

## **“If You Want to Get to Heaven, You Must Believe Like a Child”**

Mark 10:13-16

Tomorrow we begin VBA 2023. Our Renton family has come here for the purpose of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the kids in our community. We have prayed many months for this week, and we look with anticipation at what God is going to do in the hearts of many children.

**Mark 10:13-16**, *“And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. 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. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.’ And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.”*

The manifestation of God’s love for us is so clearly revealed, a child can understand and respond to it. Jesus loves little children, their tender hearts and minds; what a contrast they are to the hardhearted Pharisees and dull-minded Disciples, who continually were, “seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding.”

Where a child may easily trust in Jesus, an adult is much more reluctant to respond because they lack the innocent faith and trusting nature of a child. It was God’s desire and pleasure to provide His gospel of salvation to trusting, believing, and receptive hearts:

**Matthew 18:1-5**, *“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me.’”*

**Luke 10:21**, *“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”*

Entrance into God’s family is revealed to little children.

The word translated “change” in **Matthew 18:3**, means to turn from sin and self, to God and salvation, this is done in response to God’s Spirit leading us to repent and believe in God’s Son for salvation.

**John 3:16**, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

**John 16:8**, Jesus said, when the Holy Spirit comes, *“He will convict the world... concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.”*

**Acts 2:21**, “And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [pp. **Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13**].

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God reveals Himself to all who believe in and trust Him, all who come to Him like little children whose minds and hearts have not been hardened by years of exposure to this fallen and corrupted world.

There is a song that has been around for over 100 years, and I’m pretty sure that most, if not all of us, have sung its lyrics. The song is, “Jesus Loves the Little Children,” and it is one of the first songs many children learn in church. The words are so simple and so true: “Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world: red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.” [In 1991, alternate words were written, “Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, *Every color, every race, all are covered by His Grace*, Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

The problem is that there is only one race, the human race, multi-colored (cultured) for sure, but only one race.

I prefer the following rendition of that song, “Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world: red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

There is another song, **Jesus Loves Me**, that has been sung by children (and adults) since it was written in 1860 by Anna Bartlett Warner. The lyrics of this song express God's deep deep love for children:

**Verse 1**, “Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.” *Refrain: “Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”*

**Verse 2**, Jesus loves me this I know, as He loved so long ago, taking children on His knee, saying ‘Let them come to Me.’ *Refrain: “Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”*

**Verse 3**, “Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way, wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live.” *Refrain: “Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”*

**Verse 4**, Jesus loves me! He who died heaven’s gate to open wide; He will wash away my sin, let His little child come in.” *Refrain: “Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”*

That song expresses Christ’s love and affection for all of God’s children, and the love of the Shepherd for His little lambs. Jesus openly welcomed little children, holding them on His knee, telling His Disciples, “‘Let them come to Me,’ and ‘do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”

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God's love is merciful and it is freely given. Anyone coming to God with a trusting, childlike faith, believing in Jesus Christ to save them, receives forgiveness for their sins and salvation for their soul; for at the moment of genuine belief, the God of all Creation becomes their Father for all of eternity.

God desires and has made a way for us to know Him, to be loved by Him, to trust Him, to become His Children, to grow in our knowledge of Him, and to serve Him. God foretold all of this in the Scriptures, and He has proved His love for us by taking upon Himself our penalty for sin, paying our sin debt, in full, to God; this is something we could never accomplish, for we cannot, ourselves, be justified in the eyes of God, we can't earn or acquire or attain forgiveness and eternal life in any other way (**Romans 3:10-12, 23-24; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1; 10:9-10, 13**).

