**Mark 10:13-16 13Some people began bringing little children to Jesus so that he would touch them. But the disciples rebuked them. 14When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said, “Let the little children come to me! Do not hinder them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15Amen I tell you: Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took the little children in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.**

Children and Disciples

[This sermon is for Christian Education November 14, 2021 at St. John’s Lutheran in Fremont, WI. The children were sitting in the front pews of the church and the ones to whom the questions were asked for responses.]

Have you ever had the chance to meet someone you really wanted to meet? Maybe it was a famous athlete, an actor or singer, maybe it was a relative that you hadn’t seen for a long time. What did you do to get ready for see the person? (Possible answers: made sure you looked good being dressed in nice clothes, practiced what you would say when you met them, make sure that the time is guarded so you don’t miss the opportunity to meet them, etc.) There is a lot we think about when we get to see someone we really want to see.

Imagine you are meeting that person. How does it feel? (Possible answers: exciting, nervous, speechless, etc.) When we meet some that is we think is important, it becomes a highlight of our week. We will likely remember it for many years is not for the rest of our lives.

Jesus was meeting little children. He was as excited to meet them as they were to meet him. He was glad they were coming to him. And as he did, he was taking the little children into his arms and blessing them. It’s a pretty imagine of Jesus as the best friend of children. Such an image that it even is recreated by artists.

Just think what it would have been like to be there as one of those children in Jesus’ arms. He spoke highly of those children. **Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.** Children are an example to all people when it come to having faith in Jesus. That is why we talk somethings about having a childlike faith.

What does it mean to have a childlike faith? Well, children trust what they are told. They have an almost gullible way of taking in information from the ones they trust. It doesn’t matter what they say they will just believe it. A childlike faith takes in everything in the Bible, God’s Word, the words of Jesus, and believes it. It doesn’t matter how unbelievable it might sound or that it seems too incredible. It doesn’t matter when the childlike like faith grasps it. It takes it in and trusts that it is true.

That’s the only way we can hold onto the message of Jesus dying on the cross to forgive our sins. We weren’t there. We haven’t watched in because someone recorded it in a video. We believe that Jesus died on the cross to save us because it is in the Bible. A childlike faith trusts what it is told.

When we talk about a childlike faith that is usually where the description stops. But a childlike faith is a lot deeper than that. Those with a childlike faith are excited to get to see Jesus. They want nothing more than to see Jesus, to be in his arms. To be close to him. To not let anything get in the away of being with him. It shows one people who have a childlike faith. They are just different when they connect to Jesus. The childlike faith glows when it comes to time with Jesus. It’s refreshing to see because it’s a faith that is infectious in many ways. It’s why parents and grandparents like to see a child learning about Jesus because they know it is important for their children to know about Jesus. Being around childlike faith spreads a desire to be close to Jesus because a childlike faith is excited to be near Jesus.

How does that infectious spread of the excitement of faith spread? Because children won’t stop talking about what makes them excited. It doesn’t matter how much you tell a child to stop talking about something they will find ways to bring it back up. In fact, that is the same with whatever a person is excited about. Those are the topics they share. Every conversation will be twisted and turned to be able to talk about it. A childlike faith doesn’t talk talking about Jesus. It becomes what is needed to be said. It will come up. A childlike faith continually talks about Jesus.

Sadly, a childlike faith is rare and it becomes rarer as people grow up. Let’s talk about why. Now children I’m going to need your help again with this.

What would it feel like to have someone tell you that you can’t go and see someone you really admire even though they are right there? (possible answers: disappointing, angering, sad, etc.)

Telling the children that they weren’t supposed to be close to Jesus was what the disciples did. They did it with the best of intentions. They thought Jesus had more important things to do than to talk to children. With all the adults around he surely needed to be doing adult things is what the disciples thought. What was Jesus doing wasting time with little children? Such thoughts are what made Jesus indignant. Jesus became worked up with anger when he saw what the disciples were doing.

