

KIDS, HUH?

-Ryan Parsons-

Matthew 19:13-15

13 Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, 14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." 15 And he laid his hands on them and went away.

As Jesus was ministering and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 4:23, 9:35), he welcomed this special moment to bless the children. What is so curious is that he claimed the kingdom of heaven belongs to the likes of little kids. Really, Jesus?

Later, he repeated this sentiment to his disciples.

Matthew 18:3

and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

One would think the kingdom would open wide for the educated, polished, rich, popular, mature, wise, and powerful. But, nope. Jesus said the kids are the ones who are welcome. What did he mean?

I am reminded of my time as a parent, my years in youth ministry, and my general observation of kids. I can recall trying to give kids instructions before going swimming. They make occasional eye contact as they inch closer and closer to the water's edge. You bring them back and start over, demanding eye contact and acknowledgment of your instructions. Then, without fail, they are slowly moving towards the water again. All they want to do is jump in. Their eagerness is apparent, and their focus is singular. Likewise, I remember watching a parent try to extract their child from a Chick-fil-A playground. The child wrapped hands and legs around everything they could to not be removed from their happy place. Then, in the slide, they spread themselves out to lodge their tiny body in the tube, desperately wanting to stay forever. Their appreciation of that place and resolve to stay wasn't lost on all the other parents watching (and laughing) through the glass.

Kids, huh? Jesus was saying many things in these passages, but I feel confident he was also saying this: the kingdom belongs to kids because they have the purest desire, eagerness, and focus. In addition, once they are in, they will never want to leave.

That's how we are supposed to feel and act about the kingdom.

Oh, Lord, make my heart more like a child when it comes to you and your kingdom. I just want to be where you are!

Hesed,

Ryan