

# The Preciousness Of A Child

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 May 2026

Preacher: Rich Chasse

[ 0 : 00 ] A number of years ago, there was a book written called Children's Letters to God. It's a compilation of letters written by six to eight-year-old kids to God.

! They all started with Dear God. Allison wrote, Dear God, I am starting to read my Bible. What does begat mean? Nobody will tell me.

A little girl named Nan wrote, Dear God, I bet it's hard to love all the people. There's only four in my family and I can't do it.

Little Bruce said, Dear God, could you send me a pony? I've never asked for anything. You can check. Little Joyce said, Dear God, thanks for my baby brother, but I prayed for a puppy.

Little Elliot said, Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying. The question I want to ask is, would we expect God to be as interested in the thoughts of a six-year-old as he would be in the thoughts of a 26-year-old or a 56-year-old?

[ 1 : 30 ] The average rabbi at the time of Christ would have answered that question by saying, No, not at all. In the Talmud, which is their commentary on the Old Testament, now be aware the Old Testament didn't teach this, but their commentary and the way that they thought of children, which was not unusual among all the cultures in that day, would be that children are just not a priority.

They're not high on the list of priorities, of things that are important. And that's what we're going to kind of deal with today in our three passages.

We're going to look at a very familiar story. The old King James suffered not the little children to come unto me, or suffer the little children. I forget how it's supposed to. The word suffer doesn't mean what it does today and all of that.

But this is a story that's told in all three of the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And we're going to look at all three of them. There's only three or four verses in each account, so it's not hard to do that.

And then we're going to ask the three questions, three big questions surrounding this story, these passages here. So I want to start with our passage in Luke.

[ 2 : 50 ] We are going through the Gospel of Luke. And so here we go. Large crowds, of course, still gathered around Jesus. In one of the Gospels, I believe it's in Matthew, the idea of huge, massive crowds, even to the point of trampling, these people are trying to get around Jesus.

And it's in this context this scene happens. Now, they were bringing even infants to him, Luke says, that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

And again, the prevailing idea, children are just not that important. Jesus has more important things to do. That's the kind of thinking there. But Jesus called unto him, or called them to him, saying, let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

And so we're going through this portion of Scripture where Jesus is proclaiming very loudly, the kingdom of God is at hand, right?

The drums are beating. The drum beats are getting louder. This presentation of Jesus to the Israelites as their king is coming.

[ 4 : 09 ] The kingdom of God is at hand. It's staring you in the face. It's right in front of you. What will you do with the kingdom of God? And he says that for such belongs, children, the kingdom of God.

Well, what is that about? And he says, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

What does that mean? We're going to answer that. And then you come over to Matthew's gospel, and he tells the same story. Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray.

And so a little different nuance. Luke mentions infants. Matthew calls them children. Different Greek word here. And then he's laying his hands on them and praying for them.

So little nuances of differences between the way Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell the story. The disciples rebuked the people. What would that look like? Hey, keep your kids away from Jesus.

[ 5 : 20 ] Wow. I mean, but Jesus said, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. And the idea repeated there.

And he laid his hands on them and went away. Matthew's account is the briefest of the three. And then in Mark's account, it says that they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them.

And the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant. And so Mark adds this little piece of information, not that Jesus was saying, hey guys, hold on.

It's that he was mad. He was indignant. Indignant meaning bent over. Grieved, sore displeased, though old King James would say.

And said to them, let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. And here Mark repeats exactly word for word, what Luke told us.

[ 6 : 25 ] 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.

And so here we see even Jesus taking the time to hold these little ones, as the parents are bringing them to him, to be blessed by him.

And so I want to ask three questions surrounding this story and the importance that this story plays to this idea, the kingdom of God is at hand.

How does that fit in? And is there a relationship to the story that follows, which all three accounts tell us, which is the story of the rich young ruler?

