

Mark 10:13—16
November 4, 2018

You can tell a lot—maybe all you need to know about a person not by what makes them happy, but by what makes them angry. I don't think you really see who a person is by what they get happy about. You get to know what makes them tick by what angers them.

Why?

Anger reveals what we care most about. You'll get angry when you really care about something. What do you get angry at?

Most of us get angry when something happens TO us or when we don't get what we want.

- Something inconvenient or unexpected.
- Someone overlooks your contributions.
- Someone doesn't understand your hardships.
- Someone insults your sensibilities.
- Something takes extra time or money.

The reasons we get angry are legion. Jesus is different. As we join Jesus we are going to watch him get angry. Not just angry, indignant.

We are not just going to note THAT he got angry but WHY he got angry. We need to pay close attention—we need to watch and listen because as we do we will understand more about Jesus.

What are we going to see?

Be like a kid.

Jesus is going to call us NOT to childishness but to be spiritually childlike. Unlike children we are all apt to take ourselves too seriously and we have something to offer. We don't.

Since we think we are capable and don't need much from anyone, Jesus invites us to—

PROP: Accept our complete helplessness.

Those who are follow Jesus are like children.

Let's see how—

“And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. [14] 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. [15] Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God

like a child shall not enter it.” [16] And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.” Mark 10:13–16

PRAY

His Anger Kindled (10:13-14)

An Important Shift (10:15-16)

1. His Anger Kindled (10:13-14)

Last week we joined Jesus as he continued his long journey to Jerusalem. Along the way to his date with destiny and eventual death, did what none of us would have done. He cared about other people.

He taught people.

And people flocked to him.

Already in this book we have seen people bring the sick, the paralyzed and the blind to Jesus that he might touch them and heal them.

Parents now begin to bring their little children to him to bless them.

That makes sense to me.

As a parent, I get it. If I'm there and I hear about all that this Jesus from Nazareth had done—from casting out demons, to taking on the Pharisees, to even calling people back from death—I think having him bless my kids is a pretty good idea.

What parent wouldn't do anything to see their kids blessed? And so people start coming and keep coming and....

Vs. 13,

“And they (just normal people like us) were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.”

Jesus' disciples didn't just say—“Hey, the teacher is tired and he has a lot on his plate it's probably best to come back another time.”

No. The disciples rebuked the people. It was something like—Get out of here. We don't want you bringing your grubby little kids to him.

Severe.

When I was small, my grandfather on my mom's side had a particular and memorable way of delivering a rebuke to me. If I did something he didn't like—he'd yell—"Hiya! Boy!"

Whenever I heard that, I immediately wanted to get away from him and never bother him again.

The disciples again deputize themselves as the keepers of the kingdom but pushing people away from it. Just as they stopped the man from casting out demons, now they try and stop the parents from bringing their children to Jesus.

They are trying to exert their power and influence over others. One writer described the disciples' actions in this scene saying they were acting like 'truculent bouncers.'

Verse 14,

"But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them..."

Jesus was indignant.

Our Lord was seething and way beyond angry. Mark doesn't tell us this, but I can imagine that Jesus yelled harshly at his disciples.

As the people press in and the disciples try and push them out—Jesus yells at his followers to knock it off.

The disciples think of the children as a bother or a nuisance. And Jesus has the opposite perspective. Look at this passage this week, I asked myself what it takes for me to get 'indignant.'

We know what it takes for Jesus. He sees the children being mistreated and sent away and he says—hey!

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

Jesus was indignant because his disciples were lying about what it means to follow Jesus by their actions. They were actively misrepresenting the kingdom that Jesus was inaugurating. They were not showing the watching world what it really meant to follow Jesus.

Its important not just to note that their actions drew the ire of Jesus, but we see their perspective. There are important people, people worthy of Jesus time and attention and then they is everyone else.

Not only were they wrong about that—but they were wrong on so many levels. Because to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

To people like them the Kingdom belongs and NOT to people like you. The disciples act like they are the gatekeepers of the kingdom and Jesus says—you have no idea what you are doing.

His anger was kindled—now it is time for the disciples to a perspective shift.

