



Mark 10:13-16

“And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 3:3, 7-8

Lessons, Lord-willing:

- 12.27 [Review] The Light of the World gives light to a man born blind: Jesus heals a man born blind [83]
- 1.24 Jesus seeks the lost: Jesus tells stories about lost sheep and lost coins [85] Luke 15:1-10
- 1.31 A faithful father welcomes back his lost son: Jesus tells a story about a lost son [86] Luke 15:11-32
- 2.7 Jesus is glorified in the raising of Lazarus [87] John 11:1-44
- 2.14 Jesus has mercy on blind Bartimaeus [88] Luke 18:35-43; Mark 10:46-52



“Regeneration is always the decisive element in effectual calling. Regeneration is monergistic: that is, entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit. It raises the elect among the spiritually dead to new life in Christ (Eph. 2:1-10). It is a transition from spiritual death to spiritual life, and conscious, intentional, active faith in Christ is its immediate fruit, not its immediate cause. Regeneration is the work of what Augustine called ‘prevenient’ grace, the grace that precedes our outgoings of heart toward God.”

— J.I. Packer

Dear Parents,

This week we looked at the story in Mark 10:13-16, when Jesus welcomed the little children. Parallel accounts can be found in Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17. This familiar passage can be talked about so much with children that the story becomes almost a cliché. But when this story is read with God’s powerful grace for salvation in mind, this story becomes a means for worshipping God for His mercy to us. Typically, when reading this story, the focus is on *the children* being allowed

to come to Jesus, as if the most important thing in this story is the fact that Jesus is concerned with not only adults, but children as well. And while this is true, I fear this understanding is far too narrow. Let’s explore what Scripture has to say about humans going to Jesus:

I Will Give You Rest

How many times have we seen these famous words slapped on a coffee mug or quoted to a

“Sanctification, says the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q.35), is ‘the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.’ The concept is not of sin being totally eradicated (that is to claim too much) or merely counteracted (that is to say too little), but of a divinely wrought character change freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. Sanctification is an ongoing transformation within a maintained consecration, and it engenders real righteousness within the frame of relational holiness. Relational sanctification, the state of being permanently set apart for God, flows from the cross, where God through Christ purchased and claimed us for himself. Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth.”

– J.I. Packer, *Sanctification: The Christian Grows in Grace*

For more reading regarding God’s initiation in salvation and our resting in Christ, check out:

John 6: 35-51

Hebrews 4:1-13

Ephesians 2:11-22,1-10

John 11:1-44

Romans 8:1-39

stressed-out-sleep-deprived college student, “*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for you souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*”? And while it is a wonderful concept to find rest in Christ while we are physically exhausted, I think we miss the beauty and power of what Jesus is saying if we ignore the context of these verses and fail to understand what type of rest Jesus was teaching about. Doesn’t it

seem like there is dissonance between these verses just mentioned and the ones preceding them?