And some commentaries that I've looked at combine the two stories and see them as related. I thought about that and thought, well, if I tried to preach both of those stories in one sermon, we'd be here for a couple hours.

[ 7 : 28 ] You might not like that. So we're going to divide them up and do it this way. But here's the first question that we want to ask here. And these are questions everybody is wanting to know.

Why in the world did the disciples seek to prevent the parents from bringing their children to Jesus? Why would they do that? What was their thinking?

And again, the prevailing thinking of their day, the prevailing perception in the first century was that children were simply not that important. And in our culture as well, there can be a mindset that children are to be seen and not what?

Heard. Oh, you've heard that before. Children are to be seen but not heard. And that kind of thinking was prevalent then and it still sticks around today in our world.

But in their culture, they went perhaps I would say a little bit further and it was due to some of the realities around being a child in the first century. Basically, there were 20% of children born that did not survive to their fifth birthday.

[ 8 : 48 ] And so parents tried to, at least were encouraged to not be attached to their kids at an early age because you wouldn't want to be disappointed if and when they would pass away.

So oftentimes in those cultures, they would not name their children early on. They would wait until their children were older and then perhaps those children would display some sort of characteristic by which then they could be named.

And that was true even more so for servants or slaves. Even to the point that slave children were often named not with a personal name but by a number.

In other words, the firstborn of a slave woman would be called first or one and then the second one would be called second and so forth.

even to the point where you see characters in stories and people in history. For instance, if you watch The Chosen, there is a Roman soldier character by the name of Quintus.

[ 9 : 58 ] That's just the number five. And so that tells you a little bit about his background probably as a slave to begin with and use the Roman army as a way to improve his lot in life as it were.

And so these circumstances then were part of the reality that they lived in. And so children, particularly little children, were not meant to be something that you would get attached to.

Something that in our day, we kind of struggle with that a little bit. How could they do that? And you'll see that even these parents that are bringing their children to Jesus, they are attached to their kids.

They want their children to survive. They want Jesus' blessing so that they do. And you'll notice that Jesus is not taking these little children in his arms and then saying, well, this one's not going to survive past his fifth birthday, so let me get on to the next one.

You know, he's not doing any of that kind of sort of thing. Again, in their culture, children were expendable. They were, in some respects, things to be done away with.

[ 11 : 13 ] In some cultures in our world today, daughters, for instance, are not considered valuable and are given away or aborted because boys are more prized.

That was certainly true in their day as well. In our day, we have this thing called abortion where we have devalued children to the point of saying, well, we're going to clean it up a little bit.

We're not going to allow them to be born, and that makes it easier on our conscience. And so we will kill children. We'll make them expendable through the function of abortion.

And because we never get to see their tiny faces or their little hands, we really won't get attached to them that way and make it easier for us and more convenient.

And matter of fact, we'll make a money-making industry out of the whole process and benefit from that. And you consider that thought press in the context of what Jesus just was teaching, how...

[ 12 : 30 ] No. It is grotesque to think that. It is utter horror to think of what we are doing to our children in that.

We've made it worse even yet. Now, after our children are born, we will over-sexualize them at a younger age, younger and younger age, and create in them a sense of gender confusion to the point of butchering them as children and butchering genitals and making of them and confusing them and causing chaos in our society as a result of it.

This is all as a result of what has happened to our nation in terms of the downfall of Christianity. As Christianity has become less and less influential in our world, these practices of abortion, of gender mutilation, of over-sexualizing our kids, of coming to accept pedophilia, that's, by the way, if you don't know that, it is on the horizon.

It's already here. The idea that children can be used for those purposes. I have a hard time saying some of these things in basic ways.

I don't want to. But yet, that is the reality that we live in in our world today. And much of it is due to the idea that as a Christian nation, the influence of our Christianity has waned so much that these practices are accepted and government endorsed and profited by in our world.

[ 14 : 33 ] And it is abhorrent that it would come to that. These things were in existence in Jesus' day as well.

