

February 1, 2015  
Mark 10.13-16  
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### **The universal compulsion (13a)**

*13 One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them.*

- Drawn to wear we belong, a continued theme in Mark.
- Even though the crowd often misidentifies Jesus notice that they still bring him their precious children. They are compelled by his kindness.
- They bring their earthly children to the Image of their Heavenly Father.
- “He is the image of the invisible God...” (Colossians 1.15) and “If you have seen me you have seen the Father...” (John 14.9).
- The kindness of God in the person of Jesus.
- All that we hold dear is safe in God’s hands!

### **What bothers God? (13b-14a)**

*But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. 14 When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them!”*

- The disciple’s mistake.
  - The disciples’ assumptions about greatness, as we’ve already seen in Mark, are incorrect (the quarrelling about who is the greatest and also their objections to Jesus’ apparent “defeat” in his predictions of his death).
  - Where there had been previously a case of mistaken identify, this is a case of mistaken character.
  - God’s greatness does not negate his humility.
  - It is not the children who annoy Jesus, but something else.
- What *really* bothers God?
  - Godly anger and the mistreatment of “little ones”.

- God is angered any time we discriminate amongst one another and act in such a way that there is hierarchy in human value.
- God has made all of us in his image and when we discriminate against and harm one another we discriminate against and harm God. – “For whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me...” (Matthew 25).
- How do we treat “little ones”?
- Godliness, and therefore greatness, is noticing looking out for and caring for those who society doesn’t notice, and can’t look out for or care for themselves.
- Who do we marginalize? Who are we shooing away?

### **The double lesson (14b-15)**

*For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”*

- Who belongs?
  - Mark’s compounding message. Those who typically *don’t* belong now *do* belong. The list continues to grow (the sick, the needy, societal and religious outcasts, people of other races and cultures, women and now children).
  - Unlike today, children were not even second-class citizen’s in Jesus’ world. They were possessions and considered sub-human, hence the disciple’s treatment of them.
  - But Jesus says that God’s kingdom, God’s blessing, is *for* these little ones – that God is inclined toward them – that space is being made for them!
  - Not only this, they are held up as examples.
- How to belong.
  - Our culture’s obsession with strength and independence.

- “A strong, independent woman”, “He doesn’t need anyone”, “Wait till I get my money right. You can’t tell me nothing”. (Kanye West laments a spiraling life driven by the lust for independence).
- The way to become truly human is to recognize our need for God, our dependence on him as his created children.
  - Independence and autonomy from God and one another make us less than who we were created to be.
  - Relating to God as Good Father and to one another as good brothers and sisters transforms us into our true selves.
  - This is why for all the striving for independence and “go it alone” attitudes our culture might seem to celebrate, we can’t shake these in-born truths:
    - We need and want love from one other.
    - We want to be together.
    - We’re happiest and most fulfilled when we experience the love of a friend, a partner, a parent or a mate.
- This is the second part of the double lesson from the “little ones”. We belong in a state of belonging.
  - Jesus inverts culture’s negative vision of child-like dependence and uses it as a model of how best to relate to God – whom we were created to belong to.
- Playing God’s part and recognizing our own. When we love others who are in need we remember we’re on the other side of the relationship with a God who loves us in our need.

### **A cosmic tableau (16)**

*16 Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.*

- When Mark says Jesus “took the children in his arms and blessed them” we get much more than cutesy image but a cosmic tableau.
- This is the good Shepherd. This is the one who searches for us as we search for belonging.

**Discussion Questions:**

- How did you see this passage before Sunday’s sermon? What were your impressions of it?
- What struck you about the passage and teaching on Sunday?
- Who are the “little ones” you are surrounded by daily?
- How have you seen people in our community value and love “little ones”.