

## Sermon followed by Service – Mark 10:13-16

I think this is my favorite picture of Jesus with children - it makes my heart smile. But then I see this one and I remember my dad telling me how much he loves this picture - it's good to know I don't have to have blonde hair and blue eyes to have Jesus. Then I see this one and my heart skips a beat.

(Google "Hook Jesus with children" and you will likely see a couple of the pictures I am showing.)

Do you know the kids in these pictures? There's one (I won't tell you which one) who is always getting in trouble. He doesn't want to be in trouble; he says "it just happens." Sound familiar? Another one just can't seem to get a break, unless it's a broken bone or a broken toy or a broken heart. You might know someone like that. Another one ... he's not sure what to think. His dad's gone. His mom is up all night taking care of his baby sister. The house is a bit crazy in the morning ... no sleep, no dad, no help. He's not sure what to think, not sure what to do. He's not sure whether to be angry with his mom or his sister or his dad, so he's just a bit angry with himself, because no matter how much he loves his family, he just can't make it right for them. And then there's that one on the edge. He's not sure what to think either. "All these strange people. And this Jesus man saying such nice things. Nobody talks that nice at home, at least not to me, at least not for long." Do you know the kids in these pictures? What does Jesus say to them? Do you see yourself in these pictures? What does Jesus say to you?

What does Jesus say? “Peace. I have a Father, a family for you in heaven. And we won’t ever yell at you.” Or maybe “Peace. I know you wish you could make everything right. Trust me, I’ll make it right for you.” Or “Peace. It hurts, doesn’t it? It’s scary, isn’t it? When everything in your life seems to go wrong and everything seems to get broken, it hurts; it’s scary. But let me tell you this - My love for you, my promise for you won’t ever break.” And what else does he say? “Peace. Your sins are forgiven you. I forgive you. God forgives you. With me, you can be sure of this - you have a place right with God.”

As you look at these pictures, what do you see? Jesus holds the children, Jesus blesses the children, and what does his face say? “I love you. I love the child in each and every one of you.” So can you imagine the look on Jesus’ face when his disciples tell these children and their parents: “Jesus doesn’t have time for you”? We don’t want to see that look, do we?

Imagine another look. Not the look on Jesus’ face, but the look on Satan’s face as these children hear: “Jesus doesn’t have time for you.” What’s that look on Satan’s face? A look of cheer and victory and gloating. But then Jesus says: “Let the little children come to me.” And as Jesus blesses these children, as their faces light up with Jesus, what happens to Satan’s cheering gloat? The cheer, the gloat turn to anger and hate.

And what happens next? We can imagine. Satan calls his partners together. “What are we going to do? We tried ‘Jesus doesn’t have time for you.’ But look at all these pictures of Jesus and his little lambs singing ‘I am Jesus’ little lamb, ever glad at

heart I am.’ Look at all these pictures of Jesus with children singing ‘Jesus loves me this I know.’ With all these pictures of Jesus and children, ‘Jesus doesn’t have time for you’ isn’t going to work. We need a new line.”

And so the demons wrack their brains, trying to figure out what to do. “What are we going to tell the children to break their hearts?” Then one of them has an idea: “How about this - instead of telling them: ‘Jesus doesn’t have time for you’ ... how about telling them: ‘your parents don’t have time for you’? We’ll make the parents so busy they won’t have time for their children. They’ll stick their children in front of screens and computer games. They’ll let their godly kids run with our demon kids and then we’ll have them all.”