2. A Massive Shift (10:15-16)

This is so very important. One of the things it means to follow Jesus is to be willing to have your perspective shifted by Jesus. If you are intractable and have a mind that is impossible to change—Jesus might be yelling—Hiya to you right now.

Verse 15 gives us the substance of the shift that Jesus is talking about.

“Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

To understand what he means here we need to understand what Jesus means by to receive the kingdom ‘like a child.’

Obviously we aren't to become childish and immature. Or to revert to asking questions about everything all the time.

Some have suggested that Jesus is saying we need to be innocent like children. If you are parent you know that kids are only innocent in pictures and facebook posts. They often fight, hit, spit and run amok.

But further, if Jesus is saying we need to be innocent like children—no one could enter his kingdom. None of us are innocent. None of us are virtuous.

But we know that virtue is not a precursor for entrance into his kingdom.

So what is it to be like a child?

Children have nothing to offer anyone and they don't act like they do. So, they are willing to receive gifts without any trouble.

"We are not innocent and eager, but slow, disbelieving, and cowardly. In this story, children are not blessed for their virtues but for what they lack: they come only as they are—small, powerless, without sophistication, as the overlooked and dispossessed of society. To receive the kingdom of God as a child is to

receive it as one who has no credits, no clout, no claims.” James Edwards

In other words, it is not what we have that gains us entrance to the kingdom, it’s what we don’t have. So backwards to our natural thinking.

What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God?

That is kind of a strange thing to say. In Great Britain no one says you need to receive the kingdom of Elizabeth. Kind of a strange way of talking.

What does Jesus mean?

Remember at the very beginning of the book—the first thing we hear coming from Jesus’ mouth is this:

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, [15] and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:14–15

There is a way to receive the kingdom of God—there is a way to enter the kingdom of God. Repent and believe.

Repent of what?

Believe in what?

Repent means to turn from a lifestyle and pattern of sin and turn to Jesus. The way you turn to Jesus is by believing that Jesus can save you from your sins. That is the way to receive the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom is not contained by any one church, people, movement or country. In fact, the Kingdom of God is not located in any one realm. The Kingdom of God is most easily seen in her citizens.

In other words, no country can be said to be the kingdom of God, but people everywhere are members of the kingdom of God. We call those people Christians or disciples or followers of Jesus.

The way you can tell who is in the kingdom is by how they live. Listen carefully here—I'm not saying that if you live well, you can gain entrance into the kingdom of God. Rather, those who have repented and believed in Jesus are going to begin to live more and more like him and show themselves to be citizens of the kingdom of God.

Now do you see why Jesus got so angry with the disciples?

The disciples were actively misrepresenting the kingdom of God by how they were acting. He is

saying—stop sending the children away! My subjects would never do that. Never!

It is obvious that the disciples don't have the first clue of what Jesus is doing or what the Kingdom of God is all about.

Not only that, but in front of the crowd assembled, Jesus dresses them down. What right do you have to send them away?

They—the little children—are a better picture of citizens of the kingdom of God than are you at this moment.

That had to stop them in their tracks.

Wait. What?

Jesus was a nationwide sensation and to be associated with him was a significant honor. People would recognize the disciples because they were associated with Jesus from Nazareth.

I can imagine that the disciples could walk into a town and people would gawk and whisper and point. They were the closest associates of Jesus.

Wow.

We know that went to their head by this episode here alone. How dare they take upon themselves the privilege of deciding who can and cannot come to the savior?

That is a staggering bit of pride and self-importance right there.

Jesus turns on them and says—you should be more like the little children you are turning away. The little children are helpless, dependent and needy.

Think about it, a baby can bring great joy but they offer literally nothing to support the maintenance or upkeep of any household.

They cost money.

They displace peace.

They get sick.

They get hungry.

They have need after need after need.

Jesus is saying citizens of the kingdom understand that they are helpless and utterly dependent on Jesus. They are humble enough to receive the gift of salvation from Jesus.

You might think it is a strange turn of a phrase to say someone needs to be humble enough to receive a gift. Let's be real. We aren't good at admitting that we need anything.

That sort of thinking—the I am the captain of my destiny, I don't need anything from anyone, I can watch out for myself, I am fine the way that I am keeps people from Jesus in droves.

Humanity is wholly uncomfortable and opposed to receiving gifts. There is something in us that does not want to receive the kingdom but we want to achieve the kingdom.

