

Jesus Loves Children and So Should His Church

Matthew 18:1-6, 19; 13-14
Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17

Introduction:

In the 1970's, the bus ministry was one of the most popular ministries in the churches of America.

The primary thrust of the bus ministry was to bypass parents who were not interested in the spiritual welfare of their children and go directly to the child with an appeal to take an exciting bus ride to church. Having secured the child's regular attendance and an entrance into the home through the child, you would then seek to win the parents to Christ. Thousands of boys and girls and their parents were won to the Lord through this ministry.

During this time, a pastor went to another state to lead a church. There he built one of the largest bus ministries in America. Over time, most wealthy members of his congregation became opposed to the bus ministry. They did not like how some of the children smelled, looked, and behaved. They felt the bus children were too abusive to their church facilities. They finally issued an ultimatum to the pastor: Either the bus kids are going to leave or we are going to leave.

This obviously created a crisis in the life of the pastor. He relates that one night he drove all over his city. He was in great anguish of soul as he prayed, "Will it be the bus kids or the wealthy people? ...Will it be the bus kids or the wealthy people?"

He drove to a city park, parked his car, walked into the park, and fell to his face in earnest prayer, "Will it be the bus kids or the wealthy people? ...Will it be the bus kids or the wealthy people?" He prayed all night. About sunrise he got his answer. It would be the bus kids. It would be the bus kids.

The pastor reported "The wealthy people did leave, we did keep the bus kids, and we do feel we got the best end of the bargain. The hand of God has been on our church ever since."

The church that loves as Jesus loves, the church that cares as Jesus cares, and the church that follows Jesus will be a church that loves children.

Let us open our Bibles and learn how Jesus loved children and see why we as His church should also love children.

I. Matthew 18:1-6

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

- A. It is a child-like thing (loving, tender, trusting, forgiving) to be converted. vs.3
- B. It is a child-like thing to be humble. vs.4
- C. It is a God-approved thing to receive (accept or welcome) a child. vs.5
- D. It is a dangerous thing to offend (entice to sin, or hinder in right conduct) a child who believes in Jesus. vs. 6

II. Matthew 19:13-14

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

- A. He put hands on them and prayed for them. vs.13
- B. He did not want the children kept from Him (Do not forbid, or restrain or hinder from coming). Vs.14

III. Mark 10:13-16

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid

them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

- A. He touched the children. vs.13
- B. He was much displeased (indignant and pained) with the disciples for rebuking those who were bringing the children to Him. vs.14
- C. It is a child-like thing to receive the kingdom of God. vs.15
- D. Jesus took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them (fervently invoked a blessing). Vs. 16

IV. Luke 18:15-17

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

- A. They brought infants (babies) unto Him that He would touch them. vs.15
- B. The disciples rebuked those who brought infants to Jesus. Jesus wanted the children brought to Him. vs.16
- C. Jesus taught it was a child-like thing to receive the Kingdom of God. vs.16-17

Five Things a Church Can Do to Show That It Loves Children

1. Seeks to prepare couples for marriage.
2. Encourages strong, growing marriage relationships.
3. Provides materials and resources for parenting and marriage enrichment.
4. Believes in the validity of childhood conversion and discipleship, and provides opportunities for both to take place.
5. Endeavors to provide the finest facilities, curriculum, teaching aids, and teachers for children.