Listen again to what Jesus said and I will explain what Jesus did. **Let the little children come to me! Do not hinder them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen I tell you: Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**Jesus isn’t speaking a gentle encouragement to the disciples to readjust their actions and thoughts. He is giving a blunt rebuke of their sinful actions. He is angry because the disciples were turning the children from him and teaching them to stay away from Jesus by their actions. They were letting their worldly mindset get in the way of childlike faith. Jesus tells the disciples the way it is when he told them clearly **Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**

If you lack a childlike faith, it wasn’t that your childlike faith died. Something killed it. That childlike faith was told it couldn’t be next to Jesus and therefore it died. It likely was told that adult-things were more important than being close to Jesus. That’s the world repeating the words and actions of the disciples of hindering the children from being close to Jesus. That childlike faith is disappointed each time it saw the opportunity to see Jesus and it was told no or hindered until the childlike faith comes to accept that it needs to go away. Is that why your childlike faith died?

If you lack a childlike faith, it wasn’t that your childlike faith died. Something killed it. And now it’s likely that it’s you yourself that is killing your childlike faith if you haven’t already slaughtered it. As adults and even as teens and younger, you hinder and kill the childlike faith you had because of the way you think and act about being close to Jesus. When you fall into the “I already know this and don’t need to consider it again” you think and act like the disciples keeping children from being close to Jesus. When you choose to do other things rather than be close to Jesus you are killing the childlike faith inside of you and inside of those who look to you for guidance as the people looked to Jesus’ disciples. Jesus becomes indignant with you too when you think and act this way. **Amen I tell you: Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.** Be careful.

How’s your little child within doing? Is it there on full display trusting, excited, and babbling on and on about Jesus or is it dead? Your childlike faith wants to close to Jesus because being close to Jesus is where he blesses. Jesus doesn’t bless when you wonder off or spend months, weeks, or days away from him. Jesus blesses and build up your childlike faith only when you are with him. Those who are close to him he picks up in his arms, he places his hand on their live, and he blesses them. Jesus confirms the trust placed in him by proving over and over he is the one who never disappoints. Jesus builds the excitement by show more and more to be overjoyed about. And Jesus gets your mouth to talk more by filling it with more things to say.

I think part of the reason why people like to hear children sing the Jesus songs they sang when they were children is that they childlike faith is connected to those songs. When it hears those song, they are reminded about how simple it really is to have a childlike faith. A childlike faith just goes after Jesus. That’s it. It does anything and everything to be close to him because nothing else really matters if that is not there. It doesn’t want anything to keep them from Jesus. It’s why there was likely a different sense inside of you when you heard the children from our school sing *I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb* right before this sermon. Your childlike faith wants to be close to Jesus because it knows that is the Savior who died on the cross. It knows what it is like to be excited to have had the opportunity to be in Jesus’ arms and is ready to talk about him if not hindered by the world or ourselves.

Let’s sing one of those children’s songs as we conclude this sermon that talks about being careful not only to be close to Jesus but also not to hinder the childlike faith. Please, let that childlike faith join in as we praise our Savior.

1. O be careful little eyes what you see
O be careful little eyes what you see
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little eyes what you see

2. O be careful little ears what you hear
O be careful little ears what you hear
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little ears what you hear

3. O be careful little tongue what you say
O be careful little tongue what you say
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little tongue what you say

4. O be careful little hands what you do
O be careful little hands what you do
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little hands what you do

5. O be careful little feet where you go
O be careful little feet where you go
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little feet where you go

6. O be careful little heart whom you trust
O be careful little heart whom you trust
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little heart whom you trust

7. O be careful little mind what you think
O be careful little mind what you think
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little mind what you think

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* What brings out a childlike faith?
* Define the child to whom the kingdom of God belongs
1.
2.
* What makes Jesus indignant?
* Explain: It takes a child to reveal a disciple.