Down in hell they all thought that was a great idea. But one of Satan’s buddies said: “That’s good for starters, but look how many churches there are. Look how those children love to hear about Jesus. Listen to how those children love to sing about Jesus. We have to do something more than just distract the parents. We need to distract the children. This is war. We need to get them away ... we need to keep them away from Jesus. So let’s give the children their own tvs and their own screens; that will distract them. And we’ll buy them balls, white balls, brown balls, round balls, oval balls.” And somebody else said: “What’s wrong with balls? Playing ball is good, clean fun.” And the first demon said: “Right. That’s what makes this is so sneaky; that’s why this is going to work. We won’t just give them balls, but we’ll teach them that playing with balls is the way to be loved and special. We’ll show them that if they’re really good playing

with balls then we'll be really happy with them. Then we'll get them to think that playing with balls is more important than time with Jesus. Oh, we'll get more kids with balls than we ever got with Baals." And the demons' faces got their gloat back.

And Jesus' face ... what's the look on Jesus' face when we tell him: "We don't have time for you anymore; we're just too busy"?

I don't like to hear that. I don't like to think about that. We like the bad guy to be somebody else. We like to think we're doing the best we can and no one should question what we're doing, not even ourselves. But we need to question ourselves. Are we bringing the children to Jesus? Or are we getting in the way, putting things in the way of Jesus and our children? Or just as bad ... are we just standing by?

When Jesus said: "**Let the little children come to me,**" he didn't say: "and we'll lock them up without tv or balls or video games." No, not at all. I can imagine Jesus cheering at a ball game, even picking up a ball and playing a bit. But Jesus did say: "**Let the little children come to me ...** and raise your children as the children of God. Raise them to know they are loved by you and loved by God, that they are forgiven by you and forgiven by God. Raise them to know that Jesus lived for them and died for them and that Jesus is living today to love them and bless them and to take us to heaven.

And tell them the truth about the world out there. Raise them to know that there is an evil world out there looking to distract

them. And Satan really doesn't care if they choose a life of evil or a life of nice, as long as they waste a lot of time living without Jesus. So, what does Jesus want for our children? Don't just raise them for life in this world. Raise them to know there is more to life than this world, more to life than that world out there; raise them to live for heaven.

That doesn't mean "raise them to ignore the world," but raise them to love that world with God's love. Raise them to know that God is eager to work in you, and eager to work in them, to share his life and love. He may do that while you're in front of a screen with a friend, or while you're playing or watching a game. No matter what you're doing with your children, show them God is eager to love them, and show them God is eager to work in all of us to share his life and his love with the people around us.

I can't imagine how hard it is to raise children today. I can't imagine how hard it is to grow up today. There are so many distractions. But just because I can't imagine how hard it is doesn't mean that I should, or that any of us should just stand by.

That's why we have Family Bible Hour with Sunday School - because we promised God to help moms and dads bring their children to Jesus. That's why we have a school and a Tuition Grant Fund for our school - because we promised God to help moms and dads raise their children with Jesus.

Yes, Jesus is inviting our children, our family children, our congregation and school children, our community children. Jesus

is inviting our children to know his blessing and promise. I know it's not always easy. That's why Jesus gives us these pictures - to remind us what's so important for our time, for our treasure - **“Let the little children to me for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”** Amen.

October 12 & 13, 2024

**NEW MORNING PRAISE**

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY** ... children are loved, adored, idolized, set up as Masters of the House, abused, ignored, tucked under the coat rack in the bar, set in front of a screen for hours upon hours ....

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY** ... Jesus shows us that he wants better for our children - better than abused and tucked away, and better than idolized; our Lord has a place for children in his kingdom and family.

**OPENING HYMN**

*"Gracious Savior, Gentle Shepherd"*

**Hymn 757**

Gracious Savior, gentle Shepherd, children all are dear to you;  
may your loving arms enfold them in your care their whole life through.  
By your tending and protecting keep them safe in all they do.

Tender Shepherd, never leave them, never let them go astray;  
by your warning love directed, may they walk the narrow way.  
Thus direct them, thus defend them lest they fall an easy prey.

By your holy Word instruct them, fill their minds with heav'nly light;  
by your pow'rful grace convince them always to approve what's right.  
Let them feel your yoke is easy, let them find your burden light.

