

“LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME”

Mark 10:13-16 speaks of Jesus blessing the little children brought to Him by their parents. It is a short story, but it is very significant.

The obvious lesson (which the disciples badly needed to learn even after Jesus said this—see **Matt. 20:20-28**) is that His kingdom would require each of us to humble himself and become as a little child (**v.15, Matt. 18:1-4**).

It may surprise you to see that the disciples “**greatly** displeased” Jesus by what they did in this story (**v.14**). According to the Greek language in this verse, Jesus was more upset by this than the moneychangers and vendors at the temple.

The disciples were probably well-intended in their attempt to protect Jesus from getting side-tracked from His **important** mission of preaching and healing (the things which made Him—and them—famous). They rebuked the parents who brought their children to Jesus just to lay His hands on them, pray (**Matt. 19:13**), and bless them. The disciples thought that Jesus and His mission were too important to let a bunch of small children waste His valuable time.

The fact is, Jesus did not have a calendar, a schedule, or time management book to follow (in Romania, such organizational tools were called an “agenda”). Jesus had a particular purpose: “not to be served but to serve, and give His life as a ransom.” (**Matt. 20:28**) His hour had not yet come.

So Jesus did not feel that people were imposing on His time, and He did not want others to feel badly for coming to Him, interrupting His day, etc. The only exceptions to this openness are when He was allowing importunate persons to express their strong faith (**Matt. 15:21-28**).

The behavior of the disciples was causing people to get the wrong impression about Jesus as well as the kingdom. Jesus was a “people person” that made people His priority over personal preferences, or even physical needs (**John 4:34**). It was hard enough for people to truly know Him because of their preconceptions about the Messiah. Having the disciples to misrepresent Him by their actions just made matters worse.

Luke uses the word translated “infant” in the New King James. Perhaps the disciples thought that the children were too young to benefit from Jesus holding them. However, Paul used the same word to remind Timothy that his mother and grandmother taught him to understand the scriptures from the time that he was a very young child (**2 Tim. 3:15**). It is never too early to learn.

The disciples not only underestimated the personality of Jesus and the ability of small children to learn something from their brief experience with Jesus, they also underestimated the power of prayer. Jesus was praying for them. We must be in Christ and pray through Him if we want Him to pray for us today (**Hebrews 7:25**). If the fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful (**James 5:16**), how much more the prayer of the sinless Son of God!

As usual, the worst damage done to the reputation of Christ and His church is not by the enemies of the cross, atheists, or worldly people whose behavior reflect more badly upon themselves; the disciples of Jesus cause the world to have a greater negative impression of the church by behavior and attitudes that are not Christ-like.

Jesus encourages parents to bring their small children to Him. They are the most eager to learn. Teach them constantly at home (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9**) and bring them to Bible study.