

The Heart Of A Child

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[0 : 00] So will you turn with me please to the passage of scripture we read in Mark chapter 10. We're going to look this morning at verses 13 to 16.

They were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them, and the 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 in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Well, you know that something is up when you see Jesus angry. When you find a description as here of Jesus expressing anger or speaking in anger, you know that something has seriously caught his attention.

That something is seriously wrong indeed, as he expresses these words in his anger. And the word that Mark is using here is a very strong word. It's very rightly translated here in the ESV by the word indignant.

[1 : 13] Jesus was indignant, which is very strong emotional anger in the way that the word indignant expresses.

Indeed, you could say that there are times when the lack of this kind of righteous, holy anger on the part of Jesus would be a serious defect if it was missing.

You'll find it expressed in various places in the Bible. For example, in John chapter 11, verses 33 and 38, you find him coming to the sepulcher, to the grave, where the body of Lazarus had been buried four days previously.

And he's agitated in himself. He groans within himself. Different words used to describe it. And when he comes to the grave, again we read, he groaned within himself before he spoke.

Now what was all that about? He was moved inwardly. He was indignant. He was angry. He was angry at death. It would be surprising if Jesus wasn't angry in the face of death.

[2 : 17] Because death had done this to human beings. This death had come to Lazarus. He was no longer in this world.

And his body, separate from his soul, was laid into the earth. That is what sin's wages is. Jesus expressed his annoyance, his anger, his emotional approach to death as significant.

Now here he is. What is it here? That he is indignant. Because it doesn't seem on the surface as if there's something really worthy of Jesus being indignant about. All they're doing is just preventing those who are bringing children from bringing them to Jesus.

These people who had these children, they wanted to bring them to Jesus that he might touch them. Because they had obviously learned by now that the touch of Jesus was significant.

That he could convey blessing through his touch or healing through his touch. So they were bringing these children. They were actually infants. Very young children. Certainly under four or five years of age.

- [3 : 23] Possibly even younger. But they were certainly not older than that. So that he could pick them up in his arms. They were that age of child. Infants. And he was indignant.
- Because he saw that they were preventing something very important. They were misunderstanding the place of children in the kingdom of God.
- That's exactly how he put it. He rebuked them. And in his indignant rebuke, he said, Let the children come to me.
- Do not hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. In other words, he's not just saying, These children actually belong to the kingdom of God.
- Therefore, they have every right to come to me and be brought to me by their parents. So don't hinder them. Don't prevent this happening. But he went further. And he said, They are actually an illustration of who belongs to the kingdom of God.
- [4 : 29] And even of how one comes to enter the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the rule of God. God from his throne ruling over the lives of human beings like ourselves.
- Everything in which God's rule is displayed. You could say, That is the kingdom of God. And here he is saying, To such belongs the kingdom of God. But then he adds, Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child, like these infants, shall not enter it.
- And in other words, He is saying, Here is a characteristic of how we come to enter the kingdom of God and belong to the kingdom of God. We become like little children in order to enter it and belong to it.
- What does he mean by that? That is what we are really going to look at in more detail today. But first of all, Look at Christ's command. Let the children come. Do not hinder them. We need to look at that just briefly.
- Because it is important in regard to our own view of children. And the congregation and belonging to the kingdom of God. And the blessings of God. And then secondly, More fully, We will look at Jesus' explanation.
- [5 : 40] For to such belongs the kingdom of God. And the way that he adds also, Whoever does not receive it like a child, Shall not enter it.
- His command is that, First of all, Let the children come to me. That of course, Addresses what was happening with the disciples, Rebuking and preventing these parents from bringing their children to him, As verse 13 puts it.
- In other words, Jesus is actually saying something very positive here. He is not saying to us as children, Or as parents, Or as grandchildren, Or as grandparents.
- It is just, As long as you let them come, On their own accord, Then that is fine. That is all that is required. What he is really saying to them here, Is a positive action.
- It is not equivalent to, Let them find their own way. Don't prevent them finding their own way into the kingdom. It is much, much more than that. It is a very positive instruction. In other words, He is really saying, Let the children come to me.
- [6 : 42] And obviously, These children at their age, Are themselves being carried to him. And that is exactly what he is saying. Bring them to me. Don't prevent them coming to me.
- Because to such belongs the kingdom of God. In other words, It is a verse that really teaches us very positively, The importance of encouraging our children.
- Encouraging our children to come to Christ. To come to know the kingdom for themselves. The things of the kingdom. The rule of God. The promises of God. The commandments of God.
- Everything in which you find God's rule set forth. He says, Let the children come to me. We don't think of the children of this congregation, I hope, As the church of the future.

