

Start Acting Like a Kid!

(Mark 10:13-16)

(preached 6/14/15 Pine Grove BC)

Introduction

It has been said that kids spend their time wishing they were grown up....

And grown ups spend all of their time wishing they were a kid again.

There is some truth to that.

Now, I am not sure that I have much desire to go back to my adolescence.

It was pleasant, and I was blessed in many ways as a child.

But there are many things that I enjoy about being an adult.

And there are also many things that I don't necessarily enjoy about being an adult at times...

But this morning as we prepare our minds and hearts to take part in the Lord's Supper, we are going to look at a truth.....

That we should never grow out of.

It is a truth found in Mark 10:13-16.

If you will, take your Bibles and turn with me to Mark 10:13-16...

I want to read this fairly short passage this morning...

¹³ And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." ¹⁶ And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

Now, if you aren't careful, you can read this passage and totally miss the point of it...

After the past two weeks of looking at marriage and divorce, it is easy to let this little scene slip by our eyes...

But if we do, we miss two incredible truths that help us understand so much about our world...

But more importantly, we miss two truths about the incredible grace of God.

I have entitled this message....

Start Acting Like a Kid!

And that is the point of this passage...

It is simply instruction on how we should be childish and never grow out of that childishness.

I have divided these 4 verses into two parts....

First, we are going to see this truth....

I. All Children are in God's Kingdom (13-14)

That is going to be found in verses 13 and 14...

And then we are going to see in the final 2 verses...

II. Only Children are in God's Kingdom (15-16)....

Let's begin with verses 13-14...

I. All Children are in God's Kingdom (13-14)

Our time is limited this morning as we need to leave time for the Lord's Supper....

And the truth of verses 15-16 is really important as we prepare our hearts to remember the Lord's sacrifice for our sin..

So I have limited time to really dig too much into the first two verses...

However, I feel they teach an incredible truth that the world needs to hear....

Therefore, I can't just slide past these verses and get on to verse 15...

So, let me make a statement based upon what I feel the Lord is teaching in verses 13-14...

And this is an issue where you are free to disagree with me or hold a different view...

Because there is no one verse in Scripture that is clear on this issue...

And men and women have debated this issue over the years and there are a number of opinion out there...

However, I think that verses 13-14 are a strong defense of what I am about to say...

Though there is no one verse or passage that answers the question of what happens to children who die before an age of accountability,

I believe the testimony of various Scripture passages teaches that those children go directly to heaven.

Again, you may have a different about that issue...

That is fine and we can be friends and I will gladly listen to what verses support your position...

And in fact, I look forward to hearing from you afterward...

But for this morning, allow me to defend that position in verses 13-14...

Unfortunately, time is not going to allow us to get a complete look at the issue by turning to different passages in the OT.

Although I think the OT supports the idea in many places...

Probably the passage that most people turn to in order to support their argument of why all children go to heaven is found in 2 Samuel...

Where David loses an infant son, and then remarks that he will one day see him again..

Depending upon the interest, we may spend a Sunday night looking at all the passages that support this position..

But for today, I want to offer why I think verses 13-14 lend their support to this idea....

Now, let's review for just a minute to get our minds around what is happening...

Jesus has set his sights on the cross and he is working his way there slowly.

At the beginning of chapter 10, He and the disciples entered a region known as Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

When he got there, the Pharisees tried to trap him with a question about divorce...

Jesus answered their question by talking about the importance of God's design for marriage...

And then he added a little more about divorce as he and the disciples left the Pharisees behind and entered a house....

There is no reason to think that he has left that house as we pick up the action in verse 13...

As people began bringing children to him...

“they” most likely refers to the parents who were bringing children to Jesus..

It was common for a parent to want rabbis to bless their children...

Most of the people simply saw Jesus as one rabbi among 100s of others...

They hear that he is in town, and they are simply bringing their children to get a blessing.

There is a little bit of irony here...

Most of the people have rejected Jesus as Messiah, but just in case He is, they want their children to be blessed by Him..

And so they are bringing their children to Jesus...

