

Family Service - Children of the Kingdom

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] Well, let me welcome you all to our service this morning. This is a family service. It's a follow-on from the Holiday Club, which was held during the last week. Isn't it fantastic to see so many here today, so many children especially? I know you all enjoyed the Holiday Club, and I'm going to ask you one thing, and that's, can you please make me one of these T-shirts? And if you make me one of these T-shirts, I'll promise to wait it. Maybe not necessarily in the post, but I'll wait it. It's great to have you all. It's wonderful to have you. If you're here as a visitor, we're very pleased to have you with us as well.

Or if you're here as parents of the children for the club, we're delighted to have you with us as well, and we trust that God will bless us in our time of worship here today. The bulletin sheet's available for anyone to take a copy. Please just take a copy with you. I'll just read one or two things from the bulletin sheet today that I want to highlight. Everyone's welcome in the MA Hall after the service today to meet there for a cup of coffee, for juice, whatever. Please do come. You can meet others in the hall there for a time. You'll be very welcome to meet the children there as well. Tomorrow night, the session, the Kirk session, the elders meet at seven o'clock. That'll be here at the Kenneth Street session room, and there is important business for the session. Please do ensure an attendance on the part of the elders especially. There will be no monthly prayer meeting tomorrow because of the Kirk session.

On Friday, Fridays at the Free, the next session of the Fridays at the Free, that'll be from 12 noon to 3 p.m. when the hall will be open for soups and teas and coffees and to give opportunity to people to meet with friends and to read, to play board games, whatever, just to have a time together.

And there'll be a children's play area as well, as well as items from Dove's Corner Baby Bank. These are actually free of charge, and you'll see the number there for Callum Murdoe if you want to get in touch with him. And the services next Lord's Day are at the usual times. Now, as I said, the holiday club was held through the week. There shall notice here on the holiday club, about the holiday club, the Epic Explorers Holiday Club, which I know was very successful and was wonderful to have all the children that attended the holiday club and all the supporters as well. And I want to take this opportunity, first of all, to thank the children and to thank the parents who actually brought children or grandparents, whoever they were. It's a wonderful privilege for us to have so many people coming to the holiday club and indeed to the church as well, like today. So I want to thank the parents and relatives for that, and the children themselves especially. I want to thank you for coming to the club and making it such an enjoyable experience. But I want to thank also those who helped to lead the club, Fiona and Scott, their leadership particularly, but there are others here today as well who were integral to the success of the club. It's wonderful to have had your commitment and your application. A lot of work went into the running of the club. Every successful club has a lot of background work beforehand, and I know this is no exception. So thank you sincerely for that. Well, we're going to begin our worship today, and we're going to begin singing in Psalm 34, Psalm number 34. For those who are visitors, the blue Psalm books, if you have a copy there, there are two sections to it. The first section is called Sing Psalms. The other section is called the Scottish Psalter. So I'll give out the page numbers. You can find the Psalms from that.

Page 40 for Psalm 34. The tune is Jackson. We're singing verses 1 to 9. The practice is that we stand for singings and remain seated for prayer. If you're able to stand, if not, don't worry about it. But if you're able to stand, we'll stand for the singings. So Psalm 34, at all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. And so on, verses 1 to 9 on page 40. Let's stand.

[4 : 27] at all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice.

together let us praise the Lord. Exalt his name with me. I sought the Lord. His answer came from fear.

set me free. They look to him and shine with joy. They are not put to shame. The suffering man cried to the Lord. From him deliverance came. The angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord. Surrows and guards continually. All those who fear and honour him.

He sets his people free. Come to stand. The Lord is good. Who trusts in him is blessed. O fear the Lord, you saints with need. You will not be open. O bear the Lord.

You will not be oppressed. O bear the Lord, you saints with need. You will not be oppressed.

[6 : 52] The Lord, you saints with need, you will not be oppressed.

Now we're going to join together in prayer briefly. Prayer mostly for the children, for the Sunday school, and following on from the club as well. Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. Our gracious and almighty God, as we come to gather here in this place of worship, we look to you for your blessing.