Abortion was not something that was practiced because of how dangerous it would have been. And so they simply allowed the children to be born. And then they would... Let me fill in some blanks.

This is hard for me to speak in these ways, but this next part will be hard. To be a child was, in many ways, to be endangered. That was true then.

It's true today. Infanticide, which is the killing of children, was legal and common in that day. At least that part is, for us, illegal.

Often by exposure. They would take a child that was not wanted. And the nursing, the delivery nurses, the...

[ 15 : 46 ] What do they call the nurses? What is it? Midwives. Yeah. They played a huge role in determining whether a baby would be kept or not. The midwife would examine the child.

If the child had any defect of any kind, it was immediately rejected. Rearing a child was already dangerous enough that if a child had any sort of defect, certainly you wouldn't want to keep that child.

And often exposure was how they were gotten rid of. They would take them outside of town, expose them on a little hill, and allow an animal to come and dispose of the child.

That's... I don't know how else to say that, but that was the reality of the day in which they lived. It's practiced in these cultures. The other group of people that would take advantage when a child was left in exposure, there were others who would watch out for them and would go and collect these children from their places of exposure, collect them, raise them either for the sex trade or to sell into slavery later on, and so they would gain a profit from doing that as well.

This is the world, this is the sin-sick world that we live in. And this is the world in which Jesus was introduced and began to change the thoughts of how we view children and how we value children.

[ 17 : 31 ] So that's the first question. Here's the second question. Why did Jesus react so strongly to their efforts to hinder the children from being brought to him?

There's a couple reasons that I will bring about. First is theological. The other is perhaps more moral. The theological question, we'll get to this, for the disciples to hinder children's access to Jesus was a distortion of the gospel that Jesus was proclaiming.

The gospel itself. And you might say, well, how does that work? What does that mean?

Well, remember what Jesus said about kids, about children? I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

So Jesus is teaching this message of the gospel and he's using children now as a prime example of how we attain the kingdom of God, how we attain salvation itself.

[ 18 : 41 ] we need children to be models of that. It reminded me of another incident that seems in a way similar but yet different.

But it was another scene, another incident that brought a distortion to the gospel. And we find out about it in Galatians chapter 2. There was this scene, this interest in the early church of what's going to happen with the church.

Do you have to become Jewish first in order to become Christian? Or do you have to just be a Christian? Do you have to just trust in Christ alone to save you?

Or do you first have to become Jewish? Meaning, do you first have to become circumcised? Do you have to go and wash at the temple and be introduced there and swear at the temple to God and then become a Christian?

Or do you, is it just through Christ alone? And a huge issue. And circumcision played a huge role. And as you read Paul's letters, you'll read that there was much confusion about this as you read through the book of Acts as well.

[ 19 : 55 ] Confusion about this was circumcision necessary for salvation. And of course, the overwhelming conclusion is absolutely not. We come to faith in Christ alone.

We don't do anything to earn this free gift of God. And so what was happening in the churches in Galatias, Paul was there preaching the gospel to these mostly Gentile people and they were coming to faith in Christ.

And oh my goodness, what do we do with them? What do we do with these Gentiles who are coming to Christ? How do we relate to them? Because we can't eat the same food. We can't, you know, they're not circumcised. What's going on?

How do we deal with this? And Paul is like, well, we just let them in. We just accept them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

There's no distinction between Jew and Gentile. He tells us that later on in Galatians. But what happened was Peter came for a visit. Peter came from Jerusalem for a visit to see what was going on.

[ 20 : 58 ] And as he's at these churches, he's eating with the Gentiles too. And he's eating their food and it's all great and stuff. But then a delegation from the Judaizers comes from Jerusalem and they're coming to observe and see what's happening.

And so when that group arrives, this group of Jews who is like, hey, maybe circumcision is necessary. Peter ignores eating with the Gentiles and only eats with the Jews during that time. and Paul kind of loses it and calls out Peter in front of everybody. Now, you might would say, well, wouldn't it have been better to pull him aside?

