Jesus Loves the Little Children

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Date: 08 October 2023

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.!

And to study God's Word and to learn God's Word through music. And one of the things I love about this day that we do usually once each semester or so, while it may be different for us that they're all here at one time, we don't really have to change anything other than just tell them when to be here. Because every single Sunday, we've got more than a hundred of our teenagers who gather for our youth choir to sing and to serve and to learn music and to do Bible training, using music primarily with that.
And then every single Sunday, we've got about a hundred of our elementary students who meet in our children's choirs to do the very same thing. Tonight, our Kinder Praise Choir, our youngest choir, is going to be here for our evening service.
They're going to be leading us tonight. And of course, our adult choir meets every single Wednesday as well. And so, while in some ways what we do today is unique because everybody's here at once, the reality of it is having a church that loves all generations, having a church that strives to reach all generations, is just every single Sunday.
[1:47] And it's the way that it should be. Every age matters. We don't want anyone to feel like they're too young to go to our church. We don't want anyone to feel like they've gotten too old to go to our church. We want to be a church deliberately, purposely for the entire family.

And it's very important to us that that be the case. We have been studying the last several weeks as we walked through the Gospel of Mark about the family.
We spent the last three messages, two on Sunday morning, and quite a long time last Sunday night on a third message at the first part of chapter 10, verses 1 to 12, where Jesus deals with issues like divorce and marriage and remarriage and some of the things that are admittedly a bit difficult.
And we spent the last three messages looking at that. And I want to just sum that up into one phrase. When the men come to Jesus to ask Him their questions about divorce and remarriage, although their motives were not pure, we know that.
Though they were simply trying to scheme and trap, trying to discredit and ultimately destroy Jesus, though their motive wasn't pure, when they asked the question, Jesus simply said this, What did Moses say?
[3:15] And they go on to have a discussion about Deuteronomy 24. In other words, Jesus is telling those asking the question to consider your questions through this lens, What does the Bible say?

And if there's one thing I pray would sum up the heartbeat of our church, it would be that our life, our reputation, our message, our ministries, everything we do, every age group, from the youngest to the oldest, would be about teaching and training all of us to simply think this way, What does God's Word say?
And then, whatever God's Word says, that's what we say. What God said is what we say.
We are not to be listened to because of our own authority in any way. We're not to be listened to because of our own intellect or creativity or wisdom.
Our message as a church is simply this, to rightly proclaim what God has already said. That's the mission of every true biblical church.
[4:31] What does the Bible say? And so, as we walk through that, these last two Sunday mornings and last Sunday night, looking at issues with the family, and issues specifically with husbands and wives and marriage, and so many nuances that come from that, we come to verse 13 this morning, looking at verses 13 to 16, where now Jesus goes from dealing with marriage to talking about children.

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I love our children's ministry at our church. It is such an important part of what we do and of who we are. Every single Sunday, we've got hundreds of children in Sunday school and in here in our two worship services.
So many on Sunday nights that are a part of our kids' praise and kinder praise, and so many children here on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Parents' Day Out.
Wednesday nights with Awana, and it just goes on and on. And this past Wednesday night, I had the great joy to be with our children. I get to go up to be with them on Wednesday nights a few times each semester.
And I got to be with our elementary students for a while, and then got to go downstairs and be with our younger kids, what we call cubbies on Wednesday night, and love getting to interact with our children, to try to just be a part of the teaching that goes on in our Awana ministry.
[6:04] They do such an amazing job. And our church has far more servants than you probably even realize that it takes to be able to teach and train our children on Sundays and Wednesdays.

It is an unbelievable amount of adults who give of their time to teach and to serve and to model the Christian life for our children.
And ministering to children is not easy. Raising children is not easy. Having a church that prioritizes and strives to be excellent at teaching and training children is not an easy thing.
And understand, while our children's ministries here enjoy being together, and we want our children to love to be at church, I want our children to just long for Sundays and long for Wednesdays to get here.
I want our children to love to be at church. But let's be clear, we've got way too big of a task to simply see ourselves as babysitters or entertainers.
[7:11] We are neither. There's no babysitting going on at church. There's teaching and training and the making and equipping of young disciples. And there's no entertainers here.