They are perhaps the church of the future in that sense. That hopefully, As they are spared by God, They will take the place of us adults. Especially as older adults now.

[7 : 41] As they themselves come to adulthood. But that is not how we should see them. Although that is the truth in itself. What it is saying to us is, They belong to the church now. They are actually a meaningful part of the church.

Here and now. In their youth. In their infancy. And that is the positive point that is made here in the passage. In other words, Our view of our children as they belong to the congregation.

As it is accompanied by how they belong to the church. How they belong to the kingdom. They are to be regarded as those to encourage, Those to teach, Those to direct to Christ.

And to realizing for themselves, How valued they are as a part of the church. As belonging to the church already. That is the first point.

Let them come to me. But he added, And do not hinder them. Now that is adding something significant. He was not just content to say, Let the children come to me. Or bring the children to me.

[8 : 47] He is now saying, And do not hinder them. What is that adding? Well it is adding a significant point. It is saying, Don't put anything in the way of them coming. Don't put anything in the way of them actually coming to be properly members of the kingdom of God.

That is a great challenge to me. And a great challenge to yourselves too. As parents or grandparents. Parents. Don't put anything in the way to hinder them. Don't put them off. That applies to how we speak.

To our conversation. To our way of life. To our relationships. To how we deal with one another. To how we speak about the world around us. To our children. To the priorities we give.

To the things in life that we have from day to day. What are our priorities? What are our children seeing? In terms of our priority. Do they see that our priority is God. And of his kingdom.

As Matthew chapter 6. Remember Jesus there. In the Sermon on the Mount. And addressing those who made a priority of the things of this life. Of material possessions.

[9 : 53] Whatever they might be. He's saying. He's saying. Seek first the kingdom of God. And his righteousness. That's why we have such a regard for our children.

As belonging to the church. Because the teaching that we are seeking to give them. In their homes. In our Sunday school. In our tweenies. In all of these activities. Is for them to seek first the kingdom of God.

Is that what they're seeing in ourselves though? Are we giving them the impression. Throughout the days of the week. When they're not in church. When they're not at Sunday school.

Are we giving them the impression. That somehow. Other things are more important than the kingdom of God. Are we giving them. To believe that things. To do with the ordinary course of life.

Are to be set above. Our relationship with God. Our pleasing of God. Our fulfilling of our chief end. Of our creation. To glorify him. To enjoy him. All of the things that we do.

[10 : 53] With regard to our children. Have a bearing on what they understand. The kingdom of God to be about. And our place in the kingdom of God.

And how we view the kingdom of God. And what it means to us. To be under God's rule. And to be having the privilege. Of honoring God. In other words. We never say.

We never give the impression. That they are actually too young. To understand. That they're too young. To come to church. And to be at church services. Don't worry about. Children actually being children.

In church services. One of the great things to see. In this congregation. Really. And encourages us. Who preach the word. And the elders of the church. And the leaders of the congregation. Is that children actually come.

And are able to be children. Children will. Actually make child noises. Children actually will need to go to the toilet. Will need to go out. Will need to come back. And we don't mind that.

[11 : 49] Jesus had to deal with that. We don't imagine that all of these crowds. That followed him. Just sat silently. And all of these children. Just sitting. In a pristine kind of. Obedience.

Sitting there. Listening to him. Of course not. They were children. And he allowed them to be children. Children. That's what we. Take delight in. In seeing children coming.

To church services. To church activities. And being. Children as they do so. So here he is saying. Let the children come to me.

And do not. Hinder them. But secondly. He gave. An explanation. For to such. Belongs. The kingdom of God. And he added. Truly I say.