No, because what Peter did was out in the open. And so the confrontation needed to be out in the open. And Paul confronted Peter and said, hey, Peter, actually calls him Cephas, his old name. You can't do this. You're betraying the gospel to the point where Paul concludes it by saying, I do not nullify the grace of God.

[ 22 : 09 ] Peter, what you're doing by ignoring these Gentiles is nullifying the grace of God. You're trying to make people go back to earning their way to heaven.

And you can't do that. You cannot poison the gospel in that way. So I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

What was the point of Christ going to the cross if you have to come through the law? And that same idea is at stake here in this story of these little kids coming to Jesus to be blessed.

That's what's happening here. And we'll talk, we'll show that a little bit later. It is through what, it is these children that are demonstrating to us what it means to come in faith and to trust Christ and

Christ alone as the gospel message.

And so we dare not get this wrong. These children matter to God for this reason. The second thing that I would say here is this, and you have this on your notes too.

[ 23 : 25 ] To this day, wherever the gospel of Christ is accepted and proclaimed, the value of children rises. And so what I would say we need in our nation is a revival.

A revival of Christian thought, of Christian practice, of people putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

And when people do that, wherever, if you look throughout history, if you look throughout Western civilization, Western civilization has gotten a bad rap in the last few decades.

And I don't quite understand why. Because basically what they're saying is that Western civilization or a.k.a. Christian civilization is somehow evil.

And we need to neutralize it. And we need to allow other cultures and other civilizations to thrive.

Well, understand that Western civilization basically represents the coming of Christianity and Christianity taking charge or taking over much like it did in Rome.

[ 24 : 38 ] Rome was a very pagan nation worshiping pagan gods and eventually Rome fell because of Christianity. And all of these nations became quote-unquote Christian nations and began to value children in ways that other cultures never did.

And that's what we've seen at the birth of our own nation and our own country. We recognize that children have value. And the only reason we believe that is because of our Christian foundation. Because of how we as a nation began and how we've grown as a nation and we've had bad things in our history that have been righted through the years.

But because of that, that's why we view children. And now these last few decades, 50 years, we've seen the degradation of our view of children to the point where we're killing them in the womb at will, paying people to do this, and we're doing all sorts of things, terrible things, to children as a result of the downfall of Christianity in our culture.

And so there's a very dear cost to this. and other cultures that want to, I'll use the word invade, want to invade our culture here, what we have built and grown into here as a nation.

[ 26 : 13 ] They are bringing views of children that are very ugly. For instance, we have many Islamic people, Muslims, who are coming to our nation and bringing their culture and their ideas of slavery, pedophilia, child brides, abortion, all of it, it's all a part of what they're bringing into our culture.

And there are those among us who would say, well, they're equal cultures. No. No, sir. It is Christianity.

It is through the message of Christ that there begins to be a moral fabric that is built, a moral foundation that is built that we stand on, that God blesses.

And the more that we walk away from our Christian foundation, the more that we walk away from our Christian faith, the more we will see the degradation of our own nation.

and we won't have what we once had as a country. And the gospel of Christ will become lessened and lessened as a result of it.

[ 27 : 34 ] And so the idea of abandonment of children, destroying children, sexualizing children, strapping bombs to children and using them for terror, these are not good things.

And it is Christianity that tells us the value of children. Now, I want to answer the question is this, and this is one where you might get a little mad at me, so bear with me.

what is the specific characteristic of child likeness to which our Lord is referring, which is necessary for anyone to enter into the kingdom?

So if Jesus tells us that we've got to be like these little kids, that there's something about these kids that allows them to enter the kingdom of heaven, what is it that we need to mimic?

what is it that we need to make sure that we have as a characteristic in my own life? And I've got a few answers for you, and you can kind of see those on your notes as well.

