

April 2

Scriptures: Read Mark 10

Key Verse: "...Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:15)

Overview

I think we've all heard it said of some happy senior citizen that he or she is having a "second childhood". Whereas in their early adulthood and middle age they may have been cautious and thoughtful, now they're reckless and irresponsible. For years they were serious and committed to their work; now, all they weren't to do is have fun. Suddenly they're easily moved emotionally and seemingly over-generous with their money. It's enough to drive their cautious, serious, work ethic, middle-aged children mad. After all, how do you tell a seventy-five year old to "grow up!"?

What's more, they need their "adult" children's care and wisdom. They're constantly forgetting things—like where their glasses are, or to take their medicine, and they're always going out in the wintertime without their hat and gloves. In a way they've become as dependent on their kids as their kids were once dependent on them.

But that's the wonderful thing about kids. Irresponsible they may be, thoughtless, and playful too—but in all this they are uncritically, unabashedly, thoughtlessly dependent. They not only know how to be cared for, they expect it. It's a natural condition.

The problem with adults is like that of the rich young ruler in this chapter: he was independent. He didn't need anybody. All of us have this dependent streak. We want to be our own boss, our own final court of appeal, determining our own boundaries, pursuing our own horizons, unchecked, accountable to, and dependent on, no one. Dependence scares us.

So we strive for money, status, power, whatever it takes to be first. The child is on the bottom rung of the ladder. We want to be on the top rung.

But Jesus, in typical fashion, turns it all around on us. Only the childlike, dependent ones will enter the kingdom of God. And when we do, those who were 'top rung' may find themselves surpassed by the 'bottom-rangers'.

I think it's special that Jesus, in this context, turns to His amazed disciples, and calls them (v.24), "children". He obviously had a higher view of them than they had of themselves (although I expect they hardly would have chosen the word "children" to describe their grown-up, mature selves). Nevertheless, the point is clear. God calls those who will humble themselves and accept their dependence in a childlike way. Heaven is for children: even the seventy-five year old variety.

Prayer

Dear Lord, please help me to receive your Kingdom in childlike way and please deliver me from any childishness, that I may grow up into the fullness of Your purpose for my life.