

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #231

Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem

Jesus Blesses the Children

MK 10.13-16 (Parallel Texts: MT 19.13-15; LK 18.15-17)

^M₁₃ People were bringing little children ^Land babies ^Mto Jesus for him to place his hands on them ^M and pray for them, ^Lbut when the disciples saw this they rebuked them.

¹⁴ ^MWhen Jesus saw this, he was indignant.

He ^Lcalled the children to him ^Mand said, "*I command you to allow the little children to come to me, and do not keep on hindering them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.*"

¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. ^{MT}When he had done so, he went on from there."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere on the Road to Jerusalem
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	C. Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem
Title	9. Jesus Blesses the Children

COMMENT:

Today's reading gives us a picture of one of the tenderest scenes in the gospel. The image of Jesus gathering a gang of little children into his arms to bless and pray for them has captivated the hearts of those who hear about it since the moment it happened. There are so many profound lessons for us in this precious text.

First, the witness of small children and babies about Jesus stirs our souls. They loved him! They felt free to approach him—to run into his arms for a big hug, and no doubt they lingered to play with him. Children are pure and innocent. They sense when a person loves them and wants them. They found their perfect partner in Jesus.

On his part, Jesus equally loved babies and children. He was deeply offended when his disciples sought to turn them away. Jesus honored the children by first drawing them to himself, and then issuing a strong command to his disciples to always allow children to approach him, and stop hindering them. In a manner that was unthinkable for a great man in this own day, Jesus joyfully put himself on the same level with the children, and became one of them.

This command of Jesus has been the basis for the Christian view that babies and young children who have yet to experience any consciousness of sin are always welcome with him, and go directly into his presence if they die

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before "the age of accountability." Jesus clearly loves and treasures all the children of the world. They belong to him, and he belongs to them.

Jesus also made an example of the children in this text. He stated that every adult must enter into relationship with him by having the same kind of innocent, trusting faith in him. Without child-like faith it is impossible to enter into his kingdom. Jesus probably had Ps. 131 in mind as the background for this declaration:

*"My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters, or things too difficult for me.
But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother--like a weaned child is my soul within me.
O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore."*

The complete, unreserved trust of children for parents who love them is the requirement for all of us when we approach our heavenly Father as "Abba"--"Daddy." This child-like faith also approaches Jesus as our loving older brother, and welcomes the Holy Spirit as our inner house guest. Jesus loves children, and adults who trust him like children.

APPLICATION:

Jesus talked in previous readings about marriage and divorce, and the gift of being single for his sake. Some of us experience a marriage relationship, and others of us do not. However, we all begin our physical lives as babies, and little children. Jesus calls us to remain as children in our relationship with the Trinity. That means we should also love children, and bless and care for them as he did.

Would you describe your faith in God as "child-like?"

What could you do to more fully emulate the faith described in Ps. 131?

Do you love and bless the children in your life? Do they feel comfortable with you?

What can you do to bring those children to Jesus?