[ 28 : 53 ] And Jesus again said it this way, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter into it. That seems pretty important to me, wouldn't you think?

if you want to enter the kingdom of God, and here's the participation part of the sermon where I'm asking you to raise your hand and we'll find out if you're paying attention. How many of you want to enter into the kingdom of God?

All right, yeah. Okay, I've got you. Let's talk about a few characteristics of kids and see if these fit because these first two, I think, are interesting topics, but I'm not sure that they quite fit.

And this first one has to do with humility. And I would say it's not the humility of a child. It's not that. Are children so humble? Has that been your experience with kids? the humility of a child?

[ 30 : 03 ] That's interesting. Seems like they want something, they get something. Another parallel passage is found in Matthew chapter 18 when his disciples asked this question.

At the time the disciples came to Jesus saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Because they were interested in that. They wanted to know that, right? They were arguing, well, who's going to be the greatest?

Is it going to be James? Is it going to be John? Juan? And Jesus has an interesting answer to their question about who is the greatest in the kingdom.

Calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, truly, can you imagine being this kid? Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ooh, never enter the kingdom of heaven unless you become like children. and whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[ 31 : 20 ] And he uses that word, whoever humbles himself. What is that about? Are children naturally humble?

In reality, children have nothing. So, you can't call them humble, and perhaps that's what Jesus is referencing. But it's not their mindset.

Children are not, by attitude or mindset, humble. Are they? Because, you know, when they want their bottle, right, do they ask politely?

Are they nice about it? Are our children, answer, answer, and here's where, this is all part of the part where you're going to get mad at me because I'm going to make children look bad.

Are children polite when they ask for stuff? Or do you have to constantly remind them to use the word please, thank you? How many of you taught your kids to say the word no?

[ 32 : 28 ] No. No. No. No. Well, Johnny, just remember when you disagree with something, use your words, use the word no, it's a simple word, no, and can you say it with me?

Of course not. You don't even have to, it's like the first thing they learn is the word no. And for the stuff that they want, they don't even ask, they just cry.

What is that? I mean, if I did that, people would look thinking, well, Rich is crazy. But a baby doesn't, and it's like, oh, that's so cute. Children, like their parents, are born sinners.

And like their parents, we are not naturally humble at all. It's something that we have to learn through the grace of God, what it means to be humble.

So it's not so much their attitude of humility. There's something about children that's humble. We'll get to that in a moment that I think that Jesus is referring to here.

[ 33 : 43 ] Here's another one that bothers me, that it's probably not childlike faith. Because we hear this phrase used quite a bit, and if you would ask me even a few years ago, or even not that long ago even, well, what is it about kids that makes them so amenable to the kingdom of heaven?

What is it about kids that makes them accept Christ so easily? And I would have said childlike faith, childlike faith.

You guys familiar with the idea of childlike faith, right? do children have childlike faith? That's an interesting question.

Because we're told that children are by nature trusting. Would you say that's true? Children by nature are trusting. I actually might would agree with that.

Sort of. Now here's the part where you're going to get mad at me. Oh, by nature children are trusting.

[ 35 : 06 ] Luke points out, and Luke is the one who tells us this, that they were bringing infants. How trusting can an infant be? How can an infant demonstrate childlike faith?

A three-year-old? Yeah. Maybe even a two-year-old? Okay. An infant? Childlike faith? I would struggle with that.

Is it so much that that's what Jesus is highlighting here? I don't think it is. I don't think it is. Is it more that they are gullible?

more so than they are trusting? Now the darts are going to come my way.

Because I want to demonstrate what I mean by that. I can play a little game with a little child, with a toddler.

[ 36 : 22 ] And you guys are all familiar with this little game because you've all played this little game with your little ones. Or if you don't have kids, if you're nieces, nephews,! Whatever.

You've all done this. Tell me what I'm doing when I do this. Right?

And I peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! And when I'm hiding behind my hands or my book or whatever it is, I'm in, I heard someone say, I'm invisible.