However, the disciples are meeting them at the door and rebuking them.

The word used here suggests that this was a strong rebuke by the disciples...

Almost to the point of insult...

“Something like get those kids out of here. This is Jesus. We got important things to do here.”

“Don’t waste our time.”

This is really hard to believe considering what just happened in Mark 9.

Remember when Jesus took a small child under his arms and tenderly used him as an illustration to the disciples....

Of how they should serve the least among them...

And now, here are some children headed Jesus way and the disciples are turning them away...

So Jesus turns the rebuke back on them....

“Permit them to come to me...”

And then he says something very important...

“For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these..”

What does he mean by that?

Well, the kingdom is a way of saying that they are under the King’s care..

To be in the kingdom is to be right with the King...

When Jesus began his ministry in Mark 1, HE said this...

“The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.”

The way into the kingdom is the way of salvation...

Matthew called it the kingdom of heaven.

And Jesus is saying about these children, let them come to me...

They belong to the kingdom, and the kingdom belongs to them..

How are we to understand that?

I think in the plain normal sense of what we read...

Children up to a point of accountability are in the kingdom of God...

The Bible never offers an age when a child is then accountable, and I think it can vary depending upon understanding...

Mark uses a general word for children...

And so does Matthew when he describes this scene...

Luke uses a word that describes infants...

But as I look at this verse and try to understand it...

I think Jesus is saying that children up to a point in time that maybe only He knows...

Are in the kingdom based solely upon the grace of God...

That is not to say that they aren't sinners as children..

The Bible says that they are sinners from birth because they are sons of Adam...

But it is to say that their sin is covered by the grace of God for a time until they reach an age where they knowingly sin against God.

And so if they die as a child, I personally believe that it is instant heaven.

The enter the kingdom at that moment.

And that would be true for children of various ages, babies, miscarried infants, and even those with limited mental capacity.

I want to be clear as I leave these first 2 verses behind...

There is room for disagreement here, and so I must leave much grace in my position on this issue...

But as I look at the character of God...

As I look at the entire teaching of Scripture...

I feel strongly about this position, and I think we need to take this hope to the world as we minister to those who have lost children...

I also believe it helps us to make sense of incredible tragedies that we see in the world...

When children die in incredible natural disasters and criminal acts...

WE find hope in the fact that they go straight to heaven....

I remember when that incredible earthquake struck Haiti a few years back...

And over 100,000 people were killed many of them children...

At the time, I was trying to look at the issue of what happens when children die...

The news was grieving over the loss of so many kids...

And people were questioning the goodness of God to allow a tragedy like that to occur...

And I couldn't help but think that the goodness of God was all over that disaster...

All these kids who were destined to grow up in poverty and horrible living conditions....

Were now in heaven.

They had been spared the worst possible way of life
and God had immediately given them the best
possible way of life...

To me, that is the goodness and grace of God...

People say you have to make incredible
assumptions to say that all children go to heaven
when they die....

I disagree.

Jesus says right here....

Let the children come to me...

The kingdom belongs to them at this point in their
lives, and they belong to the kingdom...

Well, we will move from the fact that....

All Children are in God's Kingdom to....

II. Only Children are in God's Kingdom (15-16)

Look at verse 15...

15 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

After Jesus rebukes the disciples for not allowing the children to come to Him....

We find the second incredible truth of this passage...

And that is the fact that only people who come to Jesus like children are going to be in God's Kingdom...

So, what does that mean?

How does a person receive the kingdom of God like a child?

Does that mean that the only chance to get saved is when you are child?

And once that chance passes you, you have no hope of being part of God's Kingdom?

Well, we know that isn't the case.

In fact, most of the salvations in the Scripture are adults.

Therefore, we know that Jesus isn't saying that only children can receive the kingdom...

But He is saying that only those who receive the kingdom like a child will be saved...

So, what does this mean?

I want to offer you a couple suggestions on what this means....

Here are 3 childish attitudes that we never need to lose in order to be a part of God's kingdom...

#1) We Need a Childish Response to Authority

As a child, we are constantly under someone else's authority.

