

Title: The Value of Children

Text: Matthew 18:1-14

Today is children's  
SUNDAY  
and

Let us turn, this morning, to Matthew chapter 18. Our subject is: THE VALUE OF CHILDREN. What does the Bible say about children? A few weeks ago we looked at Mothers. Today is children's Sunday. And next week is Father's day. So, we are going through the family. WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT CHILDREN?

Matthew chapter 18 beginning with Vs 1.....(Read Matt. 18:1-14)

Let us look to the Lord in a moment of Prayer

There must be something wrong with the heart of one who cannot love a little child. I don't care where I go, but if I see a <sup>Two year old</sup> toddler..I always think of two things. One, this baby is cute and a lot of fun. And two, this baby is the worst problem a fellow ever had. (ha)

Children...God loves children. And as I was thinking about this message, it occurred to me how often we see children. Children are everywhere. And yet, here is a large group of people about whom many folks do not care. Children... Jesus cared about children.

(1 )Now, I want to begin by looking at the six different words for child or children found in the Greek N.T. All six words are simply translated "children" in the English language. And I hope by explaining these different words that it will add to the background of your understanding about children in the Bible.

(1 )Number one, we have a word in Greek which means "baby". This word refers to either a "newly born baby" or "one who is unborn", still in the mothers womb. And it is very interesting the usage of this word in the N.T.

Would you turn, please, to 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15....2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 15,

Paul, in writing to his brother Timothy says: "and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that ~~leads~~ leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Now, here is a very special word for "child." It is ~~often~~ seldom used in the N.T. And the word means "one who is newly born" or "one who is still in the womb."

And <sup>I think</sup> ~~it~~ it is fascinating that the Apostle Paul writes "that from a baby, from the moment of birth, Timothy, you have known the Holy Scriptures."

Often times a Parent will ask: "How early should we teach our children the Word of God?" Do you want a biblical answer? Start telling them about the ~~Word~~ the moment they get home from the hospital.

I remember hearing about a new Christian who when he brought his wife and ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> third child home from the hospital....he wasn't a Christian when his first two children were born....But he was so moved by 2 Timothy 3:15 that when arrived home from the hospital with ~~the~~ third child, he sat the mother down with the little baby in her arms and said: "I am going to preach a gospel message to this baby." And he sat there and went through the whole plan of salvation with that little baby. And his wife thought he was ~~absolutely~~ absolutely crazy....

But, listen, folks, don't you ever mistake the Word of God. The Bible teaches that the Scriptures, the Word of God, will make a child, a new born baby, wise unto salvation. A child from the moment he is born should hear the Word of God and the name of Jesus in that home.

You know, it is a beautiful thing when a baby says "Daddy" or "Mommy" for the first time. But I must honestly confess to you, it was more of a joy when my child said "Jesus" ~~then~~ "Daddy"...

And you mothers and Dads know what I mean. To hear a little child who hardly knows anything say "Jesus"...There is just something about it. From a baby you have known the sacred scriptures. It is almost unbelievable...

(2<sup>B</sup>) Now, there is a second word that is used in the Bible. I would like you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13....

Again this means "baby" but, also, it carries with it the idea of someone "without full power of speech." In other words, until they can form sentences. So, this refers to a child from about zero to about 2 ~~years~~ years of age. A baby without the full power of speech. <sup>one who</sup> Is not able to construct words with any meaning. In fact, the very word translated "child" means "without words." It cannot put things together in complete sentences.

I Corinthians chapter 13 verse 11 ~~says: "When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."~~

(Read Vs 11-13)

In the context of this passage, Paul is talking about love. The kind of love that gives and doesn't expect to receive in return. And a beautiful discription of love ~~is~~ here in I Corinthians 13.

But the point is this: as a child without the full power of speech, I was unlovely. I didn't love very well. But when I became a man, mature in christ, I put away childish things. The greatest of these is love. And Christian if we don't know the love of the Holy Spirit, we are still speaking like a zero to 2 year old child in the Lord. We haven't come to the full power of speech. We are like those who are like noisy gongs or clanging cymbals. There is no love.....no love....

