

Helpless Like A Child

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[0:00] As we've mentioned before, since chapter 9, verse 51, Jesus has been on his way to Jerusalem. And he's not just going for vacation, he's going to die.

! Going to die for his people. I've been impressed as we've gone this journey with him of his heart for his people. And it's even borne out today as he encourages and instructs his disciples and those who are listening.

Or listening. Along the way, he's talked about how people will wait for his kingdom.

They'll have to wait. We're in that time. We're waiting for Jesus to come back. We long for the day of the Son of Man when everything will be made right.

And he says during this last several verses that we've looked at, that there's coming a day when he will separate the saved from the unsaved.

[1:05] And in the midst of it, he points out that he even wishes that the Pharisees would come to him. Last time we've begun a section in which he deals with how a person comes to the kingdom.

Last time we looked at the Pharisee and the tax collector. How he warned those who come announcing what they are and what they haven't done.

That they won't enter the kingdom. They'll be humbled. Warned those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. And he taught that there's nothing that a person can do to earn a spot in the kingdom of God.

And today as he continues that thought of entering the kingdom, he clarifies a point even further by explaining what kind of a person can enter the kingdom.

He says one that is like a child. And so we'll look at that as we continue through Luke. Let's look at Luke chapter 18 verses 15 to 17.

[2:25] Luke chapter 18.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for this passage. I thank you that it makes clear some things about entering the kingdom that we need to keep clear in our minds.

This whole world needs to keep clear in their minds. I pray that you would be with us and help us to make this clear in our presentation of the gospel. I pray that today as the gospel is presented, it will be clear to those who need to hear it.

And I pray that you would be with us. Lord, how many today need this clarification to show that they're not trusting in Christ, but trusting in themselves, but need to not trust in themselves, but trust in Christ.

I pray that you would be with us. Your spirit would lead, guide my words, guide the hearing of your word, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, Luke puts these accounts together and he's getting to a specific point, and that is the idea of how people come into the kingdom.

[4:03] What kind of people come into the kingdom? And so Luke relates at this point that there were people who, children who came to Jesus. I would imagine he was pretty popular.

I would imagine that the kids liked him. The kids are pretty good about gauging character, and I'm sure when they saw Jesus, they knew there was no guile in him. They knew that he was not a shady character.

He was, after all, righteous in every way and loving, and he loved people, and it was obvious and evident that he was the kind of person that people like to be around, unless they're trying to earn their way to heaven.

But when these children came around, they wanted to be with Jesus, and I think more importantly here, it points out that the parents wanted these children to be with Jesus.

Parents were bringing their children, and this passage mentions in the first part that it was even infants. Now the other two Gospels that have mentioned in this account don't mention that idea that

it was even infants, but this account does mention that it's infants, and then he changes to little children.

[5:09] And so parents were bringing these young people, these very young children, to Jesus. And they wanted them to be blessed. Now it doesn't say exactly why, but let me just give you a couple of facts about that time period.

Many children, many children did not make it to adulthood. And so a parent would come concerned. They would have a child and begin to love that child, and many would lose some of their children. And their heart broke. And as they were thinking about, you know, life, and how it was tough for anyone to see someone have a child, and see it actually grown to be a full-grown person, the mortality rate was so high that bringing a child to Jesus to be blessed was probably something they saw as very helpful.

And it says they brought the children to Jesus for him to touch them. Now, we know from Mark chapter 10 and Matthew chapter 19 that this isn't just that Jesus wanted to go around laying hands on the heads of kids.

We know that the idea of touching them means to lay a hand on a child's head and to pray over them. And it meant to bless them.

[6:44] People all through Scripture often brought their children to men of God to be prayed over and blessed. We find the first example in Scripture that we know of in Genesis 48, 14.

It says, And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim and stretched out who was the younger and his left hand on the head of Manassas. Remember, he crossed. It says, Crossing his hands from Manassas was the firstborn.

And then Israel blessed those two boys. Joseph got all upset. No, it's this way. He knew what he was doing. But he was blessing those.

And if you're going a little further in the book of Genesis, you'll find that Israel, Jacob, blessed all of his children. Pronounced God's blessing on them.

Prayed God's blessing on them. It was something that men of God would do for children and for their own children. And so these people see this great man of God, a man who's done things no one else has done.

[7:48] And they bring those most dear to them to him to ask that he would bless them. Both good health and be able to grow and that God would make them great.

Great was relative. For many, it was, Lord, make my son to know Christ and serve him with all of his heart and life. I'm sure for some, it was make my daughter to marry a rich man.