And we thank you for the privilege of being here, that we are here around your word, that we are here to hear the teaching of your word, that we are here to receive your blessing as you are pleased, O Lord, in grace to bless us.

We pray your blessing today for the children. As we come, Lord, we ask that your blessing will enhance their young lives, and that you will bless them even from this tender early age, so that they will grow up as your children, as your people in the world.

We ask your blessing to follow all that happened in the holiday club. And we thank you, Lord, for all who attended. We thank you for all who helped in different ways.

[8 : 10] And we thank you for the way that not only was the teaching of your word and about yourself brought out, we give thanks that they were able to do so in an enjoyable environment.

And we ask today that your blessing will follow the work of the club. We pray, Lord, for every family, for every home represented here today.

We pray for us as children and as parents and grandparents and relatives, Lord, that our prayer will always be that your blessing will follow us, that you will keep us in the ways in which we seek to live for you in this world, and that you will grant us, Lord, your blessing from day to day.

Hear us now, we pray, and pardon our sin for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, I read somewhere one time, I think it was actually on a car bumper sticker, one of those stickers you get sometimes you see on cars, and the sticker said, Grandchildren are great.

I should have had them first. And there's many a person here today will agree with that sentiment. And grandchildren are great. We've had grandchildren with us, family in the family in the manse over the last month or so.

[9 : 29] The last of them are now away, and we always miss them when they go. But grandchildren are great. All children are great and should give us enjoyment in helping them in life.

But I also read something this morning which said that God has no grandchildren. God has no grandchildren. Now, why was that said?

Why do you think that was said? Well, because God has children, spiritual children, not just young people like yourselves. All the old folks here today who trust in the Lord, who have come to accept Jesus, they are God's children, God's family.

And God has no grandchildren, but He has children, many, many children. And we become children of God by coming to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, by coming to accept Him, to receive Him, to live in the way that God Himself sets out for us in the Bible, in His truth.

And as we do that, we are children of God in the world in which we live. Spiritually, God receives us, makes us His children. In other words, the Bible has a word for that.

[10 : 47] We use it in other senses as well. It's the word adoption. God takes us and makes us His children when we come to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive in Him and believe in Him and follow Him.

And we are always welcomed by God when we come to receive Jesus. We're going to be saying the Lord's Prayer in a few moments. And as you know, the Lord's Prayer begins with the words, Our Father.

So we come to know God as our Father when we come to Him through Jesus and when we come by accepting what Jesus has done on the cross and accepting Him as our Savior in this world.

That's when we come to know God as our Savior. We're not saved because our mums or dads or grandparents might be saved and might be Christians. We don't become Christians.

We don't become followers of Jesus just because maybe our parents are doing that. Sometimes you find that that's always the case with royal children. You know that when children are born into the royal family, they become royal children because their parents are royal.

[12 : 01] Princes or even the king. But it's not like that with Christians. We need to become children of God for ourselves. It doesn't actually happen to us just because our fathers, mothers, grandparents are actually children of God.

And when we become children of God, we show that we are children of God. How do you think we show that we are children of God? Well, we show we are children of God by living the kind of life that Jesus expects of us, that God tells us about in the Bible.

The kind of life that honors Him, that trusts in Him, that follows Him, that wants to tell other people about Him. That's what children of God do.

And you've been learning in the Holiday Club over this past week about Jesus Himself in the Gospel of Mark, that He's the Son of God, that He came into the world to die, and He died the death of the cross, and then He rose again from the dead.

And these are the things that we want to make known to the world around us as we live as children of God. So our lives should be different to others who don't want to know about Jesus, and we have to lovingly and patiently tell them about Jesus and why He is important to us.

[13 : 28] So children of God, and from a youngest age, as we'll see in the sermon today, which is about the children of the kingdom, we actually want to become children of God from our very earliest days.

We don't want to leave it until we're older. God receives children, young children like yourselves. So now we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together. Let's just say the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Amen. I'm going to sing again, and it's wonderful to hear all these children's voices singing today.

