

DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE

TALK
IT OVER

DATE: SUNDAY, 16TH OF MAY 2021 | SERIES: JESUS PART 6

MATTHEW 19:13-15

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them.

But the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

MARK 10:16

And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

NOTE TO LEADERS:

Flourish 2021 will be live-streamed on the 18th & 19th of June. We hope you will open your hearts and homes to your friends and host a Flourish watch party.

There is no cost to "attend"; however, if you're hosting a watch party, you need to register as a host at www.flourishwomensconference.co.za so that we can give you a host pack and all the details about our programme.

START TALKING

1. Was there anything in Sunday's message that challenged you?
2. What was your experience of church growing up?

START THINKING

1. The mistake the disciples made was thinking that Jesus wasn't interested in the marginalised (so they wanted to turn the children away).
 - A). Who are the marginalised in our society (e.g. elderly, impoverished, sick, unemployed)?
 - B). How is your heart towards the marginalised? Have you become desensitised to their plight in any way? How do we remain sensitive to the needs of others, especially when it comes to those who are not like us?
2. As parents, we have two jobs when it comes to our children:
 - to tell them about Jesus;
 - and to tell Jesus about them (pray for them).Which of these do you struggle the most with and why?

START SHARING

1. Have you grown a little disconnected from the church community in the last year? What have you done to keep connected, and how has that helped you during this time? If you've become disconnected, what steps will you take to connect back into church community?
2. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Which part of Jesus' invitation stands out to you the most? How do we practically respond to this invitation?

START PRAYING

Here are three prayer points for the week:

1. Pray that the Lord would open the eyes of your heart to the marginalised
2. Pray for your children (and grandchildren)
3. Pray for the lost

START DOING

Through the Scriptures, we learn that Jesus was particularly gracious to those who knew that they didn't have it altogether. And in fact, He was harsh with the arrogant, the wealthy and the religious, who presumed that they did have it all together. Is there an area of your life where you're guilty of presuming you have it "all together"? Spend some time in prayer and submit control of this area of your life back to God.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

In the final week of our Jesus series, Steve shared a message from Matthew 19:13-15. Jesus often referenced children - two weeks ago, we read the text *"unless you become like a little child"*. This, however, is not just a reference to children; we see by His interaction with them that Jesus clearly loved children!

The world that Jesus grew up in was a lot darker than many people realise. The nation of Israel was being ruled by the Roman Empire, and they didn't handle children very well...

The head of the household had a legal right to decide whether a newborn child lived or died. Roman historian Seneca said, "We drown children at birth when they are weak and abnormal." He didn't say this as a matter of shame or guilt - it is just how things were done. If a child was of the wrong gender (i.e. a girl), they were very often left to die of exposure. Historians approximate that the ratio was around 1.4 million boys to 1 million girls.

The disciples made a similar mistake - thinking that time with little children was beneath Jesus. Perhaps they were trying to help manage His energy (He was preaching to large crowds), or maybe they thought that praying for little children was wasting His time. Either way, they earned themselves a rebuke - and we receive a profound piece of Jesus' heart.

1. Jesus loved the marginalised.

What is interesting is to see the ongoing impact of Jesus' life and words on the rest of human history. In his book, *Who Is This Man*, John Ortberg wrote: "If you ask what is Jesus' influence ... I would suggest that wherever you have an institution of self-giving ... - schools, hospitals, hospices, orphanages - for those who will never be able to repay, this probably has its roots in the movement of Jesus."

Followers of Jesus remembered that Jesus said, *"Let the children come to me,"* and began taking in abandoned children and orphans. Instead of leaving them to die, Christ-followers would do something about it. The first orphanages were usually associated with followers of this man Jesus Christ.

They also took care of the sick and dying. There were two major epidemics in the first three centuries of the church that wiped out up to 1/3 of the population. There was such panic that one writer said that at the first onset of disease, people would flee from their nearest and dearest, throw their sick bodies into the road (even before they were dead), and treated their corpses like dirt to avoid the spread of the disease.

The followers of Jesus, remembering that He took pity on lepers, the blind and the lame, the sick and the dying, took them in and began to care of them - people that they didn't know or weren't related to.

In the first century, the first hospital was started by a follower of Jesus named St Benedict. By the 6th century, it was common practice for monasteries to have hospitals next to them.

Widows: Women who survived their deceased husbands were fined by the Roman Empire for being a drain on the economy. The followers of this man, Jesus, remembered that He, while dying on the cross, told His disciple John to take care of His mother, and so they started taking care of widows.

What about us? Does this same heart of Jesus for the marginalised flow through us, or are we blind to the plight of others? Don't make the mistake of ignoring the marginalised and focus only on the people who are like you.

2. These parents took their children to Jesus.

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. Matthew 19:13 We are not told their names, but what a profound moment this was for the parents and their children. These parents gave one of the greatest possible gifts to their children - they took them to Jesus.

We can take our children to Jesus:

- In prayer for them and with them
- In reading the Bible to them and then teaching them how to read it for themselves
- In what we say to them and how we treat them; and how we treat others
- In prioritising church community

One of the key founding principles of CityHill Church is a heart for children. Our CityHill Kids ministry has a brilliant and life-changing impact on children. But that will never replace what your children see in you. They shouldn't hear one message at church and see a different message in you!

So many people say, "we are focusing on family time at the moment, so I won't be able to attend Church/LifeGroup/Prayer Meeting etc." If you really want to do the best for your family, surely you want to bring them into fellowship with the family of Christ. "Parents that treat the church as optional, shouldn't be surprised when their children treat Jesus as unnecessary."

If you are a parent, don't make the mistake of not taking your children to Jesus!

3. Anyone can come to Jesus.

These children represent people who have nothing to offer Jesus - no money, influence, power or social media following!

If they could come to Him, anyone can come to Him. Throughout the New Testament, we see outcasts of society come to Him - prostitutes, tax collectors and lepers, the thief on the cross... Don't make the mistake of thinking that you need to have it all together! Jesus was particularly gracious to those who knew that they didn't have it altogether. In fact, He was harsh with the arrogant, the wealthy and the religious who presumed that they did have it all together.