When we get a little bit of love and understanding of the Holy Spirit's control in your life, and giving out completely, loving people with no thought of return, that is when we have left this stage of zero to 2 years old.... You see.....

~~.....~~

Also, you will find it in Galations 4:1, if you would turn over two more books. Galations 4:1. Here you find an interesting usage of the same word.....Galations 4:1 says: "Now, I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything."

The point is that he is a child who doesn't understand, he can't talk, and he must be under tuitor and teacher. ~~Now, he is an heir. But~~  
~~nothing more than a servant from his childhood although he is the~~

same

Now, he is an hier. But he is nothing more than a servant from the standpoint of his ability to talk, and so forth. A very interesting usage here in Galations 4.

(3B) Now, a third word. A third kind of child is found in our scripture lesson Matthew 18 (and 19.) In fact the whole science in teaching young people in the days of the Roman empire was based upon this word. ~~A whole teaching process went on based on this word.~~ And the word basical means: "A young lad, a little child." But a child who can learn. A child who can understand. And this is very important in understanding the message of Matthew 18 (and 19.) The word refers to one who is a young ~~young~~ child. But, one who is capable of understanding and being taught. *A primary child*

(4B) Now, there is a fourth word that I would like you to turn to. It is found in John chapter 1 verse 12. John 1:12.....(READ VS 11-12)

Now, this word means <sup>LITTLE</sup> "born one"....And it should be contrasted with the first word that I gave you. The first word refers to a child that was just born. ~~It is~~ the concept of <sup>being</sup> born. <sup>spiritual</sup> That is important in this word. In other words, the point here is: Vs 12 "as many as receive him" are <sup>LITTLE</sup> "born ones. They are born spiritually. This word is used of those who are born spiritually and children who are born by natural birth.

You might be for example, a person who is 30 or 40 years old, Physically, But if you are a new christian. ~~And thus~~ John could write <sup>to</sup> you and say, "My little born one"....It is the concept about birth that is important here.

(5B) Now, there is a fifth word. The word "son". Also, <sup>spirit</sup> translated "children. You will find it in Romans 8. I would like you to turn there please. Romans chapter 8....And, again, this becomes very, very important in understanding several passages in the Bible....The word "son" is to be distinguished from "children". Romans chapter 8 beginning at Vs 14.....(Read 14-15)

Now, here is the point: Each one of us is "born ones." And if you have come to know Christ you are also "a born one"..<sup>Physically</sup>.. Spiritually

Now, let me try and put this together....Please follow it through....

Let's take my life. At one time I was number one word. I was newly born....Obviously....I was born at a very early age, also....Alright... I am a born one. I am an infant. I was just born.

Number two...for the first two years of my life, I was a baby without power to speak.....That was I Corinthians 13.(and Galations 4:1)

Third, I became a little lad. A child capable of understanding. And many children do receive christ at this early age because they are able to understand.

Now, four, as a christian I am also a born one. And physically, I am also a born one. Now, I was born, ~~number one~~ <sup>number one</sup> babe, newly born. And I was Born, ~~number~~ four also. And if I am 30 or 40 or 50 years old, I am still the fourth word. I am still born of my parants. But I am no longer the first word.

Now, spiritually, I am, also, a born one. From the time I received Christ until now, I am still a born one. ~~A little born one.~~ And John can still refer to me, in I John, as a little born one.

~~number five~~ <sup>This Fifth Words</sup>, ~~concerns my position in christ.~~ I am a son. And I have received the spirit of adoption. I have been placed as a son. And I have received all the rights there unto. Everything that God has planned for me, He has given me as his son. Now, the idea of adoption came from the Roman world. And when a Roman adopted someone a big ceremony was held. And all would know that this man was adopting a son. And the son adopted would become his heir with all the rights and privileges and inheritance.