Any kind of things people might want as far as a blessing. And so the day was probably very busy and they were probably parents with children mulling all around.

It just says they are bringing, it's a constant idea. They're bringing children to Jesus for him to bless them. And the disciples, we're not sure why, begin to get bothered by that.

And so they start rebuking people. All right, all you folks with kids stand over here thinking, oh, we're going to make a new line and it'll be expressed. No, you guys go home.

[8:59] The master doesn't have time for you today. Now, we don't know exactly why, but again, some things that were true of children in that day. Children in that day had no standing in society.

We look at a child as precious. We see a person walking with children and often brings a smile to our face. We think, oh, that's such a blessing. But children, they didn't have that standing in society in that day.

Don't get attached. They probably won't make it. That's a crude thing to think, but often in society, children were not that which you grew, those who you grew close to because many of them didn't make it.

And the disciples are thinking, they're just children. Most of them won't be here next year anyway. Anyway. Possibly. The other thing that was true about children in that day is that they were not profitable until they were old enough to contribute to the welfare of the family.

Until they could work. They're just kids. Don't worry about them. It could be that they thought that certainly one as important as Jesus just doesn't have time for kids.

[10:25] I mean, after all, it looks like he's the Messiah. It looks like he'll be ruling the earth. He'll be reigning over all. It looks like he will throw off Rome and he will be the supreme emperor.

Why would he want to bother with kids that weren't even from Jerusalem? Kids that weren't even children of rulers. They weren't even important kids. They were just kids of common folks.

Step aside. There's no time for you to see Jesus. But Jesus then takes and rebukes his disciples. He calls them together and says, no, stop doing that.

Let the children come and forbid them not. Jesus is telling these disciples something that's totally contrary to the thinking of the day.

Children are precious. And they should be precious to parents and probably were to these parents. But children are precious to God.

[11:28] Let the children come. So Christian parent, I want to remind you that of that mentality that Jesus has, let the children come.

Don't wait until your children are old enough in your mindset to start sharing the gospel with them. Don't wait until they're old enough to be profitable in the church to share the gospel with them. Jesus would have you let them come now. He would have you to teach them the things of the kingdom of God. He would have you to point them to Christ. He would have you to bring them to Christ.

One of the most dear things God has given of your children. Bring them to Christ.

Even, not only just bring them, but even children are able to come to Christ. That's why we don't exclude children when we talk about evangelism or exclude them in our evangelism.

[12:34] Because children can come to the kingdom of God. Can come to know Christ as Savior. Oh, but that's too complicated. No, that's the very point of what Jesus is going to teach here.

It is not complicated. Children can come. We need to be careful to evangelize our children.

Evangelize children where we can. Because they are able to come to Christ.

And Jesus does desire that they come to him. Statistics. I don't know how good they are.

Sometimes it's profitable.

Sometimes it's not. When do most people come to know the Lord? Before they're 18. Not all. But a good group of people do.

Why is that? I think many come to Christ early in life because they come as a child. The very thing that Jesus is going to teach.

[13:37] So, take the gospel to them, parents. Take the gospel to them, church. Children can come. Children often have the right mindset to hear the gospel and to trust Christ.

Now, I'm not saying that they don't have to know they're sinners. They have to know they're sinners. They have to know that the sin will take us to hell and we have to be careful how we share that. But we do share the gospel with them. Don't let these opportunities pass by. Don't wait until they're older. Start when they can't.

Let the word of God be the things that they hear before they can utter words. Let the singing of God be that which they hear before they can even sing themselves.

Bring your children to the kingdom of God. But Jesus also saying is saying in this passage that young children show how people should come to the kingdom.

[14:48] They show how people should come to the kingdom. And what Jesus is doing here fits so well with what he did when he talked about the Pharisee and the tax collector.

Fits so well with what he will do when we talk about the rich young ruler. Children should come because they show how people should enter the kingdom.

What's the most distinct feature I'm not talking about of a particular baby. It's true of that too. But if you look at all of the babies in the world what's the most distinct feature of the situation of a baby. It's helpless. It's totally helpless. It never happens that a baby is born comes out of the womb jumps down to the floor and says wow that was hard give me some clothes I gotta go home.

Never. Never ever ever do babies do that. Most always and we're looking for this usually but most always the reaction is the moment they are born they cry because they're no longer in that warm soft safe environment where everything was taken care of.