We want to be valued for who we are—for what we do—for what we have done—but those things do not gain anyone access to the kingdom.

It is only when you can recognize what you are before God—helpless and vulnerable—that you can receive the kingdom of God.

Little children will gladly receive gifts—we adults want to earn what we get. We want to point to our kingdoms populated by homes, cars, land, money, reputation, job, relationships and say—look at what is mine.

I earned it all.

I took it.

That is how our world thinks—Everywhere from Wall Street to Main Street.

But Jesus directs our attention to a different sort of kingdom. His kingdom requires a shift in thinking.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we are able but because we are helpless.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we are an asset but because he has called us.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we have earned anything but because he has given everything.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because he needs us but because we need him.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we were good but because we were sinners.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because of what we have but because of what we don't have.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because of what we can do but because of what he has done.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we have grasped for it but because he has grasped for us.

We are citizens of his kingdom not because we reached out for him but because he reached out for us.

“And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

Who doesn't want the blessing of Christ? I do.

He blesses those who come and ask not just for help for those that grasp their utter helplessness. Jesus sends no one away.

No matter how needy.
No matter how helpless.
No matter how messy.
No matter how weak.

There is no one like Jesus. There is no blessing like being safe in his arms. Little children, loved and cared for by their parents are among the most secure creatures on the planet.

Jesus offers us that same peace and security.

Do you accept your helplessness?

Do you recognize his power?

Jesus was anything but helpless. We have already seen in the pages of Mark that Jesus can calm the raging wind, he can send demons fleeing, he can walk on water, he can call back the dead, he can cast off diseases—he is powerful.

His power was expressed most profoundly in his weakness. As we said earlier, he is traveling with his disciples to Jerusalem to be murdered.

He is going to be lied about.

He is going to be beaten.

He is going to be spat at.

He is going to have his beard pulled out.

He is going to wear a crown of thorns.

He is going to hang on a cross.

Without any anger. He loved the helpless and the outcast more than he loved himself.

And despite all that—he had the power not to turn aside from that painful experience.

That is real power.

Though he was anything but helpless—he exerted the power NOT to avoid the cross.

Why?

So that we who are helpless—can merely receive the blessings of the king.

The man who sent no one away had everyone run away from him.

The man who blessed even the little children was treated like one accursed.

The man who protected the outcasts and the overlooked had no one to protect him.

The man who did not sin was treated as they he was the greatest sinner who ever lived.

So that the helpless—the people like us could come to him. We a people who had nothing, now have everything in Christ.

What does it mean to live as citizens of the kingdom of God aware of your helplessness?

Grateful

When you are aware that you have all you could ever need or want in Christ you are going to be grateful to God. We were helpless and Jesus blessed us.

We are going to be grateful for what we have in Christ that cannot be taken away. Here is a smattering of reasons to be grateful—

- Forgiven: You are NOT treated as your many sins deserve. God does not deal with you according to your weakness or sin.
- Adopted: You are declared a son or daughter in the Family of God. You cannot be disowned or abandoned.
- Reconciled: God cannot be angry with you from now until forever.
- Justified: You are declared 'righteous' by the high court of the universe.
- Loved: You are loved with an eternal, undying, forever kind of love.

We have many reasons to be grateful. What we have in Jesus cannot be taken away.

When you are aware that you have all you could ever need or want in Christ you are going to be grateful to God.

Accepting

You are also going to be accepting of others. People who have done nothing to earn entrance into the kingdom aren't going to be very good at excluding others.

How can someone welcomed helpless into the kingdom sent others away?

Would Jesus be indignant with you based on how you treat other people? Are you demanding of other people? Are you demanding of your family?

Do people have a hard time living up to what you think they need to be?

Does the manner of your speech cause people to come to you or run from you?

Are you regularly offending and offended at others?

If so, listen to the voice of the king here.

"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."

People aware of all they have in Christ will be getting better at being grateful and not very good at excluding others.

Protecting

People who are citizens of the kingdom will work to protect those who need help.

Children

Special needs

Those people who are invisible in our society will be the kind of people that we reach out to. Society might send the undesirable people away.

We don't.

We can't.

We help anyone who needs help especially those who cannot help themselves.