So, I have been born by the spirit of God. <sup>inward</sup> But, I am also a son through adoption...Do you see....I am a son of God. <sup>That is the believers Position</sup>

Do you know that the title used most often of Jesus Christ in relation to the Father is: HE IS A SON of God. <sup>means</sup> He has all the inheritance

He is not, by the way, "a born one"...Hesus was not born of God. It is never used that way. But he is a son. He has all the rights and inheritances and privileges.

(6) Now, there is one other word that is used of a child. And that is found in 1 John chapter 2. I John chapter 2.<sup>v.12</sup>...And this word refers to a young man.

And "young man" is not referring to age. For we don't know what age is referred to by the term "young man." ~~often~~, in Jewish circles in the times of our Lord, a person did not become a full grown adult man until age 30... That is why many believe that Jesus began his ministry at age 30. In our society we often say 21.....So, a young man is probably referring to someone in their 20's.....

*omit* And in 1 John chapter 2 we have this word used....(READ I John 2:12-14)

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Now, that was a long type of introduction. But, it was need to understand our text. So, Let's come to Matthew chapter 18. / I hope through this long introduction you will be able to see what Jesus is saying.

Now, in Matthew 18 we have word number three....meaning "a little lad"... One who is able to understand. It is not a babe without power of speech. He has already learned to talk. He has understanding....

~~So~~, in looking at these ~~two~~ passages in Matthew 18 (*omit* and 19), I want you to see, according to Jesus, His value of children. And I have six things that I want to share with you here. And I hope that you will just take these principles down. And keep them and use them in the future..

(1) Number one, the value of children as Jesus presents it, is ~~as to our place~~ <sup>seen in our place</sup> in heaven...Our place in heaven.....(Read Matthew 18:20-3)

As to our place in heaven, children are very important. They teach us what it takes to get into heaven.

Now, a little child who is learning...who is in the process of learning.. a little primary child, the one who is learning, ~~he~~ has a greater capacity to receive the things of God, simply and willingly, without hinderence and ~~pp~~problems, than any other person from the stand point of time.

Isn't it, also, true, that we know that most people from a percentage bases will receive Christ before they are 12 years old. And we know that from there on up the statistics get wrose. Very few people will ever receive Christ above the age of 50.....

Now, thank God there are those who find the Lord. But, you see, you get down the road of life, and your frame of reference is set and it is hard to let God change you....And it is the child that becomes our example. Jesus is saying: "Go back and learn from the child." Receive Christ as a child....

omit

By the way, there is a lot of indirect reference, here, to winning some one to Christ. When you deal with a person, and you are trying to get them into heaven, then deal with them as little children. Make ~~it~~ <sup>The Gospel</sup> so simple that a little child could understand. Some times we complicate the matter by complicating the Gospel. .... <sup>SO you see</sup> As to our place in heaven, a little child is very important <sup>UNLESS</sup> ~~Accept~~ you be converted and become like a little child you shall in no way enter the kingdom of heaven." You cannot <sup>denial</sup> get into heaven by all your learning and background and experience and education. The only way you can get into hevaen is by becoming like a little child and receiving Jesus Christ. <sup>AMAZING</sup>

(20) Now, secondly, as to the value of children, notice verse 4 as to our ~~position~~ position in heaven....Our position....Where do we stand? Where do we stand IN Relationship to God's program for the future?

As you know, if you have any knowledge of the Bible, christians will reign with Christ when Christ sets up his kingdom on earth. We will have responsibility in heaven throughout all eternity....<sup>O.K.</sup> ~~WHAT~~, WHAT IS THAT BASED ON?....Notice verse 4...."Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

God's standard for greatness and responsibility is based on the response of this little child. <sup>omit</sup> ~~A child who can talk and can understand, yet, is very~~

young. [ You know, most of us act as though we <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ so spiritually mature. And we are down that road so far it becomes hard to get back and become like a little child. <sup>Do you know what I mean?</sup> ~~And this becomes so important.~~ Let me share something with you.... It is important to have good Bible teaching. It is important to know the Word of God...But, there are some folks who know so much about the Word <sup>of God</sup> that they cannot become like little children. <sup>Plus</sup> And they can't be blessed by someone who is trying to share an experience with them if they have already had that experience

And that is a sad state to be in. You know so much about the Word, you have been down the road of life, you have been a christian for years, and some new convert comes along and shares a tremendous truth out-off the Word, and inside you say: "Well, how foolish, I have known that for years."...