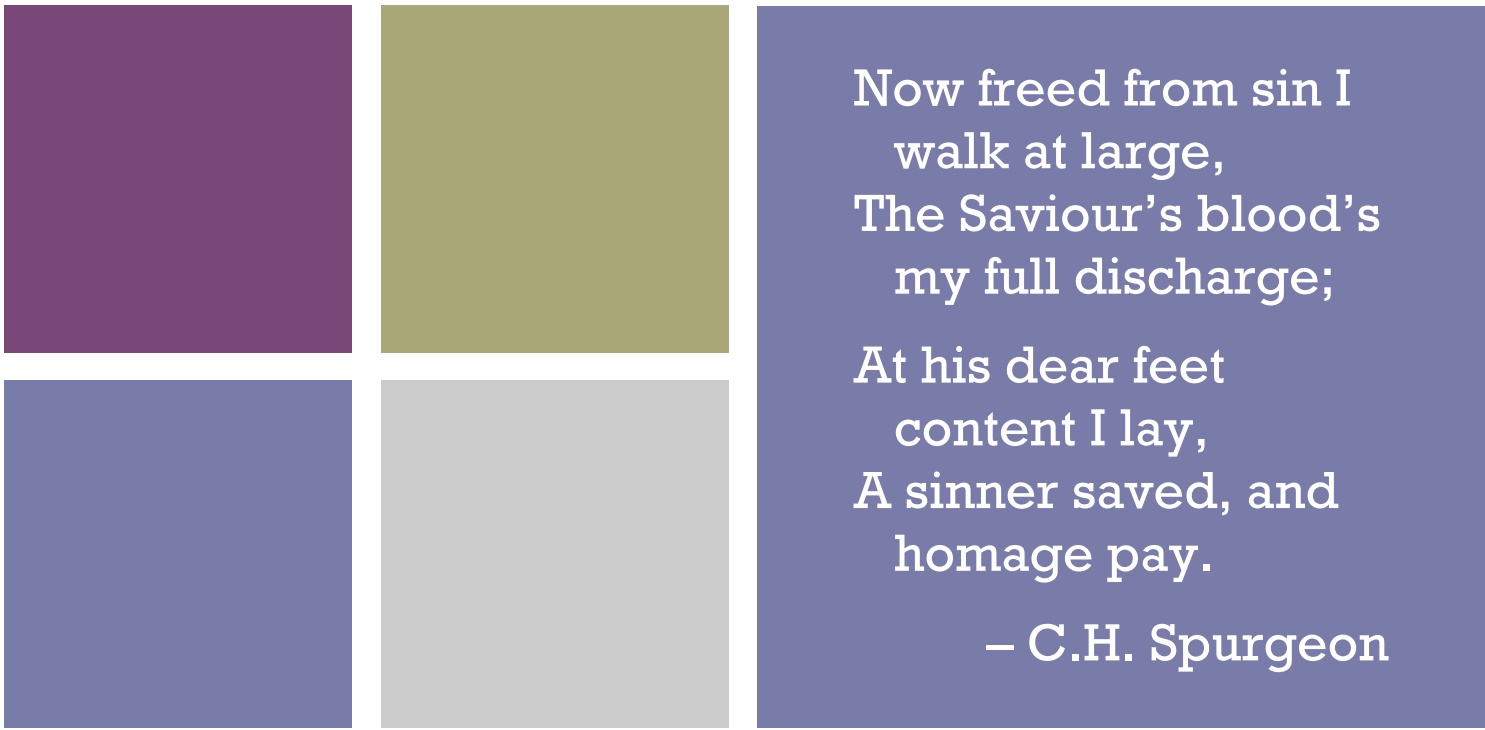
At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will” (Matthew 11:25-26).

Does Jesus like to be sneaky and enjoys the fact that His Father hides things from people? Why have “these things” been hidden from adults, or people unlike children, and then revealed to

little children? What are “these things” anyway? Prior to these verses Jesus begins listing off woes to cities that were unrepentant. And a similar account of both Christ’s woes and His interesting words regarding the Father hiding things only to be revealed to little children can be found in Luke 10:13-16, 21-24. Luke’s account is very helpful for answering these questions. First of all, we must note that Luke begins by saying, “*In that same hour [Jesus] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit*” (21). Why was Jesus rejoicing about this? Whatever He’s rejoicing over, we should try to grapple with it and also rejoice with Christ over that which He rejoices. But honestly, it’s a little difficult for me to find any reason to rejoice in a Savior who likes to hide things from people who aren’t childlike and be selective in revealing it to only little children...that is, unless I learn more about “*these things*” which are being

penal substitutionary atonement

Christ’s vicarious death satisfied God’s wrath. Jesus took the punishment we deserved. He died as our substitution—justifying us so that we are righteousness in God’s eyes because of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us and our sin imputed to Christ on the cross.



Now freed from sin I
walk at large,
The Saviour's blood's
my full discharge;

At his dear feet
content I lay,
A sinner saved, and
homage pay.

– C.H. Spurgeon

hidden and *why* Jesus is rejoicing over them being revealed to little children.

Let's look at Luke's account: *"In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will'"* (v.21). So here's a bit of insight, God's gracious will is what Christ is rejoicing over...continuing on... *"All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him'"* (v.22). Jesus mentions the word "reveal" again, this time referring to the Father being revealed only to those whom the Son chooses to give disclosure. *"Then turning to the disciples he said privately,*

'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it'" (v.23-24). This is interesting to me because it shows that Christ is, as usual, talking on a spiritual level and not only a physical level concerning childlikeness and eyesight. The disciples aren't childlike in their age, but they were blessed by God to see Jesus with spiritual eyes that had been opened to see Jesus as the Christ. They were blessed because their spiritual ears and hearts—which were once deaf and dead—were sovereignly opened by God and made alive to cherish Jesus as the Christ. Then traveling back to Matthew's account, what does being childlike have to do with Jesus giving rest for our souls?

