

### 35. Jesus Blessed Little Children

In our last topic, we saw that the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by asking Him a question about divorce. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to answer people who use questions like this to try to trap them. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus showed His love for children by blessing little children.

While Jesus was talking to the multitude, we see that some parents brought their little children to Jesus. Mark 10:13-16 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.” Here, we see that Jesus had a very different attitude than the disciples.

In that day, many Jewish parents would bring their children to a well-known teacher and ask that teacher to bless their children. That is what we see happening in these verses. The word translated “little children” is used several times in Luke 2 to speak of Jesus just after His birth. It is also used in Matthew 2, when the wise men came to visit Jesus. The word is used in a spiritual sense in 1 John 2:13, where we read: “I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.” But, here, we see that the disciples thought Jesus was too busy to spend time with little children. And so, they rebuked the parents. Many people think that young children are not important.

However, Jesus saw what was happening. We see that Jesus was greatly displeased with the disciples. Jesus made it very clear to the disciples, and to the whole crowd of people there that day, that He had a great love and concern for even the youngest child. Jesus told the disciples to let the little children come to Him. The word translated “forbid” means *to hinder, deny or refuse*. In Mark 9:38-39, we see that Jesus said to John, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.” In this case, John had forbid someone to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus knew the heart of the man and told John not to forbid him. In Mark 10:13-16, however, the disciples were hindering (forbidding) these little children from coming to Jesus.

Little children have great faith. Jesus said that the multitude had to have the kind of faith the little children had in order to receive the kingdom of God. Then, Jesus showed by His actions, as well as His words, that He had a great love and concern for little children. Jesus then took the little children up in His arms. He laid His hands on them and blessed them. The word translated “blessing” means *to praise or to dedicate a thing to God with a solemn prayer*. Mark 14:22 says, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ In this verse, we see that Jesus dedicated the bread of the Last Supper, by His prayer to the Father. In the same way, Jesus dedicated these little children to the Father by His prayer.

We go on to read, in Mark 10:17-20, “Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’” Here, we see that a man came running to Jesus and wanted to know what he had to do to inherit eternal life. In Matthew 19:20, we see that he was a young man. At the same time, Luke 18:18 says, “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” Here, we see that even though he was young, he was already a ruler (probably of the synagogue).

Later, we also see that he was rich, That is probably why he asked what he had to do to inherit eternal life. He had probably inherited his wealth from his father and thought he could do something to receive eternal life the same way. This young man came running to Jesus. He knelt in front of Jesus. He also recognized Jesus as a Good Teacher. In addition, he wanted to receive eternal life. From his outward actions, this young man would appear to be a man with great potential.

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts. The first part speaks about the relationship of man to God. The second part speaks about the relationship of man to man. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 5:16-20, which includes most of the second part of the Ten Commandments. This young man thought he had lived a very good life. In fact, in Mark 10:20, we see that he answered Jesus by saying, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” Apparently, other people also thought that this young man lived a good life, since he was already a ruler, even though he was still young. They had observed his outward actions, but did not know his heart.

In contrast, we see that Jesus looked at his heart. In Matthew 19:19, we see that Jesus also quoted Leviticus 19:18, which summarizes the whole second part. Leviticus 19:18 says, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.” The last part of this verse, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”, summarizes the second part of the Ten Commandments that talked about the relationship of man to man. Mark 10:21-22 says, “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

Jesus knew that, in his heart, this young man did not love his neighbor as he loved himself. As a result, Jesus gave this young man the opportunity to see his own heart by telling him to sell what he had and give it to the poor. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Suddenly, this young man had to face the fact that he did not love his neighbor as himself. He had deceived himself into thinking that he had kept the commandments that related to other people. Suddenly, he was faced with the fact that he did not have a concern for the poor, and he had no desire to share what he had with the poor. Jesus had

used the quote from Leviticus to expose the heart of this young man. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Here, we see that the Word had exposed the thoughts and intents of his heart.

Jesus also told the young man the thing that he lacked to receive eternal life. Jesus said, “Come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” Once Jesus had exposed the heart of the young man to himself, Jesus answered his question about how to have eternal life. The Holy Spirit convicts those who are not Christians of three things. John 16:8-9 tells us the first of those three things when those verses say: “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me.” Here, we see that the first of those three things is sin. The one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. This young man showed that he was unwilling to repent of his sin of unbelief and place his faith in Jesus. That is the one sin that prevents every person that makes that choice from receiving eternal life. We also learn another key lesson from these verses. We see that Jesus looked at this young man and loved him. True godly love will cause us to speak the truth in love. This young man could see that Jesus loved him. He could see that Jesus spoke in love. Jesus shared with him the message that he could have eternal life by following Jesus. Then, Jesus showed His love by giving that young man the opportunity to make that choice. In fact, it would only be a short time later that Jesus would say as He hung on the cross, “It is finished,” as He completed the payment for sin, so that the Father can freely forgive all those who come to Jesus in repentance and faith.

We see that the young man did make a choice that day. He was sad as he heard the words of Jesus, because he knew that he was not willing to repent of his sin of unbelief and follow Jesus. In his sadness, he walked away with great sorrow in his heart. In fact, the invitation of Jesus to follow Him had revealed the true condition of the heart of this young man. He had revealed to himself that his god was his money and possessions. In 1 Timothy 6:9-10, we read, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Here, we see that the desire for riches leads many people to destruction and perdition. These two words speak of eternal judgment.

We want to show our physical and spiritual children, by our example of sharing the Word of God in love, that the Word of God, when shared in love, will reveal the condition of a person’s heart to himself or herself. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the Word of God in love.