

Bringing Children To Jesus

I love this passage. It is full of vital teaching and it has bearing on the main theme of this service, which follows our next reading.

1. Notice in the passage (same in Matt and Luke) who the people were bringing children to Jesus doesn't matter. "It just says People. He didn't ask them lots of questions, make them take lots of vows. He just received them as they were.
2. He was very indignant with his disciples trying to keep them away. Indeed Jesus received and blessed all sorts of people that those around him thought were unsuitable. We must be very careful how we turn people away from Christ.
3. What on earth did he mean when he told his disciples they would NEVER enter the kingdom of God unless they accepted the kingdom of God like a little child?

People tend to point to children's virtues of innocence, purity, and a trusting nature, and suggest we have to develop these virtues to enter God's kingdom. But the passage emphasises these are little children, Luke says babies. It is not their virtues but their vulnerability, their helplessness that is the point. Neither the disciples nor ourselves can make ourselves innocent and pure and we certainly struggle to be trusting like a little child. To enter the kingdom of heaven we come, not with our hoped for virtues, but as sinners, in need of God's forgiveness and grace. We can never earn it by our virtues. We too must come in our helplessness. That's also why we should accept everyone into our church and show them the love and compassion of Christ. That's what he has shown to us.

4. When we opened the Global Care Home in Romania in 1992. We took 10 little children from a terrible children's home. Most were abandoned, some had parents in prison. These were a deprived, very needy group of children, not only abandoned by their parents but essentially also by the state. The state categorised all children in their children's home as mentally deficient and therefore not worth educating or indeed doing anything for them.

We brought them all to Jesus in a service in a local Romanian church where each child was prayed for and dedicated to the Lord.

5. What happened when Jesus took the children in his arms, touched them and blessed them?

It certainly wasn't for publicity, a photo opportunity for popularity.

I believe those children received from God. To be blessed by the eternal son of God they would be blessed indeed.

When the woman who was haemorrhaging reached out and touched Jesus, **just the hem of his garment**, we are told Jesus felt virtue go out of him. The physical touch transferred some power that brought her healing. Bringing children to Jesus, whatever their background circumstances brings them blessing.

6. Of course as the children in Romania have grown up they have had to make their decisions and live their own lives. Several, now in their mid 20s are keen Christians, 5 have university degrees, they are all transformed from the horror of their early lives. I believe God has touched their lives and blessed them.

It is good to bring children to Jesus. It's the basis of the work of Global Care.