It's been only a few years since

I was a child, so I'm sure having your own children now you're keenly aware of this reality: your child needs you. No matter how ornery or disobedient children can be at times, they all need parents. I can remember being quite a stubborn child, but at the end of the day, I knew that I had nothing and owned nothing apart from my parents—I wouldn't have been able to take care of myself or sustain my own life for very long without them! Also, children are moldable and are often times quick to ask for help or to learn how to do something (at least in contrast to many self-sufficient individualistic adults). I trusted my parents—I knew them and knew I could listen to them without fear that they would intentionally mislead me. This is exactly what Jesus is talking about concerning our spiritual minds and hearts.

This is childlikeness. Obeying, trusting in, and being wholly reliant upon God our Father—*this* is what Mark is referring to when he recounts Jesus' words, *"Let the little children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God"* (10:14). But Jesus doesn't merely give us a positive command, he clarifies the truth regarding the inverse, *"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it"* (15). So it is not as though receiving the kingdom of God is a suggestion—it's a command.

So, when Matthew records Christ's words, *"Come to me,*

all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...you will find rest for your souls," we must see what are souls are resting from (11:28-29). We will find rest in ceasing from striving to earn our own salvation. It's all of God! **Jesus** chooses to reveal the truth to those whom he wills! **Jesus** was the penal substitutionary atonement for us on the cross! **Jesus'** death was both necessary and sufficient, both effective and triumphant! It's a command: *Come to me! Find rest for your souls in me!* When we evangelize, we must rest in the sovereign God who does the decisive and effective work of saving souls—not the persuasive words of men. When we become discouraged that our zeal for the Lord is lacking and that we are in desperate need of sanctification, and that we desire to love God more but see how often we fall short—we must find rest in God who preserves His children for His namesake, knowing that those

Repentance is a grace of God's Spirit, whereby a sinner is inwardly humbled and outwardly reformed.

Repentance is a spiritual medicine made up of six special ingredients:

1. Sight of sin
2. Sorrow for sin
3. Confession of sin
4. Shame for sin
5. Hatred for sin
6. Turning from sin

If any ingredient is left out, it loses its virtue.

— Thomas Watson

desires would only be truly in our hearts if God had *already* done the saving work in our lives. This finding rest never leads to laziness, in fact, rest for legalistic worrying souls leads to liberation and zeal for laboring *in the strength of the Lord!* Resting in the knowledge of God's sovereign work of regeneration gives us boldness to evangelize not reason to refuse to speak of the Gospel.

Childlike vs. Childish

Within the same chapter (Matthew 11), Christ clarifies that being childlike is not the same as being childish: *"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds [or "wisdom is justified by all her children" Luke 7:35] (Matthew 11:16-19).* I'm sure Jesus' comparison of this generation to children was not a compliment in this situation. Basically He was reprimanding people for having arrogant tidy little boxes of preconceived notions regarding what God is like, but above all, having unbelieving hearts. In fact, Jesus continues to vociferate concerning those

Christianity is first humility, second humility and third humility.

—John Calvin

who are unbelieving and unrepentant (Matthew 11:20-24, and Luke 10:13-16).

I find it so interesting that in each of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), the story subsequent to Christ welcoming the children is the story of the rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he had to **do** to inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:13-30, Mark 10:13-31, Luke 18:15-30). So in the few verses that describe Christ's welcoming children, we learn that we must go to God as children in need of his sufficient grace—and that *going to God* is only a result of *God's prior coming to us* in spiritual rebirth. We cannot **do** anything to **earn** our salvation. In the following story of the rich young ruler, we learn that following God is yes, God-initiated, but it will also necessarily be reflected in our actions that overflow from our changed hearts—not to **earn** salvation, but to **reflect** the reality of God's redemptive work in our lives.

God is Glorified, Let Us Rejoice!

