

*Christian Education Sunday*  
*The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
September 26, 2010  
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church - Pastor Chip Wilke

Mark 10:13-16

*People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (NIV)*

A big rescue mission was established for homeless children, and at the dedication the keynote speaker made this statement: *"If only one child is saved by means of this mission, all the expenses of constructing and maintaining it will be well worth it."* After the service, a big contributor quickly went over to the speaker and snapped at him, *"Sir, you surely did not mean what you said. Did you not exaggerate when you proclaimed that the saving of one child will exceed the great cost of the construction and maintenance of this mission?"* This well-educated speaker quickly replied: *"No, I did not exaggerate one bit. This mission is not too expensive if that child is my child."*

How much more is this true when it comes to what our focus is on this Christian education Sunday! What cost is too great, what commitment is too much, what time is too valuable, that we don't do everything we can so that our children end up in the saving arms of Jesus? What price can we put on even one child becoming wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus? Our focus today is on a rescue mission - it was a one Man rescue mission. The Son of God came to seek and save the lost and that includes all of us. From the smallest of us to the oldest, the wonderful truth is Jesus will not cast a single one of us aside. Jesus wants to bless us all with His love. So today, I pray we remember: **The most important thing for our children and us is found in Christ alone.**

This is certainly one of the most comforting, charming, and cherished and at the same time saddest stories in the Gospels. People, most of whom probably were parents, were bringing their children to Jesus. They wanted the Savior to bless them. But the disciples started to rebuke them. We may try to excuse the disciples saying they were trying to protect Jesus from needless interruptions and save His valuable time for more important things. But that is precisely what is so sad about their actions. They didn't see Jesus spending the time with these children as being very important. Perhaps they thought of these little ones as too immature to believe or not yet in need of the Savior.

So Jesus wastes no time showing whose side He is on when it comes to this issue. Jesus clearly sided with the people bringing their children to Him. *"When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* This is only the second time Mark records Jesus getting indignant (very angry), the first time was at the Pharisees. This time Jesus is very angry with His own disciples and rightly so! He tells

them to let the children come. He tells them not to do anything to hinder the children from coming into His arms. He reminds them the kingdom of God belongs to them. These little ones need the Savior just as much as they did.

So what can we, whether we are parents of little children or not, take from this lesson? What can we, as a church family, learn about what the most important thing is not only for us but for the children here? Our children need Jesus, don't they? They need what is found in Christ alone. That is why Jesus gives us His gift of baptism - a promise for us and our children - a washing of rebirth and a renewal by the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus gives us His Word - so we may learn about His love and be taught everything He has commanded us. We learn today that Jesus loves little children. He does not want us to do anything to hinder them coming to and remaining in faith in Him.

So what would Jesus tell us about bringing our children to church regularly? Do you think Jesus would have something to say to us about being patient and loving with, and finding room for, the little ones here at church? What might Jesus instructions be about bringing the kids to Sunday School? What kind of example do you think Jesus would want all of us, parents or not, to set for the children about the importance of taking time for God's Word both at church and home? What might the Lord say to us when we think it costs too much, takes too much time, or isn't all that important to support our Christ-centered programs that bring the children into Jesus' arms? Let us listen once again to what Jesus says: ***"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."***

I'm sure, because of our sins, there have been times Jesus looks at us and gets a little indignant. His anger is rightfully placed at us when we do not see children or anyone as being very important to Jesus. That's also what makes this lesson so comforting when we hear the words and look at the actions of Jesus. ***"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."*** ***And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."***

Do you recognize the great and wonderful truth here? Our salvation doesn't depend on our own wisdom or intelligence. It doesn't rely on our age or how big or small we are - it doesn't even rely on what we have done or not done. It is in Christ alone. All people of all ages enter into a relationship with God, receive forgiveness and salvation, the same way. It is in Christ alone. The Holy Spirit teaches us to simply turn to Jesus and place our trust in Him. We look away from ourselves and with a childlike faith look up to Jesus. With a childlike trust we rely on Jesus for everything. For Jesus lived the righteous life we could not. Jesus died the dreadful death we deserved. God's anger for our lack of love and patience, for our poor priorities, was poured out on Christ. Jesus Himself became the atoning sacrifice for all sin. His rescue mission included horrible suffering and death on the cross. But we also know it ended in the victory of an open grace. Now peace and heaven are found in Christ alone.

Jesus is the Savior that all people of all ages need. Thankfully, Jesus' arms are still open wide. Christ is still welcoming sinners to be blessed and comforted by His grace. He continues to offer forgiveness and peace to all. Jesus is still carrying out the greatest rescue mission of all through His Gospel. By His grace Jesus allows you and me to be a part of it. Dear Sunday school teachers thank God for the privilege you have this year to be able to feed Jesus' little lambs with His Word. Parents thank God for the

opportunities you have to bring your children to Jesus. Let us all give thanks for the privilege of supporting such a wonderful mission.

I pray all of us see the love of our Savior in this lesson today. Jesus will not ever cast any of us aside. For Jesus loves all His children - each and every one of us. He wants to constantly keep us in His arms where He blesses us every day. May we daily recognize the most important thing for our children and us is found in Christ alone! So are we willing to take the time, pay the cost, and make every effort, so that we and our children know Jesus as our Savior? I also would say it is never too much if that one child that is saved by Jesus is my child. For Jesus, for learning about Him as our Savior through His Word, for standing in a faith that trusts in Christ alone, is the most important thing of all. Amen.