Taught to love the holy praises which on earth your children sing,  
with their lips and hearts, sincerely, glad thank-off'rings may they bring,  
then with all the saints in glory join to praise their Lord and King.

**OPENING SENTENCES (SUNG)**

O Lord, open my lips.

**And my mouth shall declare your praise.**

Hasten to save me, O God.

**O Lord, come quickly to help me.**

## CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will. **Amen.**

Give glory to God, our light and our life.  
**Come, O come, let us worship.**

## COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD (SUNG)

### *Refrain*

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,  
let us shout with joy to our saving Rock;  
come, enter in with our songs of praise,  
come, enter in with thanksgiving.

You are a great and a wondrous God,  
cupping in your hands all the depths of earth.  
You made the hills and the mountains high,  
you made the seas and the dry land. *Refrain*

Come, let us worship and, bowing low,  
kneel before the One who has made us all.  
You are the God whom we call our own,  
we are the flock that you shepherd. *Refrain*



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. **Amen.**

## SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (SUNDAY)

*“Awesome God”*

*When he rolls up with His sleeves He ain't just puttin' on the ritz  
There is thunder in His footsteps And lightning in His fists  
And the Lord wasn't jokin' When He kicked him out of Eden  
It wasn't for no reason that He shed his blood His return is very close  
So you better be believin' That our God is an awesome God*

### **Refrain:**

*Our God is an awesome God He reigns from heaven above  
With wisdom power and love Our God is an awesome God  
Our God is an awesome God He reigns from heaven above  
With wisdom power and love Our God is an awesome God*

*Now when the sky was starless In the void of the night  
He spoke into the darkness And created the light  
The judgement and wrath He poured out on Sodom  
The mercy and grace He gave us at the cross*

*I hope that we have not too quickly forgotten That our God is an awesome God*

## FIRST READING

*Deuteronomy 11:1–7, 16–21*

Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country;

what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the wilderness until you arrived at this place, and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 78C*

*Refrain*

Your Word, O LORD, is a lamp for my feet  
and a light un - to my path.

*Tone*



My people, hear my / teaching;  
listen to the words / of my mouth.  
I will utter hidden things, things / from of old—  
things our ancestors have / told us.

We will not hide them from their de- / scendants;  
we will tell the next gener- / ation  
the praiseworthy deeds / of the LORD,  
his power, and the wonders / he has done. *Refrain*

He decreed statutes for / Jacob  
and established the law in / Israel,  
which he commanded our / ancestors  
to teach their / children,

so the next generation would know them, even the children yet / to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their / children.  
Then they would put their / trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds but would keep / his commands.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son  
and to the Holy / Spirit,  
as it was in the be- / ginning,  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

## SECOND READING

*Ephesians 6:1–4*

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise — “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Mark 10:14*

Alleluia. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

*Mark 10:13–16*

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

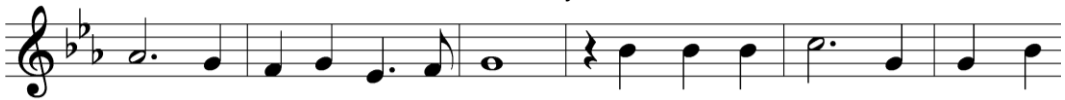
## HYMN

*"Oh, Give Us Homes"*

Songbook 214



1. Oh, give us homes built firm-ly on the Savior, Where Christ is  
 2. Oh, give us homes where Christ is Lord and mas-ter, The Bi-ble  
 3. O Lord, our God, our homes are yours for - ev - er! We trust to



head and coun - sel - or and guide, Where ev - 'ry child is taught his  
 read, the pre-cious hymns still sung, Where prayer comes first in peace or  
 you their prob-lems, toil, and care; Their bonds of love no en - e -



love and fa-vor And gives his heart to Christ, the cru - ci -  
 in dis-as-ter And praise is nat - ural speech to ev - 'ry  
 my can sev-er If you are al- ways Lord and mas-ter



fied. How sweet to know that, though our foot-steps wa - ver,  
 tongue, Where moun-tains move be - fore a faith that's vast - er  
 there. Lord, be the cen - ter of our least en - deav - or;



A faith-ful Lord is walk - ing by our side!  
 And Christ suf - fi - cient is for old and young.  
 Lord, be our guest, our hearts and homes to share.