Whoever does not receive. The kingdom of God. Like a child. Shall not. Enter it. And these words. Like a child. Are important. Whoever does not. Receive the kingdom.

[12 : 44] Like a child. Shall not. Enter it. To such. Belongs. The kingdom of God. Now what did Jesus mean? How are we to understand this?

It's obvious that he wanted. Children to be brought to him. That he saw that children. Had a meaningful place. In church. Are in the kingdom of God. And that nothing was to hinder them.

Coming to him. But what does he mean. For. A. To such. Belong. And. Like a child. I think it means that.

Children of that age. Infants. Have characteristics. That Jesus saw. As an illustration. Of what we must be. In order to enter.

In order to enter. And belong to. The kingdom of God. In order to be Christians. In other words. In the full sense of the word. To actually have that. There are some characteristics.

[13 : 39] That you see. In infants. And young children. That help us to. Help to explain. What Jesus meant. And that's three. I'm going to mention. There are others. You could mention as well. You could think about.

But there are three. Especially I think. That are important. In this regard. The first is. Trust. Trust. I'm not suggesting. By this.

That. Children. Will just believe. Anything you tell them. You know very well. For yourselves. Those of you. Have children. Those of you. Have grandchildren. That's not. Necessarily.

How it works. You tell a child. Well instead of taking. That ice lolly. Just now. It's not good for you. It's just before. Your tea time. Or whatever. Why don't you just. Why don't you just.

Gnaw on a carrot. Instead. It's far better for you. You know what the reaction. Is going to be. Anything like that. So they don't believe. Everything you say to them. In every context. And as we'll see in a minute.

[14 : 32] They actually. Tell it like it is. Sometimes. So. The point is. The point we're making. Is that trust. Really involves. Somebody who is. Trustworthy.

To the child. Will come then. To be trusted in. By them. And that follows through. Into a relationship. With God. With Jesus Christ. As our savior.

And to our membership. Of belonging of the kingdom. Belonging to the kingdom of God. Coming under. The rule of Christ. The rule of God. Because. To have. Someone trust.

In you. Or for us to put our trust. In someone. Really means that. You're doing this. In a way. That has no suspicion. About the person. You're going to trust in.

I mean. When you came. To Jesus. For example. When you come to Christ. And when you come to know Christ. You're trusting in Christ. Obviously. Includes the fact. That you know.

[15 : 26] He's trustworthy. He's worthy of your trust. You can safely put your trust. In him. And that's really what's. Uh. Illustrated. By children. Coming to believe.

Someone that they've regarded. As trustworthy. Grandparent. Parent. Whatever. They come to believe their word. Because they know they're reliable. They've been proved reliable. In the past. They're trustworthy.

So they come to trust in them. They believe. What they say to them. And the important issues of life. Especially. As they're at a young. And. Uh. And formative age. Sadly.

That's. Something that tends to. Decrease. As life goes on. As age. As we age. We lose. That sense of. Of. Of. Seeing people as. Trustworthy.

That's a whole different. Area of study. But however. So. Removing suspicion. Is part of. Coming to trust. In somebody. Or being. Trustworthy.

[16 : 20] And as you come to. God. You. Come to God. And you don't. Suspect God. And you don't. Suspect God's goodness. And you learn. Not to suspect. God's wisdom.

And to suspect. God's motives. You know. That's something. That's not always easy. Depending on. What your providence. Is at any given time. It's very easy.

Just to say. That you're a Christian. Or I'm a Christian. As long as it doesn't get too difficult. As long as it doesn't get too challenging. Or too hurtful. But when you lose somebody.

You love. When somebody. Something happens. That you didn't expect. And causes you. Great grief. And pain. Then it's very easy for us. For me. Including. Myself. To actually have some.

Suspicious thoughts. About. Why is God doing this? Why isn't. Somebody else. Suffering the same things? Why am I going through this? Why has he chosen me. To experience this difficulty?

[17 : 16] And I don't see it going on. And anybody around me. Or anybody that I know. And so. You begin. Perhaps. To suspect. God's goodness. Or to. Just question. The goodness of God.

The wisdom of God. The motives of God. You know. As time goes on. And as you come. To know God more and more. That. Is something that.