[14 : 32] I know you learned some songs during the holiday club, and we'll hear some of these in the hall afterwards. You'll be singing some of them there, I think. So we're singing Psalm 25, the first version.

That's on page 231. The tune is Golden Hill. We're singing these verses 4 to 9. Show me Thy ways, O Lord.

Thy paths, O teach Thou me. And do Thou lead me in Thy truth. Therein my teacher be. So that's Psalm 25, the first version. And it's on page 231.

And from verse 4, down as far as verse 9. Let's stand again to sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

God, Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[15 : 41] Let it my teacher be. For thou art God that dost to me salvation send.

And I upon thee all the day expecting to attend.

Light and the mercies, Lord. I pray thee to remember.

And lovingkindnesses for thee have been novel forever.

My sins and faults of you. To thou, O Lord, forget.

[17 : 12] After thy mercy, think on me.

And for thy goodness great. God good and uprightness.

A whale sinner's show. A meek in judgment he will guide.

And make his path to know. Now we're going to read from the Bible, from the Word of God.

Our reading is in the Gospel of Mark. I know you were going through the Gospel of Mark at the Holiday Club, so we're following on with our reading from the Gospel of Mark today. That's chapter 10, beginning at verse 13.

[18 : 31] And if you're using church Bibles, it should be around page 1020. Around 1020 or so in your Bible. So the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, from verse 13.

We'll read down as far as verse 31. And they were bringing children to him, that's to Jesus, that he might touch them.

And his disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them, Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them up in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good?

[19 : 35] No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud.

Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, You lack one thing.

Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How difficult it is, it will be for those who have wealth, to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said to them again, Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

[20 : 37] And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, Who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, With man it is impossible, but not with God.

For all things are possible with God. Peter began to say to him, See, we have left everything and followed you. Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sister or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold.

Now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and land with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life.

Many who are first will be last and the last first. And we pray that God will follow with this blessing that reading of his own word.

Before we look back at this passage, let's again call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's pray. O Lord, our God, we thank you once again for your word. You have sent your word to us so that we might know you, so that we might live by faith in you, so that we might follow you and be in our lives pleasing to you in all things.

[22 : 00] We thank you, Lord, that while we are so imperfect and so sinful, and as we confess our sins to you again today, we give thanks for the perfection that belongs to you as our God.

And we give thanks for the perfection of Jesus, for the way that he came into this world and took to himself our human nature and lived a perfect human life. We thank you for the perfection of the work that he did, the perfection of his life as it goes on in heaven and as he remembers us, O Lord.

So we give thanks for all the blessings that we receive by virtue of his death and resurrection. Bless us here, Lord, today as a congregation. We thank you for all the privileges that are ours.

We thank you, Lord, as we reflect upon our lives, that you have not marked up our iniquity against us, that you have not dealt with us as we deserve, that you have chosen, Lord, to be gracious and merciful and loving toward us.

And, Lord, we pray today that in response to that grace and to that patience and loving kindness of God, that we ourselves might come in receiving the benefits of your kingdom, that we might come to give our lives to you and live lives that will be pleasing to you.

[23 : 22] Remember us, Lord, in all our circumstances in life. We pray that you'd bless us when we are not together here, that you'd bless us in our homes, in our family life, that you'd bless us in our community, and grant your blessing to us in all that we do from day to day.

Whatever age, Lord, we are at today, we pray that we may know the benefit of trusting in you, that we may know you as our God and as our Savior, that we may be glad to tell of the wonderful works of the Lord to others around us.

We pray, O Lord, that your blessing today will be with those who, and in particular, needs that we know of in the congregation and in the community we belong to. Remember those especially who have illness, especially serious illness, we pray for them.

We pray that your good hand will be upon them for their healing, and, O Lord, if it be that they will not be healed, if it is your will that it will be otherwise. Give them your peace.

Give them in their hearts to know the comfort of believing and trusting in you. And we ask, O Lord, too, that you'd bless all those today who miss the passing, miss loved ones who have passed away.