## SERMON

Mark 10:13-16

F Am

1. Read - y, Lord, I'm read - y, Lord, to  
 2. Feed your lambs, I'll feed your lambs, and  
 3. More than words, yes, more than words I  
 4. If to - day's my fi - nal day, my  
 5. Feed your lambs, I'll feed your lambs your

Bb F

fol - low where you lead; Oh, show me, Lord, just  
 first of all with food; Give them drink and  
 know you want from me; Mov - ing, Lord, I'm  
 fi - nal day on earth, Thank you, Lord, oh,  
 words of truth a - lone; Fill their hearts with

Am Gm Dm C

show me, Lord, the ser - vice you will need.  
 com - fort them and build their for - ti - tude.  
 mov - ing, Lord, I'm mov - ing ea - ger - ly.  
 thank you, Lord, for life, for breath, for birth.  
 sav - ing faith and claim them as your own.

F C Dm7 Am

Read - y, Lord, I'm read - y, Lord, I'm  
 Then I'll feed them with the Word you  
 Take my heart and take my hands, my  
 If this town is gon - na be my  
 Let me feed them with the Word you

read - y, come what may, So call me, Lord, just —  
 fed me with un - til They're read - y, Lord, so —  
 feet, my life, my all; I'm read - y, Lord, so —  
 fi - nal rest - ing place, I'm read - y, Lord, yes, —  
 fed me with un - til They're read - y, Lord, so —

call me, Lord, and I'll be on your way.  
 read - y, Lord, to go and do your will.  
 read - y, Lord, to fol - low till I fall.  
 read - y, Lord, to meet you face - to - face.  
 read - y, Lord, to go and do your will.

### OFFERING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we can learn so much about giving from our children. Some days we see how quickly the tight-fisted “mine” turns from cute to ugly. Other days our children show us with their smiles how joyful giving can be. Erase the ugliness out of our hearts so that we can give generously with a smile of joy. **Amen.**

### OFFERING

*If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an “I Give Online” card in the pew racks.*



*(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.*

Eternal Father, your Word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path.

You inspired the Scriptures for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that your servants might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Lead us to love your Word more and more and to receive your message with great eagerness.**

You have given us your Word that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name. Enable us to see the wonders of your love in Christ from the beginning to the end of your holy book.

**Help us to see Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.**

Work in all your people, especially in parents, the resolve and patience to teach children the simple truths about the Savior who loves them. Walk with us as we take our children to the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb. Help them see Jesus in the Bible stories, songs, and prayers we teach.

**Move us to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

Provide wisdom and commitment to teachers who train our young people in our school, in Sunday Schools, and youth Bible classes. Deepen their knowledge of your Word as they prepare and share the lessons they teach. Move them to model a sincere devotion to the Scriptures.

**Lead us to plan for and support the Christian training of children.**

We thank you for enabling our congregation to provide elementary (and high school) education for our children. We know our schools are your special blessing, and we pray for the resolve to establish and maintain standards of excellence in all aspects of education. Move us to be generous in our offerings so that teachers may teach and students may learn in fitting surroundings.







The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

## CLOSING HYMN

## *"I Am Jesus; Little Lamb"*

Hymn 804

I am Jesus' little lamb; ever glad at heart I am,  
for my Shepherd gently guides me, knows my need and well provides me,  
loves me ev'ry day the same, even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away, Jesus is my staff and stay.  
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, into pleasant pastures leads me;  
when I thirst, he bids me go where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am, even now the Shepherd's lamb?  
And when my short life is ended, by his angel host attended,  
he shall fold me to his breast, there within his arms to rest.

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