A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

Receiving the Kingdom Like a Child

◆ *Mark 10:13–16*

THE BIG IDEA

You don't earn a place in God's kingdom by your strength. You receive it, like a child, by admitting you have nothing to bring.

SERMON SUMMARY

When parents brought their children to Jesus, the disciples turned them away, protecting the rabbi's time from people they assumed didn't qualify for it. Jesus responded with real anger and grief: "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Across Mark's Gospel, Jesus kept welcoming the very people everyone else had written off, and he said the kingdom belonged not to the strong but to the helpless who came with nothing to offer except their need.

DIGGING DEEPER

OBSERVATION

1. In verse 13, people were bringing children to Jesus, and the disciples rebuked them. What do you think was actually motivating the disciples to turn the children away?

INTERPRETATION

2. The word translated "indignant" in verse 14 carries the sense of deep grief combined with anger. Why did Jesus react that strongly to his disciples simply trying to protect his time?

3. Jesus said that whoever doesn't receive the kingdom "like a child" won't enter it (v.15). Pastor Nick explained that the point isn't innocence but helplessness. What's the difference between those two, and why does it matter for how you understand what saving faith actually looks like?

THEOLOGICAL CONNECTION

4. Trace the pattern across Mark's Gospel: Jesus had already welcomed the demon-possessed, the Hellenistic Jews, and the Gentiles, and now he welcomed children too, all people considered "less than" in that culture. What does this pattern tell you about who the gospel invitation is for?

5. 1 Peter 5:6 and James 4:10 both call believers to humility before God. Where in your own life have you been most tempted to bring your own resume to God rather than come to him empty-handed?

LIVING IT OUT

HEART CHECK

What do you tend to lean on to feel acceptable before God: your effort, your morality, your reputation, or your track record? Where are you resisting the word "helpless" because it feels like weakness?

ACTION STEPS

— Name one specific place you've been operating out of self-sufficiency instead of dependence on God.

— Put words to it honestly: name the actual effort, record, or reputation you've been leaning on.

— Bring it to God in prayer using the language of surrender, "I have nothing to offer but you," instead of the language of negotiation.

"SO WHAT?" CHALLENGE

> ***Stop presenting your resume to God. Come to him the way a child comes: empty-handed, and let that be enough.***

REFLECTION & PRAYER

KEY VERSE — TO MEMORIZE

> *"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*
>
> **— Mark 10:15**

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask God to strip away whatever self-reliance you've been leaning on, and thank him that his kingdom is entered by grace alone, not earned, only received.

YOUR PRAYER