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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon
Barry Hosford

Class Leaders:

Deacon: C M Hester

Children: Gift and Model Mark 9:36-37, 42; 10:13-16

Lesson Background and Introduction

Lesson Context: Historical

Our text lands between Peter's confession of Jesus, "Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29), and the triumphal entry (11:1-10). Sandwiched between these events are clarifying motifs defining God's kingdom as upside down and backward to natural human instinct. Examples of these motifs are the high cost of discipleship (10:21-22), the difficulties of wealth (10:24-31), and a redefinition of greatness (10:36-45). Throughout this section, Jesus exalts the weak and lowly while humbling the powerful and proud. Just prior to today's text, Jesus and his disciples traveled the 25 miles between Caesarea Philippi and Capernaum (Mark 8:27; 9:33). Caesarea Philippi was a town in the hill country at the base of Mount Hermon. Capernaum was a small fishing village that Jesus used as the home base of his ministry on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:13). Capernaum is mentioned in all four Gospels and named more than any other town in the New Testament except Jerusalem. It is where the centurion asked for Jesus' help and where Jesus healed the paralytic who was dropped through the roof (8:5; Mark 2:1-12). In contrast, Scripture mentions Caesarea Philippi only twice: in Matthew 16:13 and its parallel in Mark 8:27.

Lesson Context: Children

In the Greco-Roman world of the first century AD, children held little significance. Adults viewed them as lacking reason and requiring training. The aim of their training was to learn their parents' business and duties. Their value was in their contribution to the family. In the extreme, children were considered property—to be nurtured or disposed of as the head of household determined. The same was true in Jewish households, but God also taught his people to consider children as a blessing (Psalm 127:3-5). God instructed parents to teach Israel's faith to their children and train them properly in behavior and wisdom (Deuteronomy 11:19; 31:12-13; Proverbs 22:6). Still, they had little power or status.

Introduction

Culture teaches us that the "good life" is for the smart, powerful, and accomplished. This concept is a constant refrain heralded by academia, work environments, media, and social circles. Even our children express this outlook—bragging about how good they are at something, how well they do in school, or how much bigger they are than younger siblings. This behavior points to social and cultural values that promote competition and comparison to determine who's in and who's not. Jesus' point is quite the opposite. Jesus teaches a nonhierarchical mindset among his followers. He challenges his disciples to recalibrate their values and embrace a new kingdom mindset. Jesus encourages unity, service, and childlike faith. He calls his people to accept entry into his kingdom with the delight of a child receiving a gift. To be sure, there are childish attitudes and actions we must avoid, correct, or otherwise put behind us (1 Corinthians 13:11; 14:20; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:2). Knowing what those are and how to grow beyond them while honoring and embracing Jesus' viewpoint is our continuing challenge. How might you adjust your goals, vantage points, and perceptions to better align with Jesus' directives? In what ways might you embrace childlikeness, vulnerability, innocence, and trust on a day-to-day basis?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

There are many belief systems that are influencing our children. TV shows, movies, music, teachers, friends, the media, each of these carry assumptions (either obvious or under the radar) about faith that exert real influence

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Dear Father, thank You for the joy and privilege to gracefully nurture children's hearts toward You

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus

(2 Tim 3:14-15 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 26, 2020)

Series: Social Teachings of the Church

UNIT 2: Fulfilling Our Obligations to Family and Community

NEXT WEEK

Family: Distinct and Obedient (Deut 6:3-9; Matt 19:3-9)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Gift of Children (Mark 9:36-37, 42)

Gift of receiving children (36-37)

- Receiving a child is like receiving Jesus (Matt 10:40-42)
- One must be like a child to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3-4)
- Receive a child because angels protect them (Matt 18:10)
- Welcoming a child is like welcoming Jesus (Luke 9:48)

Gift of training children (42)

- Train in godliness (Prov 22:6)
- Train by seeking and using God's grace (Titus 2:11-13)
- Train by teaching how to mature in the faith (2 Peter 1:5-8)
- Train what has been godly learned (Ps 78:3-4)
- Train in the Lord without exasperating the child (Eph 6:4)

Model of Children (Mark 10:13-16)

Model of access to Jesus (13-14)

- Access through God's call (Acts 2:39)
- Access through the way of Jesus (John 14:6)
- Access through faith in Jesus (Eph 3:10-12)
- Access through Jesus as High Priest (Heb 4:15-16)
- Access through Jesus' body (Heb 10:19-22)

Model of innocence (15)

- Innocence that accepts maturing in God's word (Heb 5:12-13)
- Innocence that accepts wise revelations (Matt 11:25)
- Innocence that grows in salvation (1 Peter 2:2)
- Innocence that receives without full knowledge (1 Cor 3:2)

Model of being blessed (16)

- Blessings from a father for a godly future (Gen 48:14-16)
- Blessings from the good shepherd (Isa 40:11)
- Blessings to enable obedience (Deut 28:2-4)
- Blessings received because of righteous parents (Prov 20:7)