

## “Suffer The Little Children”

Mark 10:13-15 reads, “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

The gospel of Christ demands that one be of sufficient age to have faith in and obey its teachings. In other words, the gospel is not for children. But ironically, it demands that its followers be like children. Jesus said in Matthew 18:3, “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” So on one hand, the person must have the mental capacity to believe and reason like an adult, but on the other hand, they must be childlike. What did the Lord mean by this command? The heart of a child is wonderful, having so many attributes which should be imitated. Let’s notice a few.

First, the heart of a child is innocent and pure. This is primarily what the Lord speaks of when He asks His followers to be like children. Paul explains that a child does not know the meaning of sin: “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” (Romans 7:7-9). Like a child, the Christian should “Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9). The Lord promised, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

Second, the heart of a child is impressionable. It is easy to teach and instruct. A Christian should be one who receives the word of God gladly (Acts 2:41). Immaturity as it relates to the knowledge and the doctrine of Christ should be rectified immediately. The Hebrew said, “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ...” (Hebrews 6:1). We are not to be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14). Only earnest teaching to an open mind will correct this fatal deficiency.

Third, the heart of a child is humble. A child knows that it is subordinate to the parent. Self-seeking interests and holding oneself above others should not be named among believers in Christ (Philippians 2:4). We are to be helpful to others; not tear them down. The promise of God is on those who are able to maintain humility: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

Fourth, the heart of a child is loving. Children have the capacity to love unconditionally, but brethren sometimes are so unloving, unforgiving, and hateful with each other. Peter

said, "... love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). If you cannot, you will not have God and eternal life (1 John 3:14).

Mark 10:16 says, "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." If we become like little children, the Lord will bless us too. If we will be innocent, pure, humble, loving, and have a heart that can be taught, then we can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. How is your heart? Does it need to turn? While you have life, you have opportunity. Do not wait!

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