We've got men and women, so many of them, who give of themselves every single week to be teachers, to be trainers, to be equippers of the youngest parts of our church.
But it's not easy. It takes space. It takes resources.
It takes people. And if you have ever served in children's ministry, or if you've ever raised children, or if you've ever known a child, all of us, I think, can give testimony to the fact that the role of teaching and training children is something that takes significant diligence.
And sometimes churches struggle with that. Sometimes churches, while they probably wouldn't say this out loud by their actions, or by their budgets, or by their calendar, or by their decision-making, they really kind of see children as little ones who are kind of in the way, and wouldn't life be easier if we didn't have them?
[8:40] Now, I don't think churches would say that out loud, but you can be in some churches. Some of you have been in some churches where ministry to children just really was not a priority.

And that's a tragedy. But it's not something new to have the wrong view of children.
It's actually been around for a long time. We read about it even in Mark 10 today. Even the apostles themselves struggled with how do we make room for children?
Yet, as the song goes that most of us learned as a child, Jesus loves the little children.
And that's a good reminder for us as a church today. Look with me at Mark 10, verses 13 to 16. It says, And they were bringing children to Him, that is to Jesus, that He might touch them.
[9:44] And the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, Let the children come to Me.

Do not hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.
And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them. Jesus loves the little children.
And one of the things that our church for years has cultivated, and I pray continues to cultivate, is a love for children and a love for teaching children, not just those whose families all come to church. We've got a number of children who participate in ministry of our church whose moms and dads may not be believers, and they come with friends, or maybe even parents drop them off, but don't stay.
[10:54] We want to be a church that understands that we want to take children right where they are. We want to take children and teach them and help them to understand the good news of the

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gospel of Jesus Christ.

We also want to be a church that has high expectations for our children because children tend to rise to the expectations given to them. If you go to our youth service on Wednesday nights, we don't have teenagers getting up and leaving during the preaching.
It doesn't happen because they're expected to listen. They have a lot of fun. I'm in there every Wednesday night. They have a lot of fun in there. They enjoy being together.
But there's expectations. Not everybody that comes to our youth service on Wednesday night is a believer. Not everybody has families that read the Bible together.
Not everybody who comes comes from a church background. You take them right where they are, and you've got to be patient with them. And not every teenager who comes knows the songs we sing. They've got to learn them. And they're not all used to listening to a 40-minute sermon.
[12:05] Our youth on Wednesday nights right now are going through the minor prophets. Two weeks ago, the book of Joel. Last week, the book of Micah. They have fun.

They sing the songs we sing and hear. Joey preaches for 40 minutes. Right now, through the minor prophets. And like 200 youth show up every Wednesday. And they sit and they listen, and they don't get up and leave and stir around and pass notes because there's an expectation for them.
For our children's ministry, I was in there Wednesday night with Awana. And we've got kindergartners and first graders up to fifth graders. And there are different levels, and they're learning to sit still, and they're learning to listen, and they're learning to memorize Scripture.
And they're teaching on their grade level, but there's an expectation. And so, it's not that it's either or. It's not that we either love our kids, and we just ignore behavior, or neither should it be that we're so focused on everything being perfect, and quiet, and clean, that we don't want any children to be around here.
That would be just a tremendous tragedy for a church. We want children here. And we've got young children in our worship services.
[13:28] And it takes time. It's not easy to have a five- and six-year-old in service with you. It takes time. You've got to train them. It takes time. And we've got to be patient with our children, patient with our families.

