

November 7th 2021
Text: Mark 10:13-16

Twenty Third Sunday after Trinity
0568

Theme: Bring Your Children to Jesus.

May the grace of God reign in each of your hearts, that we may be the children of God and receive Him in humble faith as a little child. Amen. Dear Christians: The lies of Satan fill the world today; there is nothing of which one may say, the devil has not corrupted or left this alone. Likewise, he has not spared our children. In fact, Satan vehemently attacks them, attempting to deceive them through their parents. He has largely convinced the world, even the visible church, that children are in no danger at all. He has convinced pastors to prioritize the teaching of adults, but neglect the teaching of children; at the same time convincing them that they need not be baptized, they need not have their sins washed away, for they have no sin. This lie is called the age of innocence by most in the Reformed church. It is taught that children up to “the age of discretion” have no damnable sin, and therefore are part of the kingdom of God apart from the teaching of Scripture, and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Nearly all reformed churches today have a daycare of sorts, a place for the children to go while their parents attend worship service, to hear the Word of God, to praise His name, and the like. In addition, most of these children are not baptized until they have reached adolescence. Today we will see that this is a grave mistake, and does both a disservice to the children themselves, and to the Church as a whole. They butcher the Word of God, ignore clear passages of Scripture and wrestle away from God the Means of Grace, casting them into the trash heap, declaring that no such lowly means are necessary. Quite frankly, it is rather disgusting, harmful, and outright false and pernicious to teach such things.

Thus to begin with, here, we must establish the need for children to receive the Word of God, the forgiveness of sins, and conversion to faith in Christ Jesus. Let us turn to Psalm 51, and read there verse 5: **read passage here**. King David here makes clear that when children are conceived, in that very moment, they are already under the curse of sin and death. Jesus told Nicodemus that that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Two sinners cannot beget a righteous person, but according to science itself, two sinners can bring forth only a sinner. If children were righteous they would not be subject to disease or death, for those things are consequences of sin. Children are born deaf because of sin. Children die because of sin, children get sick because of sin. Children, yea, even infants need the grace and mercy of God no less than adults do, and children, as we shall see, are beloved of the Lord. Who then would presume to withhold from a dear child of God His blessings, His mercy, His grace? Jesus had some very choice words for those who would dare to harm these little ones spiritually. Let us turn to the book of Matthew, chapter 18, and read verse 6: **read passage here**. What greater offense can be done to a child than withholding from him the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Therefore it will be our purpose today to see the truth concerning what it is that God desires that parents, pastors, and teachers provide for our children. We will do so

according to our text for today which is found in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Mark beginning at verse thirteen.

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

Let us pray, O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Thou who didst tenderly invite the little children, even infants to come unto Thee, we pray that Thou wouldst most graciously provide for all the spiritual necessities of our children. Give our parents, our pastor, and all our teachers grace to see the need for teaching them of all Thy wonderful works, that they may do it in patience, diligence, and in the power of Thy Spirit. O gracious Lord, show unto us the necessity for Baptizing infants and little children by teaching us of the power of Baptism, its blessings, and Thy grace given by it. Help each of us, both young and old; man, woman, and child, to receive Thee in childlike trust, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God and the water of Holy Baptism. Finally we pray that as children are nurtured by milk, grow in strength and finally begin to eat meat; let us all grow in grace and in the knowledge of Thy Word, that we may be weaned from the milk of Thy Word and receive the true meat of Thy Word, ever growing and becoming stronger in faith and wisdom. Help us, O Lord, to do these things for our children, and so teach another generation of Thy loving-kindnesses toward all those who believe in Thee for forgiveness and salvation. Grant these things for the sake of Thy precious promises. Amen.

Guided by the Holy Spirit let us learn to bring our children unto Jesus, by first bringing them:

To the waters of Holy Baptism. We read verses thirteen through sixteen of our text: ***“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”*** In the Lutheran Church Baptism is often called the sacrament of initiation, because by it many are brought to faith, that is are converted and become Christians. In sharp contrast to the Reformed teaching that Baptism is powerless and is nothing but a sign or symbol, we teach that Baptism actually has the power to convert a soul, even an infant soul to faith in Christ Jesus. Let us turn to the book of 1 Peter, chapter 3, and read verses 20-21: **read verses here.** In our text when little children were brought to Jesus the disciples rebuked those that brought them, but this displeased Jesus very much and He commanded them to be brought unto Him. Now does this mean to be brought only while He was yet alive? Does this mean

brought when they reach the “age of discretion? No, not at all. He wants this command to stand for all time, thus the reason it is included in the sacred text, and He wants them brought even as infants. In reporting this very same event, the writer Luke actually uses the Greek word for infant. He wants all children including infants to be brought unto Him. Now how would we bring our children to Jesus in our modern day? Obviously it must mean to bring them spiritually to Him, that is to bring them to Him by their conversion to faith in Him, and as we have seen in the first epistle of Peter this is done first and foremost in the waters of Holy Baptism. In truth, when Jesus instituted this sacrament He declared that it should be administered to all nations which certainly includes infants. Thus in order to teach any other doctrine than that of the Lutheran church in regard to Baptism is to ignore, yea, to tear out of Scripture very clear passages which enjoin that Baptism should be administered to little children, infants.