Now, is it just that I'm connecting with the child, right? And they just love that mom or dad are paying attention and having fun and smiling and all of that.

That's a part of it, absolutely. If you could get into their little minds and do they really believe that daddy is invisible in that moment?

[ 37 : 27 ] I don't know, but they're having fun like I am. It's the same idea that I can, you know, pull a coin out from behind their ear and believe that I actually did that.

And it wasn't just some sleight of hand to do that. In the book of Proverbs, it talks about a category of people called the simple.

Other ways of translating that word are the naive, believe. The gullible would fit there too. The inexperienced, one translation uses that word there.

But the simple believes everything. Our children, do they have a tendency to believe everything you tell them? Yeah, if you're convincing, you can get a child to believe most anything.

But the prudent gives thought to his steps. And it even gets to the point of danger. Proverbs 27, the prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

[ 38 : 39 ] Like the child who's getting ready to run into the street or touch the hot stove. Because of their lack of experience, because they don't know, they make poor choices.

So as a mom and dad, of course, our responsibility is to lead them in ways that are righteous and true and not to lead them into danger and to falsehood.

So what is it? What is it about kids that is so attractive? What is it about kids that we need to ourselves attain to that allows us entrance into the kingdom of heaven?

would say it's this utter helplessness. Because these infants, they couldn't even bring themselves to Jesus.

They were relying on someone else. Matter of fact, they're relying on someone else to feed them, change them, to shelter them, to do everything for them. them. And it's that mindset that we need to bring to our standing before God, to our relationship before God.

[ 39 : 54 ] We can only come to Christ in our truly destitute state. And we truly are destitute. destitute. Whether we think we are or not, it's best if we think of ourselves as being truly destitute.

I've got nothing. Well, you might say, well, I've got a few bucks. I've, you know, I've got a house to live. No, you've got nothing. Because even what you do have, you don't own it, not really, not in the scope of eternity.

When you die from this world, you're not taking any of it with you. You've got nothing. You come into this world naked and alone. You leave this world naked and alone.

We look to Him and to His grace alone. We can't bring anything. We have to come empty-handed. And if a child is anything, he is empty-handed.

He's got nothing. And the thing which commends children or anyone to Christ is their helplessness, not their goodness.

[ 41 : 04 ] Because they don't have any and neither do you and I. We just don't. Any of the goodness that we have is not our own. It comes from Christ. There's an interesting story, and I mentioned this earlier, the rich young ruler that comes right after this.

And there's a reason why in all three gospels, the story of the rich young ruler, comes right after the story of the little children coming to Jesus. And you remember this rich young ruler, and we find out from the context that that's what this guy is.

He's wealthy, he has means, and he has authority. He's a ruler. And he's also been brought up very well, very religious. And so this rich young ruler comes to Jesus and asks a question.

It happens right after this. We're going to see this in a couple weeks when we get to this passage. A ruler asked him, good teacher, that's how he refers to Jesus, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Good question. It's a good question, right? It's a question that all of us should ask at some point in our lives. We need to ask and answer this question because it's of eternal significance.

[ 42 : 21 ] And Jesus said to him this, why do you call me good? Almost, it's almost like I'm going to get caught up here in your title for me.

But there's a reason why Jesus asks this question. Why do you call me good? Because no one is good except God alone. I just said that, right?

We don't have any goodness of our own. No one is good except God alone. So if he's calling him good teacher, is this man recognizing that Jesus is God?

By asking the question. I don't think this guy is. And Jesus goes on and says, you know what the law says.

You know, don't commit adultery and honor your father and mother and don't kill and don't lie. And here's this young man's response to that question, to that charge.

[ 43 : 28 ] Don't, all these commands, don't do these things. He said, all these I have kept from my youth. Oh, really? Really? Really?

Now we're going to see the answer to that. We're going to see the ending of that story in a couple of weeks. But this is this man's perverse idea of what it means to be saved.