And you may be sitting next to a family, and they've got little ones, and those little ones sometimes struggle, and sometimes we struggle, and we want to be loving and supportive and encouraging. Wherever you sit, make it an easy place for people to bring their children to church. Wherever you are in the church building, be supportive of our children.
Be supportive of our young families. Be kind. Be encouraging. Use your words to help children know that they're loved, and they're welcomed, and they're wanted.
And at the same time, let's raise our expectations for all of us. Children learn what they see. They tend to rise to what our expectations are.
[14:31] But our goal as a church is not to be a place where we would ever in any way make it difficult for children to know that they're wanted here.

That's part of what was going on in Mark 10 with the apostles. Children are loud. Children can be noisy. Children can be messy. Children can be fussy.
And the apostles were just not really having it. And it's a good word for us as a church to remind ourselves that if children matter to Jesus, they must matter to us.
So as we look at this short text this morning, let me give you three headings. First, a lesson on society. Just a lesson in general for society. And here's the lesson.
Children matter to Jesus. Children matter to Jesus. It says they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them.
[15:38] The word used for children here is a word that can describe babies. It's a word that can describe very young children, even up through ages 10 or 11 or 12.

Luke specifically tells us when he records this account that people were bringing even their babies to Him. And so if you're just trying to get a picture in your mind's eye here, there's a group of people gathering, and they're bringing babies and even young children to Jesus.
Now, we don't know who the people are, and I think there's a reason for that. The reason is the people who were coming are not the focus of the story. The focus of the story is how Jesus responds to the children.

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Now, we know what they're doing. Tradition was that you would bring children to a prominent rabbi, if there was one around, and you would ask for some kind of a blessing from this esteemed rabbi to the children.
So, that's what's happening. They're bringing children to Jesus that He might touch them. They're wanting Jesus to come and just pronounce a blessing, a word of blessing over their children.
[16:56] Babies, small children, young children they are bringing to Him. But the disciples are upset about it at the end of verse 13. The disciples rebuked them.

This is actually a pretty strong word. Same word Jesus used to admonish Peter in his sin. Same word Jesus used in chapter 9 to cast out demons.
It's a pretty strong word. The apostles aren't just kind of mildly frustrated. They're mad. They're angry. They're tired of this. Now, why are they so frustrated that all these children have been gathering around where Jesus is?
Well, you've got to understand that the way that the culture viewed children in Jesus' day is very different than the way the culture views children in our day today. And truth be told, probably both cultures missed it on both extremes.
The culture in which Jesus is walking the earth is a day in which children really were seen as having no rights at all. They would have been seen as an unnecessary nuisance to be in front of a visiting rabbi if that's not what was wanted.
[18:12] It would be the tradition to do that if it was allowed. But to try to force your way in or try to put children at the forefront would not be the way that the culture would have seen children.

It's a very different world. In our world today, the pendulum has swung so far the other way that too many households let children run their household.
That's not good either. Children need biblical order in the home. They need godly moms and godly dads. They need fathers who lead and fathers who love his wife like Christ loved the church. Leaders in the home that are servants, that are humble, that are gracious, but that are biblical and disciplined and faithful. It's a wrong thing to see children as a nuisance.
It's also an unfair thing to try to put leadership of the family on a child. And while we wouldn't say we do that, when we let the children determine where they're going to go and how they're going to act, and we let them be in charge of their attitude, let them be in charge of their consequence, let them be in charge of what our family's schedules are, we have gotten the order completely out of whack.
[19:32] And so, honestly, in our day and in Jesus' day, the way that people would relate to children, we've missed it in both ways. Understand also the apostles as the children are being brought to Jesus.

Maybe the apostles here are trying to protect Jesus. Maybe they're just tired of the noise. Maybe they just want Jesus to themselves.
They don't want to share Him, so to speak. Remember, we're just a couple of weeks now before the cross, and so time is getting short. And maybe they just don't want to share Him with anybody else. They just want to keep Him to themselves. Whatever their motive is, they rebuked the people for bringing children here to Jesus, and they were unhappy about it.
The lesson in society, though, is that children matter to Jesus. He welcomes them. He loves them.
[20:37] Children always felt at peace around Jesus. That's a great word for our church. Children should feel at home here in our church.