[24 : 40] We pray that your blessing will be with all the families who are mourning today and who come, Lord, to reflect upon so much in life that is now gone.

We pray that you bless them. Your promise is that those who mourn will be comforted. We know that this is also true for us literally, and we pray that all mourning hearts today will know your comfort and will know the blessing of your Holy Spirit, even blessing such times of trouble to us.

Grant us, Lord, we pray that in our community we will see a further influence of the gospel. We thank you for the gospel that we have today. We pray that it may reach forth into all our communities.

We pray that we may know your blessing from on high. We pray that you would turn us back as a people to yourself and to your ways to honor you, to respect your ways, to value your laws and your gospel and your promises.

We pray for all who are in authority, Lord, locally as well as nationally, and we commend them to you today. You require of us in your word to pray for those who are in authority, for those who are in government, locally and nationally.

[25 : 57] We pray for such, Lord, throughout the world that as we have been praying together in the Lord's Prayer that your kingdom come, that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So we pray, Lord, today that this will increasingly be the case, that many will be turned from spiritual and moral darkness into the light of your kingdom, into the blessings and the joy and the peace that comes from knowing you and being your children in this world.

Lord, bless us then now, we pray, and continue to look after us and to watch over us and to keep us safe in this life. We pray this with the pardon of our sin and our cleansing.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we can turn back again briefly to Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10, and we're looking at verses 13 to 16 especially.

I'm going to divide the sermon into two just to make it a bit easier, I think, for the little ones who are present with us. So in the middle of the sermon, we'll have another singing and come to the second part of the sermon then.

[27 : 12] Incidentally, anyone who does need to go out and take the children out, please feel free to do that at any time. It's not a problem. We're glad to have the children with us. So if we read again from Mark chapter 10 at verse 13, they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, that means he was very angry, and said to them, let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the children, the kingdom of God.

Now, you know that something serious is taking place. I mean, everything in the Bible in a sense is serious, but you know that something is really serious when you read about Jesus and his ministry in the world, the time that he was in the world like this.

When you read that he was indignant, that he was very angry, something obviously, seriously, is wrong. What is it that made Jesus so angry?

What made it, made him so indignant? It's a very strong word that Mark uses here in this word indignant. It means he was indeed very, very angry.

[28 : 24] What was it that made him so angry? You might expect Jesus never to have been angry, but here he is. He was angry on this occasion, the other occasions as well. And of course, unlike us, when Jesus is angry, it doesn't mean he was sinfully angry, but it does mean he was indignant and very annoyed.

Well, what was it that made him annoyed? Well, we're told what it was, that people were bringing children to him, parents probably mostly, bringing children to him that he might touch them, and that was to bless them, touch them, that he would convey his blessing to them.

And his disciples rebuked him. That's why Jesus was angry. His disciples didn't like this. His disciples thought this was wrong.

His disciples thought, no, children shouldn't be brought to Jesus. It's just troubling him. It's not something that's appropriate at this moment. That's what they thought, and that's why Jesus was indignant with his own disciples.

You might expect that his own disciples would have reacted differently to children being brought to Jesus for his blessing to be conveyed to them, but obviously, they didn't understand things as they should, and they were wrong about this.

[29 : 35] And Jesus, in his indignity, indignance, indignant spirit, said, let the children come to me and don't hinder them.

Don't keep them back. Don't put anything in their way to prevent them coming. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. These children were infants.

They were children of an age that you could pick up and hold in your arms, and so they were very young children, and this is why Jesus was indignant, because the disciples thought this is not appropriate for children this age to come to be brought to Jesus.

And you can see from that how important children are to the Lord. How important it is for Jesus that children belong to his kingdom as well as adults.

That Jesus is willing to welcome children as they are brought to him. And that's something that we'll see in a moment as important to ourselves as adults, that not only do we bring children to the Lord and tell them about the Lord, but we try and make sure that there's nothing in our lives or anywhere else that stops them from coming to him.

[30 : 52] So first of all, let's look at Christ's command. Let the children come to me. It's a command that he says to the disciples. And do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

So here's his command. Let the children come and do not hinder them. And we'll look at that first before we move on to the rest of the passage. Let them come to me.