Thus, it is then that Jesus first exhorts parents to bring their children to this sacred and beneficial sacrament. The parents, in our text attempt to do this very thing, but are turned away by the disciples. In our day, there is the very false notion that children are not an important part of the church body, but are to be removed rather from the equation so that parents may be taught, but rather children are to be of the highest priority within the home and the church, to ensure that they receive the Baptism of God, come to faith in Him, receive the forgiveness of all their sins, and receive the gift of eternal life. Those of us who are grown and remember the grace of God we received at our Baptism can attest to its benefits. When we remember our Baptism, witnessed to us by our sponsors of its validity, we remember that in that moment we received the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins and were delivered from death and the devil. And we use our Baptism daily by the daily drowning of the old man with his sinful lusts and desires and daily a new man is brought forth in righteousness and true holiness, and all this is accomplished through the waters of Holy Baptism, to which we are commanded to bring our children. Now secondly, Jesus did not just command the parents to do this, but also the disciples. They are not to hinder Christian parents in their attempt to bring their children to Jesus in baptism, but promote the bringing of children, and grant unto them the very thing for which the parents bring them, to be baptized. Thus are we enjoined to bring our children to Jesus by bringing them to the waters of Holy Baptism, and:

To His Holy Word. We read verses thirteen through sixteen of our text: *“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”* To open this portion of the sermon, let us turn to the book of Matthew, chapter 23, verses 19-20: **read passages here.** As we view this passage many come to the mistaken notion that Baptism is a magic formula which once administered covers the child for his entire life, and that even if he lives an ungodly life, even if he is never taught of his Savior, that he will still go to heaven because he was

baptized as an infant. Yet this is not at all what Jesus commands in Matthew, nor is it what He enjoins in our text. Notice that Jesus says to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The teaching is to be done continuously throughout the early life of the child and continue through old age until they enter their eternal rest. Indeed, Baptism grants faith unto the child, but we must remember that faith is a living thing, and like every other living thing if not given the proper nutrients, if not fed it will die. It is the same with faith. Once it has taken root in the child's heart it must be continually fed with the Word of God to grow stronger, to remain alive and thriving. One would never imagine that a child born in flesh never needs nourishment afterward, but will feed that child every single day. The same should be understood about our second birth, that of being born into the faith of Jesus Christ. Teaching the children should be the highest priority for the parents, the pastor, indeed the entire Church of God, for such is the very thing that Jesus says in our text. Bring them to me in Baptism, but continue to bring them to me in the Holy Word. Bring them to church, bring them to Sunday School, bring them to Catechism class, bring them to Bible class. Let them continue to be brought to the feet of their Savior to hear His Word, for without such the child will die spiritually. Let us turn to Psalm 78, and read there verses 1-4: **read passages here**. The Scripture is full of instances of parents teaching their children of God. In fact, in the very early days the Word of God, not being yet written, was passed from generation to generation by speaking of it to them. Diligence is necessary on the part of parents, patience is necessary, courage and strength, knowing that Christ so desires us to do this.

Now many say that the worship service is not the place for little children, but they would learn better elsewhere. In answer to this let us turn to the book of Joel, chapter 2, and read verses 15-16: **read passages here**. Here God enjoins that whole congregation, young and old, male and female, even those that suck the breasts, in other words, infants should gather together in supplication unto God. Further, we are told in Hebrews not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. This is not an exclusionary statement, but includes all in the congregation, including children and infants. This has been the practice of Lutherans for many years, and the practice of the LCR, and the fruit bears out the benefit of doing so. Many are strong and knowledgeable believers are made in this way, who search the Scriptures, who compare teaching with the Word of God, and who teach their own children of the wonderful works of God.

Now this injunction by our Savior is not just meant for infants, but for all Christians. Indeed, we here focus on the little ones, but we should never be so arrogant as to think there is nothing that we can learn, nothing that we can glean, nothing which benefits our soul in the Word of God. In is an inexhaustible source of eternal wisdom. I have heard from one of our own members telling the confirmands not to lose their catechism, but to continue in its teaching, and this is very wise instruction, for the learning truly never ceases. Indeed we may know the Bible stories we have heard from our youth, we may have many of the famous passages time and time again, but even from these very familiar passages much can be learned. New facets of the same gemstone can be seen if

we take the time to read them, study them, meditate upon them. Truly, the task of bringing our children to Christ is a daunting one, a great responsibility, however it is also an opportunity to impart to others the knowledge of salvation in the Savior Jesus Christ. Many here and across the LCR long to perform mission work, and this is a noble desire, yet the most effective mission work is to teach the children, for in so doing a new generation believes and in turn teaches their children who teach their children and so on. May God grant that we be given strength, diligence and patience to bring our children to Jesus through the waters of Holy Baptism, and in His Word, and be continuously a people who study and learn His Word until our final breath, and be brought to His throne there to forever sing His praises and glorify His saving name. Amen.