They should feel safe in our church. They should feel loved in our church. Not in charge of our church.
That would be unfair. Not in charge of what we do in a worship service. They need strong leaders, biblical leaders, godly, servant-minded leaders to teach them and instruct them and to help them learn how to participate in the life of the church.
But they should absolutely know that they're loved, and they're not in their way, and they're not a nuisance, and they're not a bother. They are loved and welcomed as a part of our family.
Children matter to Jesus. But not only is there a lesson for society that children matter to Jesus, secondly, there's a lesson here on salvation.
[21:46] And that lesson is, you bring nothing. Look what happens here. Verse 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant.

When he saw what? When he saw the apostles trying to turn the children away. It's translated, he was indignant. This is actually a word that's only found here in the New Testament.

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It's what we call a hapex lugomena, a word that's only used once in the New Testament here. And it's a compound word made up of two words. One word is much, and the other word is to be grieved.
So when it says he was indignant, it means he was grieved very much. He's very upset. The apostles are mad at the parents.
Jesus is indignant with the apostles. So here's the scene. You got these cute, precious kids all around making noise and having fun, and all the adults mad at each other.
[22:59] Somebody told me this week, it sounds like Christmas morning. Jesus said, let the children come to me.

Church, let's never forget this. Jesus' word to children was, you are welcome here. You're invited to be with me.
You're not in my way. You're not a headache. You're not a problem. You're not a nuisance. Let them come to me.
Bring more children to me. And if that's Jesus' attitude and response to children, that must be ours as well. Our church spends a lot of money every year on ministry to preschoolers and ministry to elementary students and middle school and high school students.
It takes a lot of money and a lot of manpower and a lot of resources and a lot of teachers to do VBS and middle school camp and summer camp and for the high schoolers and youth students and passion mission trips.
[24:20] I mean, all these things we do for our young people. It's a lot. But we're in good company when we have the mindset of, we want to reach children for the gospel.

We want to teach them. We want to train them. We want to help equip them to be disciples because that's exactly what Jesus said, bring them to me. We want your children in worship service in here. We want our youngest children in here. As soon as they are able at all to learn, to sing, and to listen, and to pray, and to join with us, we want them to be a part of it.
And Jesus said, bring them to me. The apostles are saying, get them away. Jesus says, no, no, bring them to me.
He says, do not hinder them. Don't make it hard for the children to get to me. Make it easy for them to come. Don't make it hard.
[25:32] Whatever the apostles are doing here, they're hindering the children from getting to Jesus. And Jesus says, don't do that. Don't make it difficult for the children to get to me.

And then he gives this rich, brief, but theologically deep statement.
Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. And this isn't just about children. He's talking about the kingdom. To such, to ones like these, to ones such as these. The children now are not only literally welcomed in the presence of God, the children are literally, truly, physically cared for, and Jesus wants them to be near him and around him and with him.
But it's not just about that. He's also now going to help use this picture of the children to instruct the apostles about the kingdom. And let's be crystal clear on this.
[26:48] Jesus is the authoritative word on the kingdom. What Jesus says gets you in the kingdom is really what gets you into heaven.

And what he says keeps you out of the kingdom is really what keeps you out. And the ones Jesus says, they are a part of the family, that really is what salvation is. He's got the authoritative word. So when we talk about Jesus is the only way to heaven, it's not because we said so. It's because Jesus himself said so.
And he has the authoritative word. And he says, don't hinder the children. Don't keep them away. Don't drive them away. Bring them to me.
For to such belongs the kingdom of God. The kingdom belongs to ones like these children.
[27:55] Of such ones, the translation would be. He says in verse 15, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

And here, Jesus gives a critical lesson on salvation. And the lesson is, when it comes to your salvation, you bring nothing.
You contribute nothing. And the picture is that of a child.
So, entering the kingdom is not a right. It's not something God owes you. It's not a reward.
It's not something you've earned. Forgiveness and everlasting life, entrance into the kingdom, is simply received.