[16:28] Now they're exposed to cold to heat to light to noises to scratchy cloth to all these things and they're helpless a baby can't move to the places it wants to be doesn't know where it wants to be it can't cover itself it can't feed itself it can't deal with the messes it makes a baby is first born and it's only actions are to go I don't know how to even move my arms and my feet carried along how foolish would it be for you to hear a baby cry and yell out there's a bottle in the fridge help yourself or if their diaper is dirty there are diapers on the changing table and wipes there

I'll give you some privacy go ahead and change yourself children are helpless for a long time sometimes it seems way too long they're helpless for several years for many years parents hear

mom dad I need help when a young child sits at dinner table and says mom I'm done what is the child thinking at that time he's thinking I need you to come do for me what I need done the child if you don't come is not thinking it must have made mom mad now there comes a point when they do think this way but when they're little and they say mom

I'm done and you don't come they don't go mom's mad at me nor do they say I didn't eat my peas she won't come until I eat my peas nor do they say I'm ugly mom doesn't help ugly children there's none of that if you don't come they think you must not have heard them and so instead of mom I'm done it's mom I'm done they never think that you should come now they get this way but at first they never think that you should come because of how good they are they never think that you should come because of how cute they are they think you should come because they need you they don't know how to clean themselves up they don't know how to get out of a chair that's taller than they are and they don't even begin to think how do I help myself they just know they're helpless and so they cry out they see you as the one who can meet their need and of course that's right that's true that's the way parenting is

I know it's laborsome I know it's difficult and it seems like it lasts forever but that's the way parenting is and Jesus is taking this situation and showing us what it is that a person needs to have as a mentality to come to the kingdom children demonstrate helplessness and they believe that mom and dad will meet their needs when they ask and so young children teach us that we need to see our helplessness when we call out to God and he's there to meet our needs and Jesus teaches that only people who come with this mindset of the helplessness of a child enter the kingdom only those who come with the mindset of their helplessness get to enter the kingdom people who feel that they are better than others will not enter the kingdom of heaven and

God I thank you that I am not like other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector people who feel they are better than others will not enter the kingdom of heaven people who can name sins that they have not done will not enter the kingdom of heaven the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus God I thank you that I am not like other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector people who can name good things that they have done will not enter the kingdom I fast twice a week I give tithes of all that I get good teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life and Jesus said to him why do you call me good no one is good except

[22 : 35] God alone you know the commandments do not commit adultery do not murder do not steal do not bear false witness honor your father and mother and he said all these I have kept from my youth people who can name good things that they have done will not enter the kingdom of heaven only those who recognize their helplessness their helplessness to save themselves can enter the kingdom of God but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner do you see how Jesus welcomes these children and says if you're not like these children he's not talking about their cuteness he's not talking about their innocence because they're not they are sinners from the moment they're born before they're born and they prove it in the way they cry it's not that they're cute it's it's not that they're innocent because they're not it's not any other things

Jesus is saying only people who recognize their helplessness that they cannot bring anything to him they cannot say that they've earned by keeping away from things they cannot say that they can get to heaven because they are better than other people helplessness and cry out God be merciful to me a sinner are those who can enter the kingdom of God and just like Jesus welcomes these children because they have this mindset of helplessness of dependence on those who can give them what they need Jesus welcomes them so he welcomes!

us and offers help to those who know that they are nothing and have nothing that they can use to earn God's favor those who come and say I'm helpless come everyone who thirsts come to the waters and he who has no money come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money and without price Jesus is able and has promised to meet my need if I call upon him for whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved now maybe you've been coming to this church for 20 years and you have claimed that you're part of the kingdom you've claimed that you know

Christ and I'm I'm not trying to make someone doubt their salvation but if you have at all offered and said I am here I am a Christian because I give I am here I am a Christian because I have stayed away from these sins Or I am here and I am a Christian because I am better than anyone else only those who recognize their helplessness call out to Christ cast their selves on Christ can enter the kingdom anyone anyone who lists their own accomplishments will be humbled just like it's

mentioned in the last several verses and that's how we ought to present the gospel we have to present the gospel that the gospel is for those who recognize their helplessness those who know they are sinners and can't do one thing about it well those people can come to Jesus and those people will be exalted because they've humbled themselves to admit I am helpless I have nothing and that's how we should share the gospel and if you're here today that's how you should examine yourself am I standing on what I have done or am I standing on the grace and mercy of a God who helps those who are helpless that you work in our hearts and you would be glorified we pray in
[27 : 43] Jesus name amen we're going to sing hymn 499 as we close rock of ages cleft for me may may may