And of course, that's, as we said, addressed to verse 13, the disciples rebuking them. This is how Jesus reacted. This is how Jesus spoke to the disciples. Let them come to me.

It means a positive action on our part to bring children to the Lord, to bring young people to him. It's more than just hoping that they'll make their own way to the Lord, that they'll one day find out for themselves how important Jesus is.

This is a positive command to these disciples. Let the children come to me. In other words, encourage them to come to me. Make every effort to make sure that they come to me.

[31 : 58] Not let them find their own way. Some people have that view, don't they, that children really, even if they're brought to church, that's a good thing. But let them grow up, first of all.

Let them make up their own minds as to how important Jesus is to them or otherwise. Well, that's not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying, from the youngest days, we teach them about the Lord.

Parents are encouraged to teach their children, to direct their children to come to the Lord. That's what the holiday club was about, after all. The holiday club was about Jesus, about Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, this Gospel we're looking at this passage from.

The holiday club was about that, about Jesus and the importance of Jesus, Jesus as our Savior, Jesus as the Son of God, Jesus the perfect man, the perfect Son of God as well.

Everything to do with Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is to do with getting to know Him. Who is He? Why is He important? Who is He important to? He's important for all of us.

[33 : 02] But here, the disciples are rebuked. They're told off by Jesus and Jesus gives this command, let the children come to Me.

That's what the holiday club was about. But, it was about that in an enjoyable environment. I'm not saying, and I'm not, I'm hoping that coming to church is enjoyable as well in the best sense of the word.

because learning about Jesus should be enjoyable. Why shouldn't it be enjoyable to learn about Jesus? Maybe we think, well, some people do think that religion or things to do with the Gospel, with the Bible, is pretty boring stuff.

It's not enjoyable. You don't really want to get into it too much. You just keep a kind of passing interest in it. But here is a passage that tells us, as many other passages in the Bible tell us, learning about Jesus should be enjoyable.

It should be something that we actually enjoy doing. It should be a pleasure to us. And I hope all the children, I know they did, they enjoyed the holiday club. And it's important, along with the teaching of Jesus, to have enjoyable activities.

[34 : 15] That's what childhood is for. We live in a world when sadly, a lot of children are not allowed to be children. Their childhood is taken from them because they're given teaching that really belongs to adulthood.

Teaching about relationships, teaching about this, that, and the other, that really are not suitable for the age at which they are as children.

Children must learn in an enjoyable environment. not have anything pressed upon them that's not appropriate to their own age. That's what the gospel is doing.

That's what we're seeking to do with the holiday club and even with church as well. Because here is Jesus saying, let the children come to me, but let them enjoy finding out about me.

And I want to encourage you as well. Maybe you're here today and perhaps you don't usually go to church. You're, as I said already, most welcome to be here today and any other time. And I hope if it's just coming today because your children were at the holiday club, and especially if you don't belong to any other church, please think about coming regularly because it's so important for our children to be learning about Jesus in an enjoyable way and to have their lives built around that great truth of who Jesus is.

[35 : 41] So please, if you are in that category today, please come back. Please bring the children to the Sunday school, which I know is also enjoyable for all those who come.

And many of the leaders here at your holiday club are also teachers in the Sunday school. So let them come to me. And he says, do not hinder them.

See, he added that as well. He didn't just say, let the children come to me. He said, do not hinder them. What he meant by that was, don't put anything in their way that would be a block or a barrier or prevent them coming to me.

Now that's a big challenge for me, and it's a big challenge for you as adults as well, whether we're parents or grandparents or relatives or even just people in the congregation who know these children, know who they are, and even if we don't, what he's saying is, don't put anything in their way.

Don't do anything that will put them off finding out about Jesus, coming to trust in Jesus, coming to know the Lord for themselves. And I have to apply that to my own way of life.

[36 : 51] You have to apply that as an adult today to your way of life. It's a great challenge, and it's a great privilege to be able to bring the teaching of the Bible to our children in our homes, in our Sunday school, in the holiday club, wherever.

