**Jesus & the Children – Matt. 18: 1 -18**

**Focal Truth: Only the childlike go to heaven**

Today we are celebrating the blessing of children in worship.

**Jesus ministry was full of children and Jesus loved children!**

* They were present at the feeding of the 4,000 & 5,000

A child provided the food with which he fed thousands

* They were singing and laying palm branches before Jesus as He ascended to the temple:

*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna!*

* They were present at his teachings in the Synagouges, in the fields & in the Temple
* They followed along with Jesus as he went on His journeys

**Observations**

1. **Faith like a child is necessary to go to heaven 18:3 – 4**

*Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

1. The disciples ask Jesus who was the greatest in heaven 18:1
2. Jesus called a primary age child to come be with him before the disciples 18:2
3. Jesus said that everyone must repent of their sins – **unless you are converted** to go to heaven
4. Jesus said that everyone must **become like children** to go to heaven

**Consider – What does it mean to become like a child?**

* Children trust – we must trust in Jesus
* Children love – we must love Jesus
* Children ask for help – we must call on Jesus for help
* Children forgive – we must forgive others as we have been forgiven
* Children learn – we must follow Jesus & live like Him
* Children seek protection – we must rest in protection of Jesus

**Lessons from my grandchildren**

* They love to be with you
* They love for you to do things with them
* They always want your attention
* They never get tired of being with you
* They love to show you what they have done
* They are sad when you can’t be with them or have to leave
* They imitate what you say & do

*Here is the warning of Jesus: Unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

1. *Jesus said that heavenly greatness begins with childlike humility*
2. **Loving children is loving Jesus 18:5**

*Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me*

1. Jesus said that children should be received like we would receive Jesus
2. Jesus said that receiving children like we receive Jesus is receiving Jesus!

**Consider – What does it mean to receive a child**

* Receiving = to take with the hand, to hold on to; to receive into your family

We receive children by caring for them

We receive children by protecting them

We receive children by accepting them as our own children

* When we won’t receive children how can we receive Jesus?

Jesus said; *He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day*

1. **Do not be the cause of leading a child to sin 18:6 -7**

*But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!*

1. Jesus warns about the pain of leading children into sin – to stumble
2. Jesus warns that the world is filled with stumbling blocks that lead children to sin

**Consider – the stumbling blocks for children in the world**

* Ungodly parents & families
* Lack of godly instruction & discipline
* Unsupervised use of electronic devices & the internet

**Godly families seek to protect their children from the stumbling blocks of the world**

1. **Do not despise children – God protects them 18:10**

*See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven*

1. Jesus warns about despising children

Children are looked upon as a problem, a blocker to personal fulfillment & success!

1. Jesus promises that God will protect children from being despised

**The angels before the throne of God are ready to render aid to despised children according to God’s love & protection of them**

**Consider – the contempt of children in the world**

* **Abortion**
* **Child sex trafficking**
* **Child neglect**
* **Child abuse**
* **Child abandonment**

**God sends angels to protect & help the despised children of the world**

**Just because we don’t see His protection always doesn’t mean He is not protecting them**

*A Father to the fatherless…Ps. 68:5*

 *You have been the helper of the orphan…Ps. 10:14*

 *The Lord supports the fatherless…Ps. 146:9*

***I am grateful for FBCD love & care for children!***

**Things to Remember and Do**

1. Jesus loves the little children of the world – *Let the little children come to Me*
2. The way you treat children is the way you will treat Jesus
3. You must become like a child to go to heaven
4. Believers look out for the needs of children as God’s children!

*Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (vs. 3-4)*

**To the praise of the glory of His grace! The Lord is near to the door! Come Lord Jesus!**