

10012023 In his earthly ministry Jesus took situations he encountered and used them to teach his disciples. They are also there for us. One day, the disciples were trying to direct traffic as the people encountered Jesus...some came and went, some sought, some followed, some rejected...but they all provided Jesus opportunities to instruct, heal, challenge and Jesus used all of it to teach life lessons to his disciples... The Lord has used the self righteous attitude of the Pharisees which God rejects their prayer and how he responds to the humble sinner...

The disciples, who were listening to this, must have thought, "He spoke this against Pharisees and thankfully we have no connection that kind of self righteousness.

But all humans are as susceptible as the self righteous Pharisees... just perhaps with different bias... as we will see today. When Jesus gives the next real life example which will include the disciples...

The end of the previous teaching closes with these words from Jesus:

NLT Luke 18:14b....For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

**Know this whenever God teaches us a principle of the Kingdom...a test immediately follows... and here we go!**

*NLT LK 18:15* One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But when the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him.

- The practice of bringing "little children" meaning infants and toddlers to the Rabbi's or scribes for a prayer of blessing upon them was a common practice
- The word translated "touch" is Greek *hapto*, "to make close contact, also conveys the idea of "to hold."

- The Gospels record 12 other times Jesus touches to bless or to heal children
- Let's imagine the setting. Jesus sitting teaching... Parents are bringing babies, and letting their toddlers run up to Jesus, and Jesus would, with great joy, scoop them up and pray for them. Toddlers pulling on his arms, sitting on his lap...running around...chaotic
- When other parents saw it they too would come down toward the front. They wanted this for their children, also
- **Now...The prevalent Jewish view of the Messiah at the time of Jesus pictured a conquering King who would restore Jewish fortunes, defeat Jewish enemies, and usher in His kingdom on earth. These beliefs about the Messiah were resident in the chosen twelve and in their human ambition they fantasized of the greatness that would soon be theirs by becoming cabinet members in the earthly messianic kingdom they thought Jesus would establish. But the thought that the Messiah would come to suffer and die at the hands of His own people was incomprehensible to most Jews and the twelve apostles were no different...**
- **The Disciples were operating from this mindset...** Jesus is heading to Jerusalem for Passover. The disciples participating in the work of God were the important ones here, the religious leaders asking theological questions were the important ones here, Jesus teaching was important here... the healings were important here... **you know who wasn't ? babies and toddlers...they are an annoying distraction**
- **They self righteously thought ...The Lord Jesus did not have free time to deal with babies and toddlers. Who do these selfish, unreasonable parents think they are? bringing their nursing babies and toddlers to Jesus.**

**The View of Children in Jesus' Day** children **in Jesus' Day** were viewed as unimportant.

- In those times women were viewed as second class citizens and children as third class citizens. They were not even included in the count of the crowd of 5,000 which Jesus fed with five loaves and two fish.
- Children were considered a liability until they could grow up and serve and earn a living to support the household.
- **So The disciples were thinking they were doing the Lord a favor and righteously shooed them away. They couldn't allow his work to be interrupted by mere children constantly running up. And he having to stop to hold the babies...**
- **They began to stop the little children, and tell off the parents in no uncertain terms...**

NLT Luke 18:16 Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children.”<sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”

- They did not grasp that they are children also *Eph 5<sup>1</sup> Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children...*
- **What these adults did not grasp is that from God’s perspective they are children also...quit self righteously thinking you are some kind of fully self capable person...and that because you are men or women...you are capable of coming to God by your own means!**
- They did not grasp that they are children also *Eph 5<sup>1</sup> Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children...*

**He immediately gives them a life lesson....the boy who became a successful man yet forgot he was still a boy...a child...**

*NIV Luke 18:18 A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* NLT Luke 18: <sup>19</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. You think I am another man like yourself...and I have good teaching?"

- The only truly good person is God...everyone else is a mixture of good and bad, strengths and weakness, sinners...

**You are asking me what do you need to save yourself eternally...But you know what is required perfection in carrying out the 10 commandments...how you doing with that?**

NLT Luke 18: <sup>20</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.'<sup>21</sup> The man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

- so you have kept four of them you say... yet young man has you still senses a lack, an incompleteness, or else he wouldn't have come to me in the first place.
- how this one?? And this one? And this is why you know something is still not right about you...

*NLT Luke 18: <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. **Then come, follow me.**"*

- **This is what is missing**

NLT Exodus 20:3 "You must not have any other god but me. 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to

them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.