But I have to look to my own life and ask, is there something in my life today that children will see, and children I know will see things that perhaps we don't see as adults very readily.

Is there something in my life that proves to be a barrier to children coming to know the Lord? Is there something that puts them off? Is there something about my way of life that suggests I'm not really serious about trusting in Jesus?

Well, you and I have got to look to that. Is our life a positive encouragement, in other words, for our children to come to know the Lord? Or in our conversation, is the way we speak, is that conducive to encouraging our children to come to know the Lord and to trust in Him?

In our conversation, in our language, is there something there that doesn't actually fit with being Christians, with being people who are children of the Lord?

[38 : 02] Is there something that our children might see in which they might say, well, you know, I don't think I want to trust in the Bible if that's really the way it doesn't really affect people very positively?

Let's look at our conversation, our way of speaking. Let's look at our way of life. Let's look at our priorities. Is my priority, as I show that to my children or grandchildren as they are now, is that, is what I, what I, what they see in my life, is the priority given to God?

Am I as a grandparent or as a parent yourselves, are you, am I, showing our children that God comes first? That we put God, that we put Jesus top of the list of what's important to us?

Because if we do that, then our children are going to see that we're serious about our faith, that we're serious about teaching them the things of the Bible, that we're serious about teaching them about God and who He is and why He's important.

So that's why He's saying, not just let them come to me, but do not hinder to them. Do not hinder them. Don't put anything in their way.

[39 : 26] In other words, things like, oh, children are too young to come to know Jesus. Just leave it until they've grown up, until they're able to make up their own minds. Well, you can, you must never say to your children or to your, to your grandchildren, you're too young to be a Christian.

You're too young to come to Jesus. You're too young to come to know what it is to live a Christian life that's pleasing to God. Never say to them, just wait until you have your career fixed up first of all.

Whether it's, when you come to teenage years, maybe that's something that's in our mind. What sort of career are our children, our young people going to have, going to develop? And some people might think, well, is it not better just to let them concentrate on that?

And then maybe think about being somewhat serious about their faith, about God, about Jesus afterwards. Well, no. No, because that's not what God is giving as a priority.

Because if God is in the right place in our thoughts, in our hearts, in our way of life, that's the basis, that's the foundation on which we then move on to everything else.

[40 : 37] Whether it's our parenthood, our life in the family, our life in the world, our career, our choice of career, whatever it is, it has to be firmly based, stable foundation that Jesus himself is.

There's the first thing then, Christ's command, let the children come to me and do not hinder them. So let's just sing while we take a wee break and move on to the next part of it after we've sung some verses.

And again, we're singing from Psalm 34, the same as we did before, this time verses 10 to 14. And the tune is St. Stephen. This is on page 40 again.

At verse 10, Young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food, but those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any good. Come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word, and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

And how wonderfully the psalmist puts it there very much in line with what Jesus said to the disciples. He's not just encouraging the children to come. And here, of course, he means not just young children, but others as well who are children of God.

[41 : 55] But I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord, how you may respect the Lord. That's a privilege in life to teach younger children how to fear the Lord.

So we'll sing verses 10 to 14 to his praise. We'll stand again to sing. Amen. Young lions may grow weak and faint and anger for their food, but those who wait upon the Lord will not look like any good.