And Jesus is trying to communicate, no, no, no, you come with nothing. You don't have anything. There's nothing that you have to offer. So come empty handed. Lord, I've got nothing.

Like this humble child, not because the child is acting humble, because the reality for this child is that he is humble. He's got nothing.

[ 44 : 41 ] He has no possessions. He has no righteousness of his own. He's got nothing to offer. That's the best place for us.

Best place for us. It's to come empty handed before God. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Matthew 5 3.

Literally bankrupt in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The best place you can be when you finally recognize I've got nothing.

Just like a child. Just like an infant who has nothing. That's why an infant, that's why a child represents what it means when we come to faith in Christ.

We come with nothing. It is only by faith in Christ that we are accepted. Now, with what Jesus did there, and I've been alluding to this throughout, the impact of what Jesus did here, not just his words, but his actions with these little children, what has been the impact of that in culture, in our culture, and I do want to address that a little bit more directly here.

[ 46 : 10 ] The impact of Jesus' actions on our culture. Don't, first of all, number one, don't underestimate the value or the personal worth of children. Don't.

Don't do that. Don't do remember when the disciples were rebuking parents for bringing their little children to Jesus, Jesus was indignant, indignant over that small, little infraction as we would think about it.

one day we're going to have to stand before the Lord in judgment. What do you think will be his response to our view of abortion?

our view of children?

children. That we would allow abortion to happen, that we would even vote vote for support or support candidates that would prop up that industry and let it prosper and operate under our noses.

[ 48 : 01 ] And some people would say, well, Rich, why did you have to make this political? political? No, sir. No, ma'am.

I didn't make this political. You did. this is a Jesus issue. This is a moral issue.

And if the issues revolving your pocket book or your personal economy are more important to you than how we as a culture handle children, children, how was Jesus going to look upon that?

If Jesus was indignant simply because the disciples were getting in the way of parents bringing their children to Jesus, indignant, I do not want to face the fiery judgment of life, is it important that we allow our Christianity to influence the way that we vote and who we look at as candidates and those kinds of issues?

our relationship with Christ ought to invade every aspect of our lives and ought to be sovereign over every aspect of our lives.

[ 50 : 08 ] I don't say this lightly and I realize that through the years we've had people that have left our church as a result of me speaking up about issues like this and that's fine.

I would rather endure that than to have to stand before Jesus and answer the question, Rich, why were you afraid to speak about the importance of children and the value of children? When I demonstrated to you in the Gospels, just how important children are and their value. So, yes, don't underestimate the personal worth of children and allow that truth to impact every aspect of your life.

We ought to be informed. Now, the same would hold true for mistreatment of children. We should not tolerate mistreatment, abandonment of children, all of those things.

[ 51 : 26 ] And we ought to be supporting ministries like the West Shore Family Support that's working to help parents and their children survive and thrive.

Secondly, I will say this, don't overlook the daily pressure parents face. one of the things that I hear often and I'm guessing I can be guilty of this and Lord, forgive me if I do this.

I don't want to do this. Don't ever, Lord, don't ever let me think this way. When I observe other parents or if you observe other parents and other children today, my kids have all grown and married and so I'm out of the woods, right?

I'm done. I'm just doing the grandparenting thing now, which is a whole lot different than the parenting thing. And we have a tendency, and I'll use the word we, we have a tendency to look at parents today with young children and be judgmental children.

Oh, my kids would never do that. When I was raised, I don't know, I don't know. You can fill in the blanks with my hum and hum and hum. I would say that raising children today is a unique challenge than what it was even 10 years ago, certainly 20, 30 years ago.

[ 53 : 14 ] parents today are facing challenges that many of us never had to face. Same thing is true in schools and teachers working in the school systems.

It is different. And it is unique. And a lot of it is brought on by our sinful culture. I would agree with that. But rather than sitting in judgment, rather than looking and complaining, let's be supportive. Let's get behind parents who are facing some of these unique challenges. Let's pray for them. Let's support them.

