

Children: Obstacles or Examples?

Little People are People too!

Mark 10:13-16

I. Introduction

A. There is a common struggle in children's ministries.

1. Almost every church struggles to staff the nursery.
2. Let's be honest, aren't little kids a little terrifying?
 - a) Share some examples from VBS this week.
3. Why is this?
 - a) Some good reasons.
 - b) Some bad reasons.

B. There is a sobering warning about failure in children's ministries.

1. Death is to be preferred over causing a child to stumble.
 - a) **Matthew 18:6** but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
2. The more I think about this, this may actually scare people AWAY from ministry to kids.
3. At the very least, though, I hope that this would spur you on to pray for those who serve in children's ministries.

II. Little People are People too!

A. Parents were hoping for access (Mark 10:13a)

1. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus.
 - a) Why is this so significant?
 - 1) Because it shows us that parents want to see their children blessed.
 - 2) Children are never secondary citizens in the eyes of their parents.
 - 3) Notice that they were not clamoring for Jesus in order that He would fix their problems. They were pressing on Him to bless their kids.
2. They were doing this so that he might touch them.
 - a) Why? What was their angle?
 - 1) Probably not because of something they may get from that experience, but because of what that experience may protect them from.
 - i. Is there anything scarier in the world than the prospect that you kid may have physical issues or even die? The likelihood of that happening was way higher in this culture than in ours.

B. The disciples were displaying their arrogance (Mark 10:13b)

1. The disciples were being insensitive to the parents.
 - a) Let's face it. Regardless of how little they may have thought about children, they should have been more sensitive to the fears and desires of parents.
 - b) Can't you relate to these parents?
2. The disciples were being thoughtless toward the children.
 - a) In the mind of the parent, their children are the most important people in the world.
 - b) Somehow, the disciples got it into their mind that Jesus was not interested in wasting his time with children. Oh how the Lord will correct them!

C. Jesus was displaying His acceptance (Mark 10:14-16)

1. In His words
 - a) Permit them to come to Me.
 - 1) Old KJV "suffer"...one of the more unfortunate translations.
 - i. This problem, here, is that English has changed, not that the KJV is necessarily inaccurate.
 - ii. I used to have a death metal CD called "suffer the children". That's why it is important to use an updated translation.

- b) Do not hinder them.
 - 1) Instead of encouraging them to interact with Jesus, they were slowing them down.
 - i. Isn't this the last thing we should be doing?
 - ii. Is it not our calling to encourage people to go freely to Jesus.
 - c) For they are examples, not obstacles!
 - 1) Unless you heed their example, you will not enter the Kingdom!
2. In His actions
- a) He took the children in His arms.
 - b) He blessed them

III. What must we learn from this?

A. The church of the future is the church of the present.

- 1. This is a cliché, but true. Children are not just the church of the future. They are part of the church now.
 - a) They must learn from us.
 - 1) That's why we teach them.
 - 2) That's why we have children's ministries.
 - b) We must learn from them.
 - 1) They have a simplicity that we must recapture.
 - 2) They have an innocence that we must celebrate.
- 2. I wonder if one of the reasons why so many young people leave the church is that they never really felt they were a part of it.
 - a) I think that the church (not just our church...the church) has come a long way.

B. One man's trash is Jesus' treasure!

- 1. Jesus values what we often don't...that's why you are saved.
- 2. Jesus values what we often marginalize...Let's follow His example.