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[29:02] If you see it as a right, then you think you've earned heaven. Nothing can be further from the truth.

If you see it as a reward, you're going to wear yourself out trying to accomplish enough good works to be able to have earned heaven.
How good do you have to be to earn heaven? You'd have to be perfect. You're not making it based on that. It's received. When he says, you have to receive the kingdom like a child, he's not saying that children are innocent.
If you're unsure of that, go volunteer to teach our two- and three-year-olds next Sunday. If you have this mindset, children are innocent, just spend a few minutes with your nephew, whoever he is. That's not what he's saying. He's saying that the kingdom is received and you come to the Lord to receive it like a child.
[30:19] Not meaning you're perfect and pure and flawless, meaning you are helpless, you are dependent, you are needy, you are without any status, you are without any contribution.

You come to Jesus like a child. When you pay your mortgage each month, your children, your two-year-old, your four-year-old, your six-year-old, they're depending upon you to pay it.
They're depending upon you to make sure there's lights and air and running water. They're depending upon you to do it and they're contributing nothing.
Your children aren't at two years old. They're not shouldering the burden of the cost. They're looking at you with eyes that are depending on you, needing you, trusting you.
That's how you come to Jesus. Not looking for a right, not looking for a reward, not saying, Jesus, you can do most of my salvation, I'll just do a small part of it.
[31:46] Lord, you can take care of a bulk of it, I'll just do a little bit of it. You do 90% of it, I'll do 10% of it. Lord, you got 99% of it, I'll just get the 1% of it. You are a child.

You are desperate. You are dependent. You are needy. You contribute nothing. You come to Jesus like a child.
Jesus wants the apostles to understand and all who are listening and then by extension, all who now would read to understand that your entrance into heaven is not based on your strength.
It's not based on your stuff. It's not based on your status. You bring nothing.
This is why, chronologically, in just a couple of weeks from Mark 10, Jesus goes to the cross because He must pay in full the price for our sin.
[33:00] In Matthew 18, Matthew records the same exchange and he adds this, that Jesus says, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

It's not about your stuff. It's not about your strength. It's not about your status. You bring nothing. You come to Jesus desperate, dependent, and trusting in Him.
And in case you're not yet convinced, that's exactly what Jesus means, though we see it in this text alone, all you've got to do is look at what comes next. The very next passage we'll get to next time is about the rich young ruler.
He has everything society craves. He's wealthy, he's youthful, and he's powerful. And to this man, who says, teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?
Here's the problem. What must I do? What can I achieve? What can I earn? What can I accomplish? I'm rich, I'm young, I'm powerful.
[34:22] And Jesus says to him, go give all your stuff away. The point is not that you gain entrance into heaven by being generous.

The point is, your trust must be in Christ alone and not your resume. And the rich young ruler understood that.
He wasn't confused by what Jesus means. How do we know? Because he thought about it. And he loved his stuff so much that he walked away sad.
It's as if the rich young ruler takes stock of his life and all that he has and all that Jesus gives and all that Jesus demands and he says to himself, I can't bear the thought of not being powerful and wealthy.
And yet, if that's my hope, I'm walking away from the only one who can save my soul. And he walked away sad because he loved his stuff that much.
[35:41] The apostles understood and the rich young ruler understood that Jesus' teaching on the kingdom is consistent. And the teaching is, it's never about what you do, it's about what Christ has done.