Let's encourage them. them. Let's step in the gap. And then number three, don't discourage the spiritual decisions of children.

When your little child comes and wants to ask questions about being saved at five years old, seven years old, cherish those conversations.

[ 54 : 42 ] They may not quite be ready yet at that age. Maybe they are. Every child is different. Every child's maturity, every child's personality, temperament is different.

different. If you've had more than one child, you know how different your kids can be. And so, I would just encourage you to not discourage those kinds of conversations or those kinds of questions.

And when they're ready, allow them to make those decisions. Some of the people that have come to faith in Christ have come at a very early age.

I was 17, so I wasn't what I would call a kid. I mean, I was still a kid. I'd call myself a punk at 17. But my wife Sherry was six years old, I think.

She was very young. And I had met others who were younger still who've come to faith in Christ.

And yes, some of them had to work through some doubt later on, but it's all part of the conversation.

[ 55 : 57 ] It's all part of how God works in the hearts and minds of our little ones as well. So be an encouragement to that. Make sure that you're taking time for those conversations.

You can't do this if you're always rushed and hurried and not valuing your children. Right? So take the time, demonstrate their value by how much time you're willing to give those kinds of conversations and be willing to have those and encourage them and ask questions as needed.

How many times have I learned lessons, spiritual lessons from my kids as they were growing up? And that's multiple times that I've had to learn spiritual lessons of maturity through my own children. children. So we all need that, encourage that. So let's go to the Lord in prayer. Thank you for coming today. Lord, we just love you and thank you for this demonstration of how you responded around children and how you cause us to look at children and to see what is it about children that ought to inform our own relationship with you.

And yes, I want to be humble, but that's a struggle. And yes, I want to have a childlike faith, a simple, pure, unadulterated faith.

[ 57 : 48 ] But Lord, most of all, I want you to know and I want to fully understand for myself that I am utterly helpless without you.

I have nothing to offer you. you are God, God of the universe, the sovereign king of all. You don't need me.

You don't need anything I have. I have no righteousness within me. Everywhere I look within me, I can see my own sinfulness.

But Lord, in your grace and your mercy, in your infinite covenant love for me, you offer me salvation.

salvation. You offer me your kingdom, your family. You offer me yourself. And I do not deserve you.

[ 59 : 14 ] But you love me. And you give me your grace. I pray that we would all recognize how utterly helpless we are before you.

We have nothing to offer, that none of us are good. We're all sinful. There's nothing we can do to wash it away. There's nothing we could do to receive your forgiveness in and of ourselves.

It is only through Christ. It is only through faith in Christ that we can be forgiven. and that we receive this incredible gift of eternal life.

And now, Lord, for the rest of my days, with all that is in me, I want to live for you, even though I still fail, even though I still stumble, even though for decades I've been doing this, and yet I still struggle. Help me to understand that it is this struggle, that's what it means, that's what it means to live the Christian life, is the struggle to empty myself and to fill myself up with you, to allow you to fill me and use me according to your will and your plan.

[ 60 : 48 ] And Lord, I know it's not until I see you face to face will that struggle always be there within me. But on that day, when this life is through, and I see you face to face, there will be no more struggle.

for I will be made completely holy in your presence. And what a day that will be.

Until then, Lord, may I serve you, only you, and may I be faithful. I pray for us as a nation.

Lord, we are deserving of your judgment. Yet we know that there is still a remnant in our country, maybe somewhat large remnant, but still a minority, of people who love you and want to serve you and who do value children.

And yet, Lord, there is an evil in our midst, an evil that would destroy and butcher and dehumanize children.

[ 62 : 22 ] Lord, I pray that we would not stand for that. I pray, Lord, that we would stand for what is true and what is right, what is honorable in our world.

Lord, we love you. We pray for your blessing as we continue to serve you, live for you with all that we have.

We ask it now in Jesus' name. Amen.