

Be as a Child

Key Verse:
“Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

—Mark 10:15, New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Mark 10:13-16

It seems remarkably out of character that Jesus’ disciples would be rebuking those who sought the Master’s blessing upon the little children. Perhaps it was the long day of teaching, conflict with the Pharisees, or the sensitive discussion of divorce that prompted their reaction. They may have tried to protect little ones from exposure to such a mature theme. Perhaps they

were caught up in their prospective roles in the kingdom. Who would sit on the right hand of Jesus and who on his left? This was no time for distractions from little children. To the contrary, Jesus was displeased with the direction his disciples were going. They were missing a key point about the kingdom and its hierarchy.

In his displeasure Jesus commanded, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.” (Mark 10:14-16, *NKJV*) What did Jesus mean—“of such is the kingdom of God”—that is embodied in the nature of little children?

These were small enough to be taken up in Jesus's arms. Jesus had a similar experience when he was quite young. "Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."—Luke 2:25-32, *NKJV*

Such little ones as were blessed by Jesus had innocence of heart and thought. Devoid of cynicism, prejudice, racism, nationalism, greed, hatred, and other shortcomings of fallen man, these epitomized the heart purity, love, and trust that will prevail in the kingdom of God.

Isaiah's vision of the peaceable kingdom shows the active role of "child-like" hearts. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:6-9, *NKJV*) Be "as a little child," for of such is the kingdom of God. ■