- Jesus affirms the young man's sense of need. The word translated "lack" is Greek *leipo*, "to be deficient in something that ought to be present for whatever reason, 'lack.' "
- **You son worship business and wealth and possessions... these things are as imperfect as humans themselves, and those who trust in them will be left wanting...Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."**
- **Secondly these idols demand great allegiance...you must bow down to them... idol degrades God and it degrades man.**
- **God's jealousy against these false gods is but infinite love which allows no rival for our heart's affection.**
- **Son sell them for they weigh down your heart ...and come to me as a child who cares for you....**
- Some worship pleasure; others, reason, philosophy, or business. But all these things are as imperfect as humans themselves, and those who trust in them will be left at last without a light in the vacant and dark night, until the words of the first commandment meet them in the judgment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."
- Jesus proposes -- exchanging fabulous wealth here on earth for fabulous wealth in the Kingdom of God. Jesus is not proposing buying anything or doing anything glorious.
- **...Then come, follow me."**
- **Then be with me...follow me a person! God in the flesh....follow...means chase after...draw close... sit next to, run around him...make the center of your affection and life...go where I go....like the babies and the toddlers were doing...**
- **Be a child dependent on me....like a young child is dependent upon their caretaker for life itself...**

**Going back to** <sup>NLT Luke 18:16</sup> Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children.” <sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”

Lets look at a childlike dependence or faith...

Mark ass a key when he reoucnts this incident from Peter  
<sup>NLT Mark 10: 21</sup> Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him.

- The one who is most like a child in relationship to God...the least in position... ranks highest...Why? Jesus loves him...

because young Children know they don’t know...that is why they ask a billion questions... they are curious and **they are teachable** If you feel like your toddler endlessly bombards you with questions, it’s not just you: curious children ask an average of 73 a day, a new study finds. Preschool and elementary school years are the best times to enhance your child’s knowledge and inculcate the curiosity to learn. According to a poll by American research firm Gallup, children ask fewer questions as they grow up

Led by child psychologist Dr. Sam Wass, British researchers polled 1,500 parents across the United Kingdom, hoping to learn more about the frequency and nature of questions asked by inquisitive kids, along with how having to constantly craft responses affected parents.

1. they know they need others...they know they cannot make it alone...**they are dependent for their very existence...they seek attachment to their primary care givers...bringing them to Jesus begins a most important attachment**

2. They don't have near the amount of problems adults do in "following the leader"... they easily get in line...they learn to follow and also lead...they learn team work
3. They like to play with other children... which is mutual submission...you be mom or dad...I am the baby and visa versa...rather than always compete with them...
4. **a child does not hold grudges against other children; soon he forgets that they fought and becomes friendly again.**
5. They believe the impossible is possible...or else why would anyone believe in Santa? One guy going to every house in the world in one night?

And...they don't mind getting dirty...messy is what they do...they call it playing...us bigger children call it life...

Children need to be cleansed a lot...so do us bigger kids

1. But...The special characteristic of small children was, in fact, their powerlessness. They exist as persons without any achievements to necessarily be proud of. Based on the point of emphasis he has there, Luke was intentionally using the word "little children... toddlers."
2. They are individuals with nothing to offer. Based on the fact nursing babies are powerless, they are completely passive recipients. They know instinctively they cannot go on living without their parents. Therefore, they seek their parents as innocent beggars and entrust themselves to their parents' hands.

He or she is happy in just the love of their parents and they find rest and peace within in their love.

Consequently, "the person who accepts the kingdom of God as a child" is about the person who can admit his or her own powerlessness and be submissive to God. the one who earnestly seeks God the Father and entrusts himself or herself to God's hands.

The Lord said the kingdom of God is a kingdom of such a type of person.

Those attitudes will take you far in the kingdom of God...also

I can imagine the scene. Red-faced disciples have arrogantly told off the parents and instructed them to control their children in the presence of such an important teacher as Jesus. And then Jesus rebukes the rebukers and calls the children back to him -- "Come here, children...." -- while the frustrated disciples stand powerless to stop it. They are supposed to do crowd control and Jesus is keeping them from doing their job. What are they to do?

The little children run past the disciples, over to Jesus' lap -- he usually sits when he teaches -- and snuggle up close to him, while Jesus lays his hands on them and prays for them. Soon all the children in the entire crowd have run up to Jesus and are crowding around him, waiting for his touch and a prayer. How beautiful!

Jesus' command to the disciples is clear: Let them come (positively) and don't hinder them (negatively). **Jesus is pointing to as an essential characteristic his disciples must learn...they must encourage all to come to Jesus and hinder none...**

How do the little children come to Jesus? Freely, openly, humbly. They come to God with no posturing of worthiness...



This is good news! Have you felt that Jesus wouldn't welcome you because of something you might have done in the past or because of your lack of religious observance? Coming to Jesus has nothing to do with your worthiness and everything to do with his willingness to forgive, cleanse, and transform you.

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