Come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

Does anyone delight and long to see good days then keep your tongue from evil see your lips from lying ways depart and turn and turn from evil paths and practice what is right and practice what is right desire to know the way of peace pursue and with your might well let's turn back for a short time again to Mark chapter 14 let the children come to me do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God truly I say to you whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it and he took them in his arms and blessed them laying his hands on them why does Jesus say here as he continues here he just doesn't give a command very often you find the commands of God are accompanied with an explanation or some further teaching along with the commands of God and that's what you find here he said let them come to me do not hinder them but then he added for to such belongs the kingdom of God whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child shall not enter it what did he mean by that what is it that characterizes children especially those young infants that he took up in his arms to bless why is he saying whoever doesn't receive the kingdom like a child shall not enter what is it about such children of that age that makes them an image if you like of what it is to enter the kingdom of God well first of all there's the element of trust good parenting is the kind of parenting that conveys to our children that we are worthy of their trust that they can safely trust us to show by our consistency of life that we are actually genuine in seeking the best for them even if sometimes it means that there's a rebuke here and there but trust making making it clear to our children that we are trustworthy that we can trust that they can trust in us is so important that of course was especially true of Jesus he is the ultimate in being trustworthy everything about him makes him worthy of our trust because there are no lies there's nothing there that would really raise suspicion about him that's how it is with ourselves and our children as well our grandchildren we are to live in such a way that removes every suspicion so that the child will come to trust in us and trust in our word and trust us they see us living that kind of life now God is the ultimate parent we read earlier and prayed together the Lord's Prayer our Father who is in heaven and he is the ultimate parent because as you scan the Bible

from beginning to end as God's word where God is telling us about himself and about ourselves you'll find nothing there to raise suspicions about God everything there shows that God is worthy of our trust God is always true to his word God never says something he doesn't mean God never takes back what he says of anything of his promises or anything at all that he says to us in his word and you can see from everything there that you have no reason to suspect God to suspect God's goodness or God's wisdom or God's motives you know you'll often find people saying when something bad happens in the world in people's lives where is God how could God have allowed such a thing to happen and these questions are not easy to answer and those of us who preach the gospel should not pretend that they are easy to answer they're difficult questions they're things that really bring us sometimes a very acute searching of mind before we can try and answer such questions but a lot of people will say that because they want to dismiss God out of their lives altogether they don't think

[48 : 38] God is important enough to really put in any important place in their lives but Jesus who is the revealer of God the Son of God everything you see about Jesus is revealing God to us what God is like and so Jesus when he's saying here about trusting in God or entering the kingdom as a little child is really like trusting in the Lord trusting his word trusting that what he says is true but it also means acceptance because a child accepts the word of a trustworthy parent sadly we live in a world when children sometimes are not brought up in the way that we would like sometimes children are abused children are not treated properly that's the kind of world we live in but when you have a loving parent a parent who really wants the best for their children well a child comes to learn acceptance of that person's word or acceptance of things from that parent that the parent offers to them and is happy to give them as gifts or whatever in other words when you give a child a gift certainly children of that young age there's no no haggling no argument no saying

I don't like that it's I'd rather something better you might find that as they grow up certainly it's not always like that is it sometimes when we do grow up we think well that's not really what I'd like I'd prefer something else but what this is saying to us is that children these infants in arms that Jesus took up they don't actually argue about what their parents are keen to give them they don't argue about the care that parents take of them the gifts that parents are able to give them they don't haggle about that they don't dispute that they actually receive these gladly and that's why it says here whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child shall not enter it see God is not in the business of selling eternal life he's not saying this is yours if you can actually match up your life to it he's not saying this is yours if you can do something that makes you worthy of it in my sight he says this is yours if you trust my word if you receive it as I'm offering it to you

God is saying if you receive it on my terms and you don't haggle over it and you don't think you could have done better yourself this is for you this eternal life this salvation this is my gift to you that's why I sent my son into the world to die the death he died on the cross God is genuine and sincere and wholehearted in saying here is my kingdom here is where I rule here is where my throne is situated here is all the benefits of my kingdom of my salvation that I give to those who trust in me trust in me receive it take me at my word and so you accept all that God is offering us today in the gospel if you come to him trusting his word knowing that he's genuine because that's the ultimate parent isn't it God our father so today we accept his pardon don't we come to express our sin to him we repent of our sin we say

Lord I know I've done wrong I know my life is not what it should be please accept me please receive me and that's really receiving the kingdom receiving the word of God receiving the salvation you receive his righteousness and his peace and his joy these are things to be received God is serious and honest about reaching out to us in the gospel with these and of course that challenges our own sense of worth or pride because it's very difficult for us isn't it to get into our minds that we don't have to pay anything that we don't have to contribute anything to our salvation it hits your sense of pride that all of that is taken away that God has done everything in Christ already that all we need to do and are required to do is receive the salvation for which Jesus died but our natural minds don't like that because it hits our pride that we don't contribute something towards our salvation that we don't actually have to give God something in order for him then to receive us in response look at verse 17 as he was setting out on his journey a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him good teacher what must