Someone tells us when to eat, when to sleep, when to go to school.

And the sin of most children is trying to break through that authority in our life.

It is also the sin of adults.

And adults often feel that they are the ones in charge of their life.

They decide when to eat, when to sleep, where to go.

And often times, we let that authority come with us
as we come to church.

WE walk in church with our titles pinned to our
suit.

We own a business.

WE have a successful career.

Our family name is famous in the area.

Guess what?

You may use that authority to your advantage in the
world, but it will hold no weight with God.

You can't command your way into heaven.

You can demand that God let you in based upon
who you are.

You need to let go of that authority and put on
humility.

Job said, "Naked I came into the world and naked I
will leave, Praise the name of the Lord."

WE need the childish attitude of humility.

Now, John Andrew is almost 3.

And believe me, he already knows how to rebel
against authority...

But there are times when I tell John Andrew to do something, and he simply replies with “Ok.”

I could ask him to do something totally ridiculous and he would say “Ok” and then attempt to do it.

Sometimes, when he says “Ok” it still melts our hearts because it is so sweet and assuming.

He simply sees his mom, and his sisters and me as authorities in his life and he does it.

And that is the childish attitude that leads to everlasting life in the kingdom of God.

Jesus says, “Repent of your sin and trust in Him only.”

Your response needs to be “Ok.”

Then you repent and believe no questions asked.

So, #1 we need a childish response to authority...

#2..

We need a childish faith.

You ever been a kid’s birthday party and heard this?

“Johnny, for your 7th birthday, you mom and I are giving you a new 4 wheeler.”

The 4 wheeler comes out, the kid looks at it, and then says,...

“Dad, I don’t want this. I haven’t earned it. Take it back to the dealership. For the next two years, I will take out the trash, and then....

“At my 9th birthday party, I’ll take it because I will have earned it.”

That’s ridiculous.

No kid in the history of birthday parties has ever said that.

They would hop right on the 4 wheeler and start appreciating it that first day.

Yet, so many people think that salvation is based upon our works.

Let me clean up my life for the next 5 years and then I’ll get saved.

Let me start obeying for a few months and then I’ll get saved.

OR worse yet...

You base your salvation on what you have already done for the Lord.

I have been faithful in my church attendance.

I have been a good man or a good woman for all my life.

I have given so much money.

I have helped people in need.

Yet, you don't receive the kingdom based upon good works...

And this idea would have upset so many in the audience on this day.

The Pharisees thought that good works were the way to God.

Yet, Jesus is just saying that you must be like a child to enter the kingdom...

What good works does a child have?

Most likely, these were babies or very small children that Jesus was around...

But yet he is saying that they are in the kingdom!

The Pharisees would have been outraged.

And many of you may be outraged that salvation is not based upon any good works that you have done...

The kingdom doesn't come to you in good deeds...

It comes to you based upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Stop working your way into heaven.

The Bible says that repentance is a gift, and that faith is a gift.

Receive the gift of repentance and faith today, and put that faith not in yourself or your good works...

But have faith alone in Jesus Christ.

A kid receives a gift without any thought of trying to earn it...

We need a childish faith to enter God's kingdom...

But #3 and this goes right along with 2....

#3...

We need a childish dependence.

Our lives as children and teens is often a sinful struggle for independence.

I have seen it in all 3 of my children and it is true of every child in the world..

Let me eat with a spoon by myself.

Let me walk by myself without holding your hand.

Let me tie my shoes by myself.

Let me play outside by myself.

Let me sleep over at a friends by myself.

The list goes on and on of what kids try to gain their independence.

As adults, we have arrived at independence, but that is not always a good thing...

We do everything without help.

Some days I wish someone would feed me and tie my shoes and hold my hand.

But the truth is that we value our independence, and we try to hold on to it to the very end.

My grandfather was way past the point of being able to drive but he held on to that to the very end.

IT was a feeling of independence.

He only lost his license after an eye exam revealed that he way beyond the point of being legally blind.

So most adults hold that independence very dear to their hearts.

The goal is still to be able to do things by themselves to the very end...

