baby, that's the time God has placed you in special care, under His sovereign rule as the King.

It says nothing about the faith of their parents, nothing about any rite or ritual or baptism, nothing about them being elect or non-elect.

for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I believe with all my heart that if a baby dies, that baby goes into the presence of Jesus Christ, because they are uniquely in the care of the King.

Now, I don't know how God dispenses that grace to them, other than by a sovereign act on His own part.

I do know that it is dispensable to them, by virtue of the death of Jesus Christ for their sin. It is applied to them by the sovereignty of God in their behalf, because they cannot choose on their own.

Now, just to be theological for a moment, I don't think that means necessarily that all little babies are saved. I just think they are under special protection, and if they die, at that moment, they are redeemed.

If they were all saved, then when they got to be old enough, they would lose their salvation.

They are all under special protection, and if they die, the Lord gathers them to Himself. It's a wonderful confidence.

2 Samuel 12:22-23, *And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?'"²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."*

David knew that he was talking about death, but I also think he was talking about the fact that in death he would see again that son he loved. In David's heart, he had the confidence that he would see God, and so that son had to be in God's presence.

Babies are sinners, no question about it. Because they are produced by sinners yet, God has a special place for them. That's a great confidence.

Tremendous responsibility to make sure that little life, given to you under the care of the King, is returned to the King after your stewardship is completed.

V 15, *And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*

Jesus must have smiled on the littlest subjects of His sovereign Lordship as He prayed. But He isn't finished.

Luke 18:17, *Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."*

Every time Jesus got a baby in His arms, He gave that little word. Like this who are under the care of the Kingdom, but anybody.

Whoever comes into the Kingdom in adult life, when they come like a little baby. So, the Kingdom is populated by just two kinds of people.

Those who are babies,
Those who come in like babies.

Matthew 18:3, and said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Honesty, the lack of pretention, the lack of hypocrisy, the dependency, the weakness, and the simplicity.

The humility that casts oneself, in utter humility and dependence, on the strong arms of the Lord.

His Kingdom is filled with those who are babies, and those who came as babies who knew in themselves, they had no resource.

We need to be busy bringing children to Christ.

Conclusion:

What about your children?

1. Remember

Remember to be bringing your children to Jesus.

a) God created your child.

God creates children.

Every child is a direct work of His creative hand.

Psalm 139:13-14, *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.*

God made that child.

b) God gave that child to you as a gift.

Psalm 127:3, *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward.*

God made that child, and God gave that child to you as a gift.

Child is to be a blessing.

Psalm 127:4-5, *Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. ⁵Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.*

Children are to be a blessing to you. God made them, God gave them to you, to bless you.

c) God wants them returned to Him for His use.

Ephesians 6:4, *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

Because the task that you have is to give your children back to God.

Your stewardship.

So, remember where they came from, and to where they are to return.

2. Teach.

We are called by God to teach.

Children have limited knowledge, they have limited reasoning power, they have limited discretion, and they need to be taught.

2 Timothy 3:15, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Lois and Eunice, while Timothy's father and grandfather are out earning a living, they are in there, feeding that little life with all the divine truth they can possibly pump in. That's the role of a woman in the godly home, to feed that little life the truth of God.

Then the father comes along, as the Proverbs tell us, and teaches his son the wisdom of God as well.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9, *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You 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. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

All of life becomes a blackboard in which you teach the truth of God. It's unending, unceasing, and constant.

Teach it diligently all the time, sitting down, walking, lying down, rising up, so that it's the flow of life. It's much more.

It's more important that you teach them, in the flow of life, responses that you set up the right convictions and standards for them.

There' i another thing you need to do.

Do you have Bible verses hanging around your house?

Do you have little plaques that remind them of great scriptural truths hanging in their rooms?

Do you have Bibles all around?

Do you read them stories?

Deuteronomy 6:10-13, *““So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He ^[c]swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig,*

vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—¹² then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

When the Lord unloads all the goodies on you, and you have got it all, and you didn't have to work for it, it all came to you graciously by God.

You warn your children that when they get out into the prosperity, and in the world, that they do not forget God.

We got to warn them about the world, watch out for the world. The world will encroach on all the good things you have taught them, and then, little by little, it will eat away at that, so, you watch, and you warn.

3. Model.

We must set the pattern.

You must set an example.

Here was a man like Eli, who was the high priest.

He had the teaching position over Israel. He was the person who represented the people before God. He was God's number one man in the land, but his sons were wretched, vile, terrible, in every sense of life.

They took the wrong portion of meat.

1 Samuel 2:15-16, *Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." ¹⁶ And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force."*

They weren't supposed to take it.

It was to be offered and divided between the priests, the offeror, and God.

They took a portion that wasn't theirs. That was only the beginning.

They wound up having fornication relationships and they were wretched. But Eli went to them and spoke to them.

1 Samuel 2:23-25, *So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. ²⁴ No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord's people transgress. ²⁵ If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them.*

Eli had no influence, and he had no power, because a compromiser can't pass convictions on to anybody.

You will never get your children to live the kind of life you are not willing to live, except by the overruling, overpowering grace of God.

Here was Eli, in a posture of total compromise, trying to tell his sons to do something. You can't speak of the sins of your children with any power at all, when there are sins in your own life that your children are very much aware of.

David sinned so grossly. Just before he died, he gave Solomon a big speech. David said, *"O Solomon obey all the commandments of God."* He pleaded with Solomon to do that. Solomon went right out and was worse than David.

He multiplied wives an unbelievable number and concubines numbering in the hundreds. He became a man of despair, devastating his life, and his son, Rehoboam, was a total disaster.

The kingdom was shattered into two pieces, and Rehoboam lost the kingdom, because he had no fatherly example at all.

1 Kings 12:13-14, *Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; ¹⁴ and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your*

yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!"

If your children are not getting it from your parents then they are going to get it from the peers, and that's disastrous. You have got to set the model.

Hezekiah, the great king, compromised by bringing the king of Babylon to see the royal jewels, and in his compromise. His son **Manasseh** picked up the compromise totally abandoned God's law. Created a whole world of wickedness.

Joshua came to a crossroads, and he said to the people.

Joshua 24:15, *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

When Joshua gave them a choice, the next generation knew about the Lord, and the next generation knew not the Lord.

You don't even give them a choice.

You have to pass on a high standard of holiness.

You cannot just beat your kids into obedience while you are compromising yourself.

We cannot simply make a child believe in the truth because it's good for them.

Love your children.

Love means weeping with them, laughing with them, hurt with them, rejoice with them, sacrifice for them, and protect them. Don't provoke and exasperate them.

Be unselfish, serve them, provide their needs, give them gifts, show them affection. Give them pleasure, give them discipline. Love them in all those ways.

4. Trust.

When you have done all that, trust God.

Proverbs 22:6, *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*

You will make a lot of mistakes and we all do.

But if you have done your best in the power of the Spirit of God, trust God that He which hath begun a good work will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ.

Trust translates into prayer.

Pray for your children.