Again. Is taken care of. As you experience. How trustworthy God is. And I think one of the. The great challenges in life.

Is to never suspect. The wisdom of God. It's not just the way. That he brings events about. In his plan. But it's the way. He arranges things as well. Isn't it?

Things that he puts together. In the events of our lives. Or in the events of our families. Things that we would never have. Sought to put together ourselves. And things that don't seem. To fit together properly.

[18 : 10] As far as we're looking at them. As concerned. And our understanding is concerned. But as you go on. And as you learn. That God is wise. That God is all wise. That God never makes mistakes. Then you see.

You see. From that. How trustworthy he is. And your trust in him. Is something that then. Repeats itself. Again and again. In other words. The child that comes to trust.

The word of their parent. The infant child. That comes to accept this. And trust in them. It involves their sincerity. They're doing this sincerely.

They're coming to take the word. Of their parent. The advice of their parent. With sincerity. They don't doubt it. They don't find it. In any way. Insincere. Or suspicious.

So they trust. With sincerity. And sincerity belongs. To our trust. It's a great thing. You know. To be able. To speak to God. The way that you feel.

[19 : 08] In your heart. You wouldn't do that. If you didn't trust him. If you didn't find him. Trustworthy. If you didn't find him. Someone. Who knows.

Absolutely. Perfectly. Everything he's doing. And why he's doing it. And children can be like that. If they see that it's. That you're trustworthy. That you're reliable. They'll sometimes really tell it.

Like it is. And they'll come out with things. Which maybe. To you. And to me. You would hesitate to say. At least to say. As bluntly. Or as clearly. Last week.

For example. Our only. Granddaughter. Joanna. When she was with us. For the week. They went swimming. She came back from swimming. And I was. Came down to the kitchen. For coffee or something.

There she was. Just newly back. From her swimming. And I asked her. If. How did it have been swimming. And she said. Yes. It's great. And then she said. Are you not going swimming. No.

[20 : 01] I said. No. I don't go to the swimming. Because. I can't swim. And she said. But you're an adult. And you can't swim. I said. No. I never learned to swim.

You see. This for her. The working of her mind. I'm young. I'm. I'm still. Under five. And I can swim. So. How come you as an adult.

Can't swim. If I can do it. And she told it like it was. That's how she saw it. That's sincerity. That's trust. That's something being open. And that's.

What God. And our trusting in him. Is about. You can tell things to God. You would never dare say. To anyone else. You can be as open with God.

As you find people in the Bible. And that's illustrated. By the openness. Of a child. Who sincerely comes. To speak to their parent. Or grandparent.

[20 : 55] And explains things. Or tries to explain things. Just as they are. As it seems to them. You wouldn't want any other kind of God. To be your God. You wouldn't want any other.

Conditions in the kingdom. Except those conditions. Where you can. Come to this trustworthy God. And speak to him. As you can to nobody else. Isn't that what it means. To be a Christian. Isn't that what it means.

To be a child of God. You know that he's your father. You know that he's trustworthy. You know that he listens to you. He's reliable. He's proved himself time and again. Is that how you see God today.

Or is there just something of a suspicion. That you haven't come to him. And opened up your heart to him. And therefore not yet entered into the kingdom of God. William Gurnall.

One of the great Puritan writers. On sincerity. In his great work. The Christian. In complete armor. Says. Nothing makes you more like God. In the simplicity and purity of his nature.

[21 : 53] Than sincerity. Truth. Is that which God glories in. He is a God. Of truth. And to trust in him.

Is to deal truthfully with him. To accept him as he is. As he reveals himself. And as he tells you. Of how it is with you.

Then from trust you have. Acceptance. You see how easy it is. Sometimes for children. To just accept things. Especially gifts. And especially gifts. That they have asked for themselves.

But even if they haven't. And you come to give them a gift. That you know. They are going to accept. There is no. There is no haggling with children. Say well go on. I would rather a more expensive one. Or I would rather a different one.

To the one you have brought me. It is not like you are. Sometimes buying a car. If you are one of those folks. Like I am. And well I don't like the price. How about taking a bit off it. And you haggle around the price. When God comes to present his kingdom to us.