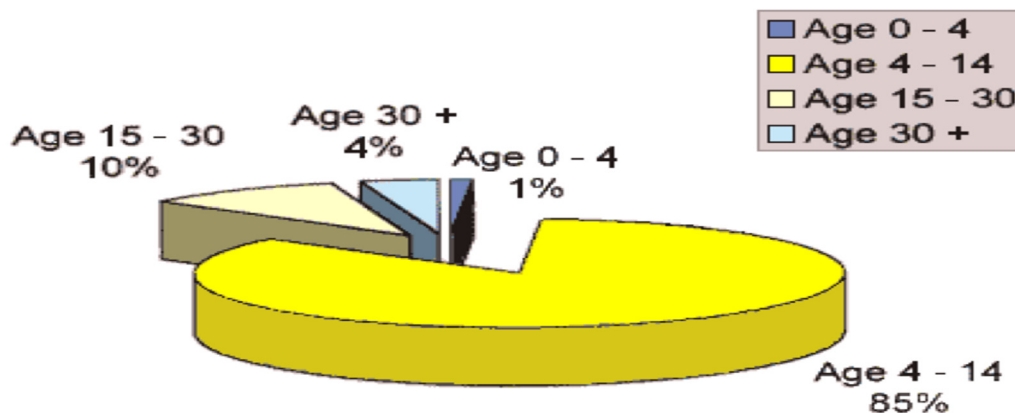
God is loving, merciful, faithful, gracious, compassionate, and forgiving, and He wants to have a personal and intimate relationship with each one of us, that relationship starts here on earth and continues in heaven for all of eternity.

**1Timothy 2:3-4**, *"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

**2Peter 3:9**, *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."*

God wants us to believe in Him and to receive His greatest gift. He is a loving and gracious Father who cares for, and abundantly provides for, His children.

The first and foremost gift from God is forgiveness and eternal life, available only through His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. **John 14:6**), He is the only way to God, the only truth from God, and the only life with God; and no one goes to heaven except by believing in Him, as a little child, trusting God to bring you into His kingdom, for God reveals Himself to little children.



VBA starts tomorrow, the children who come will be told about Jesus Christ all through the week; for many of them it may be the very first time they have been introduced to the God Who loves them so much, that He laid down His own life in order to save them.

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**John 1:12**, *“But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name [Savior, God with us], **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

Everyone who receives Christ, believing He is God our Savior and Redeemer, becomes a child of God, born of God’s Spirit, spiritually born from above.

Our salvation is entirely by grace:

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

Notice in **John 1:13** it speaks of children, “who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God..”

**blood** (lit. *blood* = natural descent heritage or ancestry via a bloodline)

**the will of the flesh** (lit. *flesh* = human decision or desire)

**will of a man** (lit. *man* = man-made system of adoption)

Spiritual birth into the family of God, as a child of God, cannot be obtained through human ancestry or bloodline, or through the sexual relationship between a man and a woman, or through a human system of legal adoption.

**John 3:3**, *“Jesus said to [Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews], “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **John 3:6-8**, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*

Spiritual birth is made effectual by and through God’s Spirit [Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Christ] given to every person who believes in God’s Son for salvation.

**1John 5:11-13**, *“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

God loves children, as I cited earlier today (**Matthew 18:3**), where Jesus says to His followers, *“Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven,”* rejoicing greatly in the Holy Spirit, Jesus said (**Luke 10:21**), *“At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.”*

July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

## “If You Want to Get to Heaven, You Must Believe Like a Child”

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God loves His children, and Jesus expresses His love for little children.

**Matthew 18:4-6**, *“Whoever humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”*

In **Romans 10:14** Paul poses a question: “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without [someone telling them]?” **15**, It is written (**Isaiah 52:7**), “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!” **17**, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

All true believers and followers of Christ who attend the First Baptist Church of Waldport, OR, and Trinity Baptist Church in Renton, WA, sincerely desire that children hear the good news and come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is our deepest prayer that nothing will hinder the children who come to (VBA) Vacation Bible Adventure this week, and that they will be led to saving faith during this God-given opportunity for children to come to know God’s Son.

Please be praying for all of those who will be serving the Lord this week here, at VBA, for the purpose of sharing the Love of God with these little ones. Please be praying for the children who will attend, that their hearts might be tender and receptive, and that they will hear and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior Who loves them now and forever.

Please sing the following words with me:

“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world: red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

Amen?

Amen!

*Pastor Mike*

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