

He Said What Part 6

It Would Be Better To Drown Than Tempt A Child To Sin

Matthew 18:1-6

Memory Verses: Matthew 18:3

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

I think we are at the point now that we are no longer shocked at some of the statements of Christ. I think we are beginning to understand that Jesus has some very hard truths to communicate to us and that we must take them seriously if we are to follow him. Following him will cost us our lives, our families, our dreams and desires, and this means war until He comes again in his glory. It's time to stop being shocked by his words and to start being steadfast in our walk.

This morning, again we will see some seemingly shocking statements from Christ - not the least of which is this; "it would be better to drown than to tempt a child to sin." Jesus is straight up saying, that it would be better for you to die than to cause a child to sin against God. That's pretty serious, so let us check the context of what he is saying. Look with me in **Matthew 18:1-6**.

Why does Jesus care so much about the purity of his children to the point that if someone causes them to sin they should die? There are many reasons but here and in our parallel passages this morning we see three main ones. First, children belong to the kingdom of God because they are innocent. Secondly, children exhibit a genuine faith. And Third, the humility of children is one of the greatest virtues. This morning we will take each of these one at a time and in the end see that... **protecting our children's souls from the pagan ideals of this world is the responsibility of every believer; for both their sake and ours.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **The Innocence Of Children Grants Them Access To The Kingdom of God**. Look at **Matthew 19:13-15** and **Luke 18:15-17**. In these two verses we see a statement that Jesus makes many times; "for to such belong the kingdom of God." This is worth examining for a couple of reasons. First, I thought the only way to belong to the kingdom of God is to place your faith in Christ and repent of your sins. It is very hard for children to know and understand the doctrines and concepts of the Bible which would lead someone to placing their trust in Jesus. If they've never made a profession of faith how can they belong to the kingdom of God? Secondly, all those who are saved are considered His children and in that aspect those who have placed their faith in him, becoming a part of his

family, are secure. With this in mind, Jesus could simply be using the faith and humility of children as a metaphor of the heart adults should have in order to make a profession of faith. So, which is it? Is Jesus talking about children as children or is he talking about children as those who have professed faith in Him as adults? The short answer is I believe it is both. The long answer is that he is definitely shining the spot light on little children, not adults who have become a part of the family through their profession of faith. For the sake of time let us only examine why Jesus is making the case that little children belong to the kingdom of God, even before making a profession of faith.

It's about their innocence. In essence I'm making a case for what many have called an "age of accountability." Children have an innocence about them that is observable. They don't know racism. They don't care what color you are they just want to play with you. They don't know jealousy and hatred. They want to have fun and make friends. When it comes to sins of the flesh they are completely unaware. They don't have sexual lusts or the knowledge of mind altering substances. They are pure. And they haven't been beat down and defeated by the world. Every moment is an opportunity for adventure and new beginning. And they will pretty much believe anything an adult tells them. When it all boils down they have not reached a point where they need empirical evidence to believe in something they can't explain. So it is very easy for them to believe in a God they can't see and His son who rose from the grave for their sins. Thus, as many believe, **it is possible God does not hold their sins or unbelief against them until they are able to make a rationale decision to have faith in something that takes an adult faith to believe in.** **Romans 1:20** tells us in a nut shell that if we as adults can see nature and rationalize there is a God we are without excuse if we reject him. It could be that children see God in nature and believe and thus have an excuse if you will. **2 Samuel 12:23** David says of his dead child that though the child cannot come back to him, one day he will go to him. If this is inspired from God then it leaves us to believe that dead children who could not even speak are innocent enough to inherit heaven.