[22 : 52] He is not selling it. It is not for haggling over. It is not for disputing over. It is not for entering into a bargain with him. It is for our acceptance.

On his terms. Just like you find. In the heart of a child. In the mind of a child. The trust. Is expressed through acceptance. The acceptance.

Of the gift. And you see. That is why you find. Here it is. It is saying. Truly I say. Whoever does not receive. The kingdom of God. Like a child. Shall not enter it.

The child. Receives the gift. From the parent. The grandparent. Whoever. It is something that they accept. And that kingdom of God. That rule of God.

Is not there to be bargained over. It is not to be bought. It is to be received. Because it is God's gift to us. God's salvation.

[23 : 52] Being a member of his kingdom. Belonging to those who are indeed. In Christ. And who have heaven to look forward to. It has not come by our own efforts.

You know that is where. You find verse 17 there. Such a contrast. And very deliberately placed by Mark here. In relation to these verses about children.

As he was setting out on his journey. A man ran up and said to him. Knelt before him. And asked him. Good teacher. What must I do. To inherit eternal life. You see. He has got all the external things in place.

He is even kneeling in the presence of Christ. He is giving him a place of honor. But what comes out of his mouth. Is what must I do. To inherit the kingdom of God. And all the way through the Bible.

Through Christ's teaching. Through the teaching of the apostles. You find it reinforced again and again. To us. As human beings. As fallen. Needy human beings. You don't do things.

[24 : 53] To enter the kingdom of God. God has done everything already for us in Christ. We need to receive what he has done. To receive Jesus.

To receive this salvation. That God has prepared. And perfected in him. So when God offers us. Pardon. And righteousness.

And peace. And joy. Of course that challenges our self-confidence. And our self-assertiveness. And we still have thoughts in our own heads.

That surely I must contribute something to the kingdom of God. And belonging to the kingdom. Surely it is not as free as that. And as easy as that. It is. Says Jesus. And that is what this other man is illustrating for us.

He missed the entrance to the kingdom of God. Because he thought about it as something. He must work his way into. What must I do?

[25 : 51] Have you given up? Trying to create your own entrance to the kingdom of God? I hope you have. Because you'll never do it.

It's been created for us. By God in Christ. The kingdom exists. Salvation is there. It's already perfect.

It's prepared. It's complete. And it's offered to us in the gospel. And the child trusting. In the parent.

The child receiving the gift. Is an illustration for us. Of how we enter the kingdom of God. And indeed. That without that. As Jesus himself says.

Whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child. Shall not enter it. The psalmist. In Psalm 116.

[26 : 48] Knew very well. The same thing. When he said. What shall I render to the Lord? What shall I render to the Lord? For all his benefits to me. And he answered his own question.

By saying. I will take. I will lift up. The cup of salvation. And I will pay my vows. Now in the presence of the Lord. And all his people.

Here is God saying to you today. I'm placing before you in the gospel. The cup of salvation. And it's full to the brim with life. And you haven't earned it.

But I have provided it for you. And what I require of you. Is that you receive it. And take it. And make it yours.

Become like a little child. Put away your own prejudice. Put away your own resistance. Put away your thoughts. Of somehow there's a better way.

[27 : 45] Put away your idea. That you have to contribute something. In order to make it meaningful. To make it fitting for you. None of that. Receive it.

Accept it. Trust the giver of it. And the third thing. I'm just going to finish with this briefly. Along with the trust. Along with acceptance. You have joy or delight.

You know how it is. When children come to trust in someone. They receive a gift from them then. And you can just look at their face. And their delight in that gift. Even if it's a tiny wee. Well a tiny wee Lego toy.

Let's say. That they get on holiday. That some of them. That I know get on holiday. And when they come back. And they show you. Look at this new Lego toy. It's this Lego thing. And put it together. It's only just taking a few minutes.

But they're absolutely delighted. With having it. And with being able to put it together. For themselves. The joy shows in their face. There's just such a sense of discovery.

[28 : 46] There's just a wow factor. If you like to use the term. That they've actually discovered this. That if something new. There's something there. That really delights them. And it's really just what they wanted for that moment.