*Hay* What IS THE PROBLEM?...The problem is what Jesus is trying to say in Vs 4 Being able to humb ourself like a little child, again, and learning from everyone. You know, learning from one who is new in christ. Learning from someone who is 20 years down the road. Becoming like the ~~learner~~ learner....

The one who is learning. <sup>That</sup> That is the basic concept in this word child. <sup>Little Learner</sup>

*EXAMPLE* ~ *SS 5 for children - I don't have to go*  
You want to know what your responsibility in heaven is going to be in

priasing the name of God forever? Jesus said it is based upon the fact that you become like little children...A little learner.....*Very important*

*Value of children, Not to be*  
(3C) Third, as to the prominence we give to children. Vs 5 says: "And whoever receives one of these little children in my name receives me."

Do you <sup>Like</sup> ~~like~~ to push the kids aside? You don't want to deal with them? You don't want to handle them? You have some kids who cause problems in the church. You know, they run around or they cause a ~~mease~~ mease...Or, they are talking up ~~there~~ in the *Jack of the Jack* ~~balance~~... *Jack of the Jack*

*Sustly* And often I wander if these kids have a home where someone loves them and tells them about Jesus. I wander if there is someone who loves them enough to ~~discipline them~~ <sup>and seat with them in church and help them understand why</sup> or talk to them? And every time I see a young child I think about his home and I wander if he knows Jesus..... Love - Kids

*of* You know, we can become so concerned about our building and its upkeep that we can forget that these children are people ~~that~~ God loves. He loves them with all their problems and everything. <sup>What a world to live in.</sup> Aren't you glad, adults, you don't have to go through what some of these kids are going through? Maybe you would like to go back in age. But, I am talking about the world they are growing up in. It is alfull. And it is getting wrose every day.....<sup>h</sup> "Children! And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me".....What a message.....Tremendous..... Give prominence to little children because when you do, you are receiving Jesus christ when you receive them.



(4c) Fourth, as to the value of children, notice the punishment we receive when we become a stumbling block. Vs 6.. "but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he is drowned in the depth of the sea."

Then in verses 7 to 9 he goes on to describe some of these offenses. That it is better to go into life eternal with a hand that has been cut-off, than to cause a child to stumble.

Dear friends, there are many applications to this principle. And you could think of many. But, I just want to point out that Jesus is very concerned about children. And He puts a tremendous price on those who ~~do not listen to his~~ ~~do not~~ do not listen to his ~~to children's warning~~ ~~warnings~~.

(5c) Then, fifth, Vs 10 we see a strong warning as to the value of children.

Vs 10 says: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones". Wow!! Do we despise children? If you do, listen to this warning.

(6 ) Then finally, and this is so tremendous..the value of children is seen in God's purpose for Children. This is really amazing. I am talking, here, about verses 11 to 14. *I want you to follow this carefully*

Now, if I had just preached about the lost sheep in verse 11, many of you would not have thought of that in relationship to this subject of little children, would you? ~~So Father's~~

~~But~~ when you study the content..what a tremendous purpose God has for children. And it is stated so beautifully in Vs 14: "Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish."

Hay! "Not one of these little ones." That is God's purpose for children. And that, I hope, is the purpose of everyone of us here in this Church. I know that that is the purpose of those who work with children in our Church. What a tremendous primun and value God is putting on a child.

Vs 11.. "For the son of Man has come to save that which was lost." And then He gives an illustration in verses 12 to 13 of the lost sheep. "Lost sheep in the context, of course, refers to a child."

Now, notice from Vs. 11 the words "lost" and "saved." Also, notice in verse 14 the word "perish." The reason I want you to notice those words is because it is important in the interpretation of the 99 and the one that is lost.