But guess what?

There is one thing that you can't do by yourself.

And it happen to be the most important thing in the entire history of this universe!!

You can't get into the kingdom of God by yourself.

In fact, you are totally dependent upon the grace of God to receive His kingdom.

And if you try to hold onto your independence and get to heaven, you will be locked out.

If you want to receive the kingdom, you need a childish dependence upon the Lord.

You need to acknowledge that you are helpless when it comes to being saved.

You may be able to pay your bills on your own.

But you are unable to pay for your sin on your own.

And when you come to the cross of Jesus Christ, you are saying...

I am helpless. I am weak. I am totally dependent upon Christ.

I love the word so of the great hymn Rock of Ages...

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.*

That is the childish attitude that we all need in order to receive God's kingdom....

The truth about all of us in here this morning that are saved is that we are kids at heart...

We love the authority of our Father in our lives...

We have a simple faith that doesn't trust in our good works; instead we trust in the person of Jesus Christ.

WE are content to be completely dependent upon the Lord.

We never desire independence from Him.

We are content with the picture of verse 16....

***¹⁶ And He took them in His arms
and began blessing them, laying His hands on
them.***

What a beautiful picture of the King of that kingdom...

Jesus is not a king that has multiple layers of security around him.

He is a King that knows and loves His children, and this scene and passage ends with these kids in the arms of Jesus Christ..

I can't think of a better place in the universe that safe in the arms of Him who created it...

Yet the hands that held these children on this occasion would soon be the hands nailed to a cross.

The strange truth of the King of God's Kingdom is that he didn't become King by force.

Instead, he died for His people.

You can receive the kingdom today because the King gave His life for its citizens.

Yes, you need to be like a child today to receive the kingdom, but first Jesus needs to be treated like a criminal for you to receive.

The King of Glory died a Death of Shame.

Jesus Christ, who had no sin, took the place of sinners who are full of sin.

Yet, in his death, sinners find life.

And that is what we are going to remember in a few minutes at the Lord's Supper.

As the men move forward to take their places to serve you this morning...

I want to help you think about the Lord's Supper from this perspective...

What we are about to do is not a time to remember our sin...

It is a time to remember the forgiveness of our sin.

Often times, the Lord's Supper becomes a time of people focused upon themselves...

I'm sure you have been there and watched people walk across to others and hug them in an effort to make things right before taking the Lord's Supper.

And though I wouldn't say that is wrong, it distracts from the point of what the Lord's Supper is about.

There is not one of us in here who hasn't sinned this week.

We all know that, but the point of Communion is not to highlight our sin....

It is to highlight our Savior from sin.

It is to point to the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf.

It is a time to praise the Lord not ourselves...

It is a time to focus upon death of our King upon a cross of shame...

Now, the Bible is clear...

Examine yourself before taking part in the Lord's Supper...

And if you find a pattern of sin, repent of that sin and remember the forgiveness found in the cross.

But if you have no desire to repent, don't take part in the Lord's Supper because some people got sick from doing that and some even died.

But once that self-examination is over, turn your focus to the Savior.

The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to remember and proclaim the death of Jesus until He returns...

I will remind you that unbelievers should abstain from taking part in the Lord's Supper.

The Bible that you are simply eating and drinking judgment upon yourself if you take part in an unworthy manner.

I would also remind Christians who are in unrepentant sin to not take part in the Lord's Supper.

However, I would remind both of these groups that repentance begins in the heart.

If you are an unbeliever, repent of your sin of unbelief and turn to Christ.

If you are a Christian in an unrepentant pattern, turn from that sin this morning, remember the forgiveness of that sin, and sin no more.

Another warning needs to go out to children and even teens.

You are under the authority of your parents when it comes to taking part of the Lord's Supper.....

It needs be the decision of your parents on whether or not you can take the Lord's Supper....

It is a serious matter to take the Lord's Supper, and though you may have taken it many times before in an unworthy manner without any consequences...

That is no assurance that God is pleased.

With that said, let me pray and will begin to distribute the elements.

Pray.