

Sermon 1603

Mark 10.13-16

May 30, 2017

This night belongs to our proud students and their parent and grandparents. They've worked hard, coming (and getting them to come) to school every day this year. The homework and things you've had to learn! It's a lot! We've got to be happy for all of you here tonight for how far you've come. This night belongs to you.

But because of what you've learned over this past year from Ms. Sweet or Mrs. Carter or Mrs. Nielsen and Heiny, you know something else belongs to you.

The Kingdom of God Belongs to You

1. You have faith.
2. You have Jesus—always!

One day Jesus was in a village, in somebody's home, and parents in the town found out about it. They wanted to see Jesus. But they also wanted their children, some of them very little, to see Jesus. So they bring them. But there's at least a couple of Jesus' disciples outside the house. They do not like having these little children around. They start shooing the parents and children away! I guess they thought Jesus was too busy for little children or that these little children wouldn't remember meeting Jesus. They felt the little children didn't belong here. So they were trying to shoo them away.

Jesus found out about it and he was angry. He was so angry he scolded his disciples right in front of everyone! The little children did belong here, because the kingdom of God belonged to them. The kingdom of God belongs to you! You have faith.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it (14-15)."

How does a little child receive anything? By faith! Your mom and dad tell you something and you believe it. They promise a trip to the park and you start making your plans on how long you will stay on the swings, before you head over to the big slide. Should you bring a ball to play catch with dad? They say something and you trust in them. That's what faith is. Faith is taking our heavenly Father at his word. And that's exactly what you do.

And that's exactly what's hard for adults to do. They have to have things proven to them so they understand. They have to see it. But how can you see heaven? How can you take God's hand? But that's exactly what believers believe, that there is a heaven, that God wants us right there by his side and that he will take us to be with him in heaven one day, no matter how far away that day is, he will take us to be with him in heaven. You know this because Jesus promised us. We know this because Jesus died on the cross for us and rose from the dead to prove his words were true. You have faith. The Kingdom of God belongs to you.

The Kingdom of God belongs to you. You have Jesus—always! Look what Jesus does next.

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them (16).”

This is exactly what the parents were bringing their little ones to Jesus for! They wanted Jesus to touch them. But they got so much more than a simple touch. Jesus put his arms around them and gave each one of them a big bear hug. “Grrrrr.” And he put his hands on them and blessed them. God himself, the Son of God, giving a blessing which could never be taken away from them.

It feels great to be hugged, doesn't it? You remember those hugs long afterwards. Some children remember the way their moms and dads hugged them even when they are grown up. We can't feel it, but Jesus gives us big hugs. He always gives us big hugs through his Word. Anytime we hear a story about Jesus, anytime we listen to what Jesus is telling us, that's Jesus giving us a big hug. And it is impossible to get a hug from somebody who isn't there! Jesus is always there for us, because he loves us. People who love us will be there for us. You can trust that your parents, mommy and daddy, will be there for you. Brothers and sisters, too, even though sometimes you wonder. Grandpas and Grandmas. But they can't always be there for you. They've got things to do, jobs to do, errands and chores to do. They can't be with you every minute of every day.

But since Jesus is God he can do anything. He can do everything. And he can do everything at the same time so he can be with each one of us always. If Jesus is the king over the kingdom of God, and Jesus the King is always with you, well, you belong in his kingdom and his kingdom,

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I hope those disciples way back then learned their lesson. The kingdom of God belongs to little children. The kingdom of God belongs to you.

I know because of what Jesus said, all of us adults learned that lesson. That's why we here at Green Valley Lutheran Preschool and Kindergarten have worked so hard all year long to make sure each one of our graduates knew they belonged here, were loved and cared for—all the while they were learning so many things! And that's why your parents went to all that effort to bring you here, to talk over what you learned in school each day and even listen to you while you sang some of your chapel songs or told them about the Jesus story you learned. They know, just like we know and you know, the kingdom of God belongs to you. None of us will ever forget it.