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The lesson to society is that children matter to Jesus. The lesson on salvation is that you bring nothing. You come to Jesus like a child.
And then third, we see a lesson on sympathy. And that lesson is we are to care for the least of these. Look at verse 16.
Quite a contrast to the apostles trying to get the children away. Quite a contrast from the apostles saying that these children are, there's too many, they're too noisy, they're in the way, just get them away from here.
Jesus says, no, no, bring them to me. Don't hinder them. Don't make it hard for them to come to me. Verse 16. And he took them in his arms and he blessed them laying his hands on them.
[36:54] Jesus didn't just talk about loving children. He welcomed them right where he was.

and he would take them and hold them and hold a baby in his arms and hold a child in his lap and he would bless them and he put his hands on them as a way to connect with them.
You're not a nuisance. I want you near me. It was one of the very first Sundays after Mars and I had our first baby.
This was 24 years ago. One of the first Sundays we were taking him to church and I was carrying him in, holding him near my shoulder and right as I walked in the church he threw up all over my suit.
And don't you think when it's your child it just doesn't bother you? Wrong. I don't like anybody's throw up on me. Your child, my child, anybody's child.
[38:15] See, when you hold a child, that's the thing. When you bring the child near, you're saying, I understand if you throw up, you're not cleaning it up.

I am. I understand if if you spill something on me, I'm paying to clean it up. I'm not charging you. I understand that to welcome you, to hold you in my arms, to have you near me, to have you close to me means you may scream and you may cry and you may be unhappy and you may need sleep and you may need fed and I may not know what's wrong and if you're near me, you may spill something and make noise and you may keep me awake at night.
To bring children near to welcome children into your life is absolutely to say, I not only love you, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to take care of you while you're near me.
That's the point Jesus is making. The children are loved by him so bring them to me and whatever happens, I love them, I want them here.
That's what our church must emulate. So we've got to teach our children, we've got to serve our children, we've got to provide for our children, we've got to give faithfully for our children's ministries to do what they're called to do, we've got to do whatever it takes to welcome the children, welcome them to us, with us, as a part of us.
[39:55] And this is particularly interesting in Jesus' culture because think of it, many people don't want to make time for children because children can't vote, children can't earn a living, children can't take care of themselves, they demand time, they can be expensive, they can be exhausting, why do we want to bring them around us?

You move it to the church world, why do we want a bunch of children? Our children don't have jobs, our children can't give, our children aren't serving in a way as far as teaching Sunday school class, they serve, and today they served us well, but they're not teaching Sunday school, they're not being able to give money to help keep the lights on, we send them on mission trips, we put them, we send them to camp, we have ministry here for them, it costs a lot of money, and frankly our kids aren't the ones giving it, why do we want more of that?
Which is how so many churches literally think. Why do we want to put it into teenagers? teenagers. Teenagers are expensive.
We spend a lot of money getting our teenagers to camp, and on mission trips. I mean, they and their families pay a little bit, but they just pay a little bit because our church pays a lot of it.
And our sixth, and seventh, and eighth, and ninth graders, they don't have jobs, they're not giving back to the church.
[41:40] Why do we want more teenagers here if it creates more work, more noise, more mess, and they don't even contribute anything? And that's how a lot of churches think.

They won't put that in their bulletin, but just hang around them. That's how they think. And in stark contrast to that is the example Jesus gives us, bring them to me.

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They're small. I know they don't take care of themselves. I know that it creates work. I know they can be squirmy. I know they can be noisy. Jesus, bring them to me.
And it's not just lip service. Let them come right in my space. He holds them. He touches them. He welcomes them. He identifies with them. He has compassion on them.
He prays for them. He's blessing them because He loves the children. And that must be true for us as well. We want to love children in our homes.
[42:45] As the Lord gives children to you, love them and teach them and train them and equip them and disciple them. We show love to children in our homes through adoption.