Well. Isn't there a wow factor in your own soul. With regard to salvation. salvation. Honestly.

We have to confess. Many of us. Myself included. Very often. We've lost. That wow factor. From our lives. Perhaps we had it.

When we first came. To know the Lord. But somehow. It's diminished. It's waned. It's not what it used to be. We sometimes. Just need to sit down. Leave everything else.

Put it aside. Be ourselves with God. And just study. What it means. To be forgiven. To be adopted by God. To be a child of God. To be an heir of heaven.

[29 : 44] To be in union with Christ. To have his acceptance. To have his approval. To have the assurance. That nothing. Will actually stand in the way. Of those who are in Christ.

As far as. They're concerned. There is no condemnation to them. As far as we're concerned. The words of. Of Romans 8. Are so true. But how often.

Do we just miss. The sense of delight. Or have lost. The sense of delight. And if so. Let's recapture it. Myself and yourself. He who spared. Not his own son.

But delivered him up. For us all. How shall he not. With him also. Freely give us. All things. Delight your soul.

In that abundance. Renew. Your sense of discovery. Stop over that. And study it. So that you can just.

[30 : 37] Recapture if you will. That wow factor. That this should be yours. That God should have done this for you. For me.

For our likes. In the words of. The hymn. Wonderful salvation. Written. Many years ago. By. Daniel. O.

Teasley. O wonderful salvation. From every mortal lost. The purchase of our pardon. The blood of Jesus cost.

O glorious invitation. That whosoever will. Has gladdened many millions. And holds out mercy still. O wonderful salvation.

From sin that sets me free. How sweet to know. That Jesus. Would deign my friend to be. I gaze. In silent wonder.

[31 : 35] At him. On Calvary. And marvel. That he suffered. To pardon. Even. Me. May God bless these thoughts to us.

Let's pray. Lord God. Help us. We pray to. Comply with what you have. Set forth. On the terms.

On which we enter your kingdom. Gracious Lord. We need your spirit. To enable us to die. To our own sinful pride. And to come humbly.

On our knees. Into the kingdom of God. We thank you for the assurance. That you will welcome. And receive us when we come. We thank you for the assurance.

That you give us. That even. When we already belong. To your kingdom. And find ourselves. So often stumbling. And falling. And falling short. That you nevertheless.

[32 : 30] Do not cast us out. Bless us today. We pray under your truth. And help us to know. The benefit of. Taking your word. As it stands. And applying it.

To our own lives. Receive our worship. We pray. And cleanse us from all our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well we're singing finally.

To God's praise. Psalm 103. Psalm 103. That's in the Scottish Psalter. And singing from verse 8.

To the tune Kilmaronock. The Lord our God is merciful. And he is gracious. Long suffering. And slow. To wrath and mercy plenteous. He will not chide continually.

Nor keep his anger still. With us he dealt not as we sinned. Nor did we quite. Our ill. Down as far as verse 13. Such pity as a father hath. Unto his children dear.

[33 : 25] Like pity shows the Lord. To such as worship him. In fear. These verses to God's praise. The Lord our God is merciful.

And he is gracious. Long suffering.

And slow to wrath. In mercy plenteous. He will not shine continually.

Darking with andro's still. Where God is merciful. Where God is merciful.

Where God is merciful. Lord has we sinned. Nor did we quite our ill.

[34 : 37] For us the heaven is high. The earth is Hert bay in andro's still. Sh dele ■■■ios.

We is rocket savet. Lord has we wave. God has we will not guarantee. For us the heaven is Dal■a.■■■ ■■■■ near andro's still. He will not be wise. He won't buy evil. So great through God. For us the heaven is Sunday.

For us all to help. Nice faith in andro's still. To help us UFO. For us the VNDs Kesley's temple. For us the moonlight. By us, we listen to the mountain is high. A flourish of sight. A duration of hope. añionES The greater glory.

As far as these decisions from the west so far have been, From us we were bred in His love for our living mercy.

Such pity as the Father has unto His children here, Like pity chose the Lord to such as worship Him in here.

[36 : 17] I'll go to the side door to my right this morning. 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 always. Amen.