When it was written of Christ, "In that same hour he **rejoiced** in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children, yes, Father, for such was your gracious will,'" we should ponder **why** Jesus was rejoicing (Luke 10:21). I don't think Jesus was rubbing His hands together in anticipation with a sinister sneer as He relished the thought of keeping secrets from people. Truthfully, the exact opposite is true, Jesus loves to display Himself and have His Name proclaimed. God is all about God getting the glory; He is worthy of all worship and praise. God is all about Himself, and while this sounds so egotistic and megalomaniacal, if the opposite were true—*God cares about something or someone more than Himself and His glory*—then He would be worshiping that thing or person and then God Himself would be an idolater! It is right and good and beautiful that God is all about His own Namesake. So when Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit concerning His Father's business of hiding and revealing, Jesus was rejoicing in this truth: *Man is utterly lost and headed for hell apart from*

God. Man is described in Scripture as spiritually dead, deaf, and blind. Man is utterly hopeless without God. Therefore, man, in his deadness, cannot seek God and cannot repent of his sins...unless God makes him alive first! That making us alive, or spiritual rebirth, or regeneration, must be understood as **God's** sovereign and gracious work. That is how God is glorified, when He gets the praise and we get His grace. Jesus rejoices in God's gracious will to elect His children in their spiritual deadness! We should likewise rejoice and meditate on God's grace to us.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."

—John 6:35-40, 44

"If any man doth ascribe of salvation, even the very least, to the free will of man, he knoweth nothing of grace, and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ aright."

—Martin Luther

Dear Parent,

I enjoy teaching your children about Jesus and playing with them on Sunday mornings. Harvard Avenue Baptist Church is committed to connecting people to Christ, and this passion is not to the exclusion of children. In fact, the Children's Ministry is dedicated to partnering with parents in teaching children about Jesus. However, we are only that: partners. You have a wonderful roll in your child's life, to raise your child for God's glory, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 style. This bulletin is designed not only to inform you of what your child is being taught at Harvard, but also to encourage you in your endeavors to bring up your child in the ways of the Lord everyday of the week.

In Christ,
Beka

"He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their

children, that the next generation might know them, ...so that they should set their hope in God and

not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."
Psalm 78:5-7

Here is a copy of one of the articles I wrote last school year for the JBU Threefold Advocate.

Base Gospel on Scriptures, not pop-culture

CONTRIBUTOR



Beka Ruiz

Let me pose a simple question: What can a dead man do? Indeed, the only thing a dead man can do is reek while rotting away. He cannot call for the doctor or in his own strength and willpower drink the antidote to save his life.

This question, while having little significance on the surface, is wrought with spiritual ramifications. Ephesians 2 boldly states that men are dead in sin and by nature children of God's wrath. If evangelism is done with the strength and words of mere men, spoken to dead men, then it is the most futile exercise attainable.

Therefore, we must re-examine our methods of evangelism, the Good News along with its sobering truths, and base them on Scripture, not what we think a postmodern culture would rather hear. The

grace of God is not only necessary but also sufficient for salvation. This is the hope of evangelism, not a trifle distinction, but the very essence and foundation of the Gospel. The sufficiency of God's grace in salvation is seen in two ways.

First, regeneration must precede faith. A dead man cannot make a decision to follow Christ. He must first be made alive in Christ. Faith is a gift of God, not something produced by enough human courage and hope.

The resurrection of Lazarus in John 11 depicts man's helplessness and God's sovereign power in spiritual regeneration. Lazarus had to have first been made alive to hear and respond to Christ's command, "Lazarus, come out." Faith cannot precede regeneration. Man is not just sick, fatally wounded, or unconscious in trespasses, but spiritually dead.

Secondly, because man is spiritually dead, God alone must do the work of regeneration. Does a dead man cooperate with the doctor? No. Likewise, regeneration is the work of God alone, who is rich in mercy.

J.I. Packer wrote in his "Historical and Theological Introduction" to Luther's "The Bondage of the Will," "To the Reformers, the crucial question was not simply whether God

justifies believers without works of the law. It was the broader question, whether sinners are wholly helpless in their sin, and whether God is thought of as saving them by free, unconditional, invincible grace... Here was the crucial issue: whether God is the author, not merely of justification, but also of faith; whether, in the last analysis, Christianity is a religion of utter reliance on God for salvation and all things necessary to it, or of self-reliance and self-effort."

These truths of the sufficiency of the grace of God give us great comfort and confidence to spread the Gospel with joy. Evangelism is not the hopeless task of coaxing a dead man to be persuaded to choose life. God, in his grace and mercy, goes before us and regenerates the hearts of his chosen people.

We need not worry about man's reaction to the true Gospel, for Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:18, "the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."



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