We have a number of families in our church who have adopted. It's a wonderful way to show love. Our church has an adoption fund. Members of our church who are going through the adoption process, our church wants to partner with you financially because it's expensive to adopt a child. And so, we've got money we set aside to help partner with families to help you with the expense of adopting. We've got families in our church who are so faithful through foster care.
It's a beautiful ministry for those Lord's call to do that, to welcome children into your home and to let your home be a place even if it's temporary where a child can be loved and feel welcomed and receive what they need.
When we open our hearts, when we open our lives and our homes to children, we're emulating Christ. We've got to do that as a church.
[43:51] When we serve our children, we make room for our children, we provide for our children. When we prioritize ministry to our children, we are emulating Christ. And the culture in Jesus' day would look at children and they wouldn't think a whole lot of them.

And Jesus says, those who you may not want here, they're welcome with me. And by the way, I think this lesson clearly extends beyond just chronological age.
There are all kinds of people that this world may not want, this world may overlook, this world may cast aside, and we want to say to them, you're welcome here.
We want people here. We want people, even if the world has no use for them, we love them. And if you're here today and you feel like this world has overlooked you, I want you to know we care for you.
We want you here. So just a couple of implications here. Number one, expose children to the gospel as early and often as possible.
[45:08] Children are never too young to begin learning about God's word. If you've got little ones at home, read the Bible to them, sing songs of the faith to them, have them sit under Bible teaching.

That should be true in our church as well. Moms and dads, if you've got little ones that you're in your home, have times of family worship where you expect them to pay attention, where you expect them to be engaged.
Help teach and train your children to participate in worship services. This is a two-way street. Now, I want every single one of us who do not have young children to be exceedingly patient and gracious for every young child and family in our church.
And those who have young children, the quicker you train them and equip them to participate in church, to go to the bathroom and get a drink before church, to listen during church, to sing during church, to be engaged during church.
The quicker you train them in that, the better for you and the better for your child. And so, let's be gracious and patient to all the young families around us. And if you've got young families, be quick to teach and train with consistency so your child can enjoy and make the most of being here in worship.
[46:34] A second implication, avoid extremes in child's response to the gospel. Avoid extremes. I think there's two extremes.

One, are parents who try to push their kids so fast to try to make some decision before they understand, before they truly are repentant. And listen to me, parents, if you push and force your kids to try to push them to make some decision that they don't understand, that just creates confusion.
Avoid that extreme. The other extreme can be where we push our children away, where they have repented. The Holy Spirit is working in their heart. The Lord has brought faith into their young life and we want to push them away.

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Avoid both extremes. Watch your children and shepherd their heart. Look for evidence of the Holy Spirit and then encourage your children as they respond in obedience.
And then the last implication, if you don't know Christ as your Savior, I implore you today to come to Jesus in complete, helpless dependence.
[47:49] come today like a child to Jesus. Not clinging to your strength or your stuff or your status, but you come to Him like a child, dependent upon Him, trusting in Him.

And you may truly be a child, you may be a teenager, or you may be an adult, but for all of us, we come like a child with complete dependence and trust in Him.
And if there's never been a time where you have turned from your sin and repented of your sin and placed your faith in Christ, I encourage you this very day, this very moment, to acknowledge your sin and to acknowledge that you have no way of saving yourself, but Jesus Christ alone has paid the price for our sin.
And if we trust in Him, the Bible says, we shall be saved. It's the work of grace the Holy Spirit does. It's not your right to go to heaven.
It's not your reward for something you've done. We receive it as we're saved by grace through faith.
And I encourage you even this moment, child, teenager, or adult to come like a child to Jesus and call upon the name of the Lord and find salvation that only Jesus can provide.
[49:25] Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank You today for Your kindness to children that is for us a great model and shows us what compassion and love and grace is all about.

Lord, may we live that out and emulate Your love for children. May that be true in our homes. May that be true in our church. And I pray, Lord, for anyone in this sanctuary who does not know You as Savior that like a child even today they would come to You confessing their sin, acknowledging their need for You.
and with complete helpless dependence upon You and You alone. May You cause them to believe in Your name and to cling to You and only You.
We pray in Christ's name. Amen. I encourage you to be back tonight evening service at 5 o'clock. Amen.

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