You see, many believe that in Luke chapter 15 where we have the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son that Jesus is talking about those within the fold and one who goes out off it. Meaning: a Christian who has back slide. He is now away from God. And people argue this on the bases of the two sons. That a certain man had two sons. And the point that they make is that they were already related to the Father. So, the spiritual lesson is that they are already Christians. The younger son wanders away from the Father's home.

But, dear friends, it is very clear to me that this illustration in Matthew 18 is not referring to the Christian, but to one who is not a Christian. WHY? Because of the words "lost", "saved", and "perish."

Here is the point: A man has 100 sheep. One goes away and 99 are left. One is lost. So, if I understand what Jesus is saying , it is this: Let's take 100 children. 99 of them have come to accept Christ. One is still not a Christian. God's value for children in relation to his purpose for them is this: God will rejoice more over the one child that is won than over the 99 that is already in the fold. <sup>Now</sup> ~~And~~ please remember that God has already rejoiced over the 99. He did that when they came to Christ.

And I believe that is the correct teaching in light of Vs. 14 which says: Thus it is". Based on this illustration "it is not the will of your Father that one of these little one's perish."

Oh, Dear friends, never discount one little child who comes across your path. That little child who runs through the church, or falls into your flower garden. Dear friends, have you ever stopped to think about the value of that child according to God's purpose. It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish. As you can obviously see, I believe in child evangelism;. And I hope you do to.

I think to many of us are talking about reaching people for Christ when the great area we ought to be working in is children. Children are responsive. Children are receptive.

You say, "well, I am older. I don't have the energy to deal with children." Listen, no matter what age we are, the message is to us. The value of children in God's eyes, his purpose for them. <sup>11</sup> It is not the will of your father that one of these little one's perish. <sup>16</sup>

*Spiritly* <sup>\*</sup> You know, a little child responses to an adult's love. Many children do not have that love at home. I thank God for every Christian home where there is love in that home. And children who know what that love is and can grow up in a home like that. But, there are many children who do not have that love. You see them every day. And they would give anything to share some love from an adult. May God help us to see this message. The need of a stronger minister in our church to and with children. To strengthen our Sunday school ministry, our children's choir, and other programs with children. This is so important. *Why do we have a hard time finding teachers? why*

And if you are here today, and you have never become like a little child, you have never been born spiritually, you may be down the road of life a long way, but you can be born again, right now, by receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior. John 1:12 says, "as many as receive Him." That is you ask Jesus to come into your life. "As many as receive him to them gave He the power or right to become children of God." And you are born of the Holy Spirit the moment you ask Christ to come into your life.

And then Christians, there is so much here for all of us. What about our concern? Oh, yes, we must be concerned for all people. But, also, children. The 99 is in the fold. That is good. But there is one that is lost. How about it Sunday School teacher? How about it youth worker? *DU* You have a child that is lost? <sup>?</sup> You have a child that hasn't been coming. What are you doing to reach that lost child? What are you doing to reach that child that stopped coming?

Jesus rejoices over that one who comes to Him. Going out into the wilderness to find that one who is lost. Most of us are too concerned, I am afraid, about the 90 and 9. Oh, I believe in

follow up. I believe we ought to train and disciple folks. But, my friends, from the stand point of importance and value, we need more emphases on the lost. <sup>Outward Focused point of view</sup> Not, just from this pulpit. But, from our Sunday School classes, from our youth programs, from adults seating in the pews.

And that is what Jesus is trying to do today. He is trying to lay the burden of that little one on your heart. "It is not the will of your father that anyone of these little one's should perish." Are we concerned? Are we really? Then, put action where your mouth is. How about volunteering to teach Sunday school? How about volunteering to work in the children's ministries. How about loading up your car with children from your neighborhood and bringing them to Sunday School. Do you part in helping to reach children for the Lord.

And dear friends, if you will do this, you will re joice in the Lord when you see that little one walk down this church isle one day receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Shall We close in prayer