

## THE REALLY GOOD LIFE

(*Life of Christ Series*)

Gospel of Luke

### 'They Are Precious In HIS Sight'

***"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in HIS sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."*** This little Sunday school song of long ago is right on about the Lord's special fondness for kids around the world. Jesus was very serious about this when He said, ***"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea...Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven"*** (*Matthew 18:6-11*). It is also in that same passage of scripture Jesus gives a warning to take drastic measures to not stop any and all sinful activity (regarding kids in context) or perish in the fires of hell (*Matthew 18:8-9*). Today we see, read and hear of how poorly many children are being raised and how wickedly some are abused, it makes one shudder to think of the coming unmitigated wrath of God against those who don't treat children as those who are ***'precious in His sight'***! Surely there must be many weeping, infuriated angels before the face of God daily; surely there must be an abundant supply of 'eternal millstones' being fabricated for the necks of all who offend, stumble and abuse ***'the little children of the world'***! For such ***"being drowned in the depths of the sea"*** will seem like mere child's play compared to eternal drowning in the depths of the Lake of Fire someday (*Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8*).

### 'Their Parents Are Responsible In HIS Sight'

Parenting is not an easy job but is more manageable when seen as baby-sitting, spiritual tutoring and temporary guardianship for God's little people until they can move out on their own (*Psalms 127 & 128*). Unfortunately today, many people treat their possessions and pets better than the children God has entrusted to them. But to the Lord, the care of juvenile souls headed for eternity is infinitely more important than the mortal critters and material creature comforts we acquire (*Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Psalm 78: 1-8, Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21*). And regardless of how decadent society becomes, the family values commitment of Joshua to be totally separated unto the Lord will be blessed: ***"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"*** (*Joshua 24:15*). That solemn pledge by parents must be reinforced with lifestyle changes just like those who agreed with Joshua (*Joshua 24:22-28*). Many, parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, youth workers and even clergy need both 'fear of God' and love for His kids in the declining society of these end times.

## 'KINGDOM KIDS' PARENTS'

(*Jesus' Father's Day Message for the End Times*)

Luke 18:15-27

### 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Jesus is moving southward in Galilee toward Jerusalem. It is early spring in Palestine with the great Jewish feast days of *Passover, Unleavened Bread* and *First Fruits* only about a month away. The Lord knows that He will fulfill the prophetic meanings of the Spring holy days with His death, burial and resurrection from the dead. Since the time is short for His earthly ministry and His return to heaven is imminent, Christ focuses on training the 12 to be His first Church Age leaders following His ascension. Misunderstandings about the kingdom of God dominate the focus of His teachings. In sermons and parables accompanied by appropriate miracles Jesus is gradually debunking former misconceptions about the kingdom and the Messiah Who would rule over it. He has clarified that there would be no literal kingdom of God encompassing the earth at His first coming, but rather a spiritual kingdom with the throne room being the heart and soul of converts to Him. The literal global kingdom would be sometime in the future when He comes a second time. The 12 are beginning to see that the spiritual kingdom, 'the Church,' was very different from anything the world had ever known – its capital city is in heaven; its King is physically absent while being personally within; its laws not only govern the subjects, but transforms them as they obey; and its policies of immigration and citizenship take a miracle to possess.

**Note:** Since chapter 14 **Luke** has detoured from the other synoptic gospels **Matthew** and **Mark** to include details of the Perean ministry of Jesus and the discipleship parables He taught them in the early months of AD 30. Luke now merges with Matthew and Mark for the rest of the story...

## ‘Thy Will Be Done,’ Parents

*(Kingdom of God Kids Are Made Not Born)*

*(See also: Matthew 19:13-15 & Mark 10:13-16)*

*“Then they also brought infants to Him (Jesus) that He might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, “Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”*

18:15-17

**Note:** The different theological intentions of Luke and the other synoptic authors explain the variation in literary emphasis. Matthew and Mark focus on the home (marriage, children (*pai-dee-os*) and the Christian home); Luke’s focus is on Christian discipleship and childlike faith; thus God inspires him to focus only on the babies (*bref-os*) being brought to Jesus. Babies and young kids were both present and useful to all the various spiritual intentions of the Holy Spirit through His human authors.

**Discussion:** Matthew’s account is very similar to Luke’s. Mark’s gospel provides a couple of graphic details that add a lot to this scene: 1) **Mark 10:14** notes that Jesus was ‘greatly displeased’ with the 12 for hindering the parents and their children. 2) **Mark 10:16** pictures Jesus affectionately lifting up the children and blessing them, presumably with prayer (**Matthew 19:13**). **Have you dedicated yourself and your kids to God and His Word?**

**Discussion:** Obviously Jesus didn’t baptize these little ones brought to Him. He or the 12 could have baptized them since that was part of their ministry (**John 3:22-26**). According to Jesus, baptism by immersion is to be done with older children and adults who have clearly understood the gospel and put their trust in Christ as their personal Savior & Lord (**Matthew 28:18-20**). *Baby baptism* has no basis in scripture and isn’t done at CBF. **Do you or someone you know need baptism? Let Pastor Tom know of your desire to be baptized.**

**Discussion:** Discuss the importance of parental example and Bible teaching parents must have to please God. **What specifics does this entail? What if parents don’t ‘parent’ well?**

## ‘Like Father, Like Son’

*(Lost Kingdom Kids Are Made Not Born)*

*(See also: Matthew 19:13-15 & Mark 10:13-16)*

*“Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”*

18:18-27

**Note:** Interesting features about this account found in **Matthew** and **Mark** are: Matthew states the man was young but not that he was a ruler or that he was rich. He adds a phrase from the Law about loving your neighbors. Instead of just *lacking one thing* he is told how to be *perfect*. These are things that would be important to include for Jewish audience of Matthew’s gospel. Mark includes more action and emotion: *‘the man came running to Jesus and kneeled down to Him; the Lord looked at the man and loved him before he departed and the charge to ‘take up the cross and follow Me’ is added to go sell everything and give it away.* These things of an *action* nature are important to Mark’s more utilitarian, pragmatic Roman audience.

Luke’s audience was Greek (Theophilus/ 1:3 and probably Luke himself). Greeks typically were more educated and sophisticated, thus Luke’s rendition. They didn’t care so much for wealth but did value position and influence. They were non-Jewish so the parts about the Law and perfect performance of it are omitted. The emotionally appealing portions of the account (running, kneeling, loving, etc.) are omitted so a Greek-minded reader would decide upon the logic and reason of Jesus’ words alone. *‘Taking up the cross’* is omitted because Luke is writing in Greek drama fashion leading up to the climax of *the cross* in chapter 23; talking about other *cross* reference at this point is premature and anti-climactic for Luke’s gospel.

**Discussion:** Religious people always want to know what more they can **do** to be saved. It is not what we have done or are doing that matters, but what has been DONE by Christ once for all for us. We can never do enough but Jesus has done more than enough by His sacrifice on the cross – God desires our trust in Him alone. If people insist on DIY salvation, they will be turned away like this man. When love of other things has priority over obeying and following Him, it is impossible to enter the kingdom of God. **Do you think the man ever changed his mind and did what Jesus told him to do?** It’s possible with God, right? Nothing and nobody is impossible to Him! **What did he need to ‘repent of’ to qualify for the Kingdom of God?**

**Discussion:** What parental example probably influenced this nice, religious young man to love ‘stuff’ more than his soul and the Savior? A problem today? What kind of parental example makes a young adult like this man?