So if there is an unspecified age of accountability and all children under this age are justified as innocent before God, then why is it imperative that we protect their innocence? Because by introducing them to sin, tempting them to sin, or causing them to sin, you are erasing their innocence and poisoning their souls to the point that when they reach that age, they will already be antagonistic towards God. **We are accountable for how we influence children's decisions for or against Christ.** Believe it or not but your sin can influence their decision... and it's not your place to influence that decision negatively. If you cause a child to sin you are in essence robbing them of their eternal life and thus Jesus says, you should be robbed of your physical life. **Protecting our children's souls from the pagan**

ideals of this world is the responsibility of every believer; for both their sake and ours.

The second thing we need to see here is that... **The Faith of Children Is Required To Enter The Kingdom of God.** **Mark 10:13-16** again reiterates what we've heard, but look closely at **verse 15**. Whoever doesn't receive the kingdom like a child cannot enter it. Where as before he was talking specifically to the innocence of children, now he is talking to us and how we should emulate children. What are we to emulate? Their faith. We are to receive Jesus and his kingdom the same way a child receives him... with very few rational and logical questions and with a simple, "yep... I can believe that." **It's not, as some may say, that children are not smart enough to dismiss fairytales.** Rather, they are smart enough to believe that there is **more than empirical evidence can explain.** As we grow up we lose this to some extent. We are told that science, history, archaeology, psychology, etc... can explain anything. Kids simply know better. They have to be indoctrinated by the world to change their minds, but they are born to believe. What Jesus is saying is that the simple faith of children is amazing and should be celebrated, not thwarted. To try to wreck this kind of faith is a spiritual crime. A sin of which there are serious consequences.

But what about our faith? We are also to have a faith that is simple and can look beyond the rational to the miraculous. Do you have that kind of faith? Do you have a childlike faith that rejects the world's ideals and ideas for something greater? Or are you one of the ones trying to rip that faith from others? Stop destroying the faith of others. Stop trying to lead them into sin. And above all stop leading our children astray. You're playing with death. **Protecting our children's souls from the pagan ideals of this world is the responsibility of every believer; for both their sake and ours.**

And lastly we need to see that... **The Humility of Children Is The Greatest Attribute In The Kingdom of God.** **Matthew 18:4** presents the case that children have a humility that is greatly desired and rewarded in the kingdom of God. Children are humble. They easily submit to authority. **They are remorseful over their mistakes. They don't think they are better or more deserving than anyone else. And in a sense they fear God. Whether through a parent's authority or a teacher's or the Bible they know that God disciplines. A bully is someone who takes advantage of the weakness of others. And children, in their humility present opportunities for bullies to take advantage of. They are impressionable in their humility. They are gullible in their humility. To take something good and abuse it is sickening.** That's why Jesus says, if you abuse the humility of these kids it would be better for you if you were

dead and drowned. Again, we as adults are to emulate the humility of children rather than act like arrogant fools and antagonize them. Humility is important for all of us. If we can't be humble like a child and have faith like a child how can we ever expect to become a child of God? Therefore we encourage humility, both in ourselves and in our kids and we protect our kids humility with every fiber of our being. **Protecting our children's souls from the pagan ideals of this world is the responsibility of every believer; for both their sake and ours.**

Application

I would add this as we close. First, protecting the faith, humility, and innocence of children is the primary job of parents. Secondly, though it is the primary job of parents to protect their children from sin and the world, it is every adult's responsibility in the church to do the same in a support role. That is why we put a premium on our SC Kids and Student's programs. They are vital to protecting and discipling our children so that when they do reach the age where they can make a decision for Christ they do make a decision for Christ.

Conclusion

Regardless, the issue at hand is clear. Jesus doesn't want anyone to die, but if you mess with his kids it would be better that you did. Look at **Luke 17:1-3**. Watch yourselves or watch your back! But also recognize that if any of us sin, there is forgiveness in Christ. Today, would you commit to protecting the innocence, faith and humility of our children? Would you commit to emulating the faith and humility of our children as to enter the kingdom of God? And would you fight to see them come to Christ at the age of accountability? **Protecting our children's souls from the pagan ideals of this world is the responsibility of every believer; for both their sake and ours**