I do to inherit eternal life and here's a man you see he's walking up towards the entrance the door to salvation in Jesus Christ and here he is he's walked right past the door to eternal life because he's come with these words Lord what must I do he's thinking of his own contribution something that's required of him to do before God will receive him before he can enter into eternal life what must I do to inherit eternal life and God is really saying to us today it's not about what you are able to do or not able to do it's about what Jesus has done that's really the entrance to eternal life and as you receive that Jesus and give over your life to him and trust in him so you come to enter the kingdom like a little child you receive it because God is honest because God is serious because you are needy of that salvation that God himself is actually extending to you in the gospel and if you're here today and you're not yet a Christian you're not yet saved you've not yet come to follow Jesus seriously wholeheartedly and then Jesus is saying to you well here's your opportunity today

[55 : 05] Jesus is saying to you here is my kingdom here are all the riches of my kingdom here are all the riches I died to actually provide for you here are all the riches I suffered in order to bring them to you all you need to do is receive them make them yours say yes Lord this is what I need thank you help me to live a life of thankfulness in the Psalms we find Psalm 116 the Psalmist saying in regard to the Lord's own benefits to him we quite often sing these verses and the Psalmist is really addressing God in them where he said to God what shall I render to the Lord for all this benefits to me what shall I render to the Lord what will I give the Lord in return for all his benefits to me how can I pay him back what he says is

I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord in other words he's not saying I will give anything he's saying I will receive I will take the salvation that God is offering to me and so it is for us today as well we come as children to trust in Jesus we come to accept what Jesus is offering and he's offering himself as a saviour to us today and as we do so there's one other element I can mention just briefly in closing and that's the element of joy we don't become Christians just to enjoy the experience there's more to it than that but joy is very firmly a part of the Christian life you children know what it's like to receive a gift and especially if it's a gift that you've mentioned you would like to get at Christmas perhaps your parents might ask you what would you like as a

Christmas gift not that they'll necessarily promise yes you'll get that but very often that's what they'll try and get you and if it's something you've asked for at Christmas time and you open your parcel you take the wrapping off on Christmas morning and you see that's exactly what you asked for and actually it looks far better than it did in the catalogue or wherever you saw a picture of it so you go wow that's awesome or whatever the current word is today wow that's awesome that's how it should be with Jesus as well for us when we receive the gift that God gives us his offering to us Jesus himself the gift and salvation that comes in him today this should be and every day this should be our reaction because this is God's grace God's forgiveness God's adoption this is really heaven in preparation if you like and we should be saying wow what an amazing gift

God has given to me in giving me a saviour in giving me salvation in giving me to belong to the kingdom of God well may God bless these words to us today we're going to conclude our service now singing in Psalm 89 Psalm 89 and verses 15 to 18 that's page 345 Psalm 89 verses 15 to 18 345 over to 346 and the tune this time is Sheffield O greatly blessed the people are the joyful sound that know in brightness of thy face O Lord they ever on shall go verses 15 to 18 of Psalm 89

O greatly blessed the people are O O greatly blessed the people are the joyful sound that know in brightness of thy face O Lord thee ever on shall go thee in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly and in thy righteousness shall thee exalted be on high because the glory of their spread doth only stand in thee and in thy favour shall our horn and power exalted be for

[61 : 02] God is our defence and he to us doth safety bring the Holy One Lord Israel is our almighty king I want to say to the children before we close with the benediction not only has it been really great having you but thank you too for the way that you've sat through the service and for the way you listened to what's being said as well and that gives us great joy to see that you're so good at listening to the gospel so thank you again for that now I'll go to the side door here to my left after the benediction I'd like the children if they can come out that door and I'll give you a high five on the way out okay now may the grace of the

Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more Amen God