

BIG Lesson from a little Child

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Sun Night Prayer - Tonight 6:30-7:30pm. [For our Nation, elections, future]
- B. Slide3 [don't do 2nd] Without Borders/Women's Seminar -
- C. Slide4 Emergency Preparedness: (show list) As a church wanting to help our community be prepared for an emergency situation we believe that our greatest opportunity is our fellowship of believers, if every family in our body were prepared, that would be a huge impact on our community, and allow us to focus our resources on the community. We have committed to reminding our body of this *twice a year* at the time changes.
- D. Our City has its *Veterans Day Parade* this Fri. [Lee Rupp's chalk painting - Murr Field of Honor]
- E. Play set up for this Thurs-Sat, Neil Simon's *Fools*.

II. Slide5 Intro: BIG Lesson from a little Child

- A. I'd pick...*Peter James & John*, they got to see the transfiguration. Or, *John*, he got to lean on Jesus chest at last supper & was called *the one He loved* (though he wrote it about himself). No, *Peter*, he was definitely the overseer. Or wait *James*, he was the leader in Jerusalem. Or *James & John* who had their mom ask Jesus for *Box Seats* in Glory.
 1. Remember from last week, Jesus was just talking about His *abasement*, & now they can only think of their *advancement*. [oh the desire to be *celebrities* instead of *servants*]
 2. I picture Jesus walking down the line of the 12, as they wait breathlessly for Jesus to name the One/the winner...saying...
Eeny, meeny, miny, moe, Catch a tiger by the toe. If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, meeny, miny, moe. My mother told me to pick YOU.
 And I picture Jesus bending over & picking up *Peter's child* & placing him/her in their midst. (cuz he's in a house in Capernaum)
- B. Did Peter, James & John, receiving the *prestigious pick* to go up on the Mount w/Jesus, stir up this question & debate among the 12? - *Did this fuel the fire of competition?*
 1. I picture from God's vantage point this discussion being like...all the crystals inside a salt shaker discussing...who's saltier?
 2. Come on guys stand together, no matter who is greatest.

- a) It's serving your **superiors** & your **inferiors**. This is the way to true *First-ness*.
3. Don't aim for **human greatness**; aim to be **more like Jesus Christ**.
- C. Oh, and aren't we just as wrong to think of *the kingdom of God* as having gradations, or levels, or class, or rank?
1. Isn't it **false humility** to say, I'll be the one in the back cleaning the clouds.
 2. **Slide6 ...is the greatest (4)** - **Jesus** here explains that **everybody is Great inside**. There are no **little souls** inside the kingdom.
 - a) Mt.11:11 **I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is **greater** than he is!**
 - b) There boys, is your answer.
- D. I'm going to show a 1 minute clip from Pixar's *The Incredibles*. [I showed once before]
1. **Backstory: Mr. Incredible** is the super hero dad in the movie, and he's tired of this job. He sells insurance, but he knows that's not **the real him**. He has a friend, **Edna**, who makes superhero uniforms, and every time he shows her a design, she keeps telling him to **loose the Cape**.
 2. **Slide7a,b Show clip**.
 3. Isn't this whole **humility** thing, God telling us to **loose the cape**?
 - a) Can we just be **Secretly Incredible**?
 4. **Slide8 Humility** means, *knowing yourself, accepting yourself, being yourself, your best self, & giving of yourself for others*.
 - a) Imagine for a moment 12 men trying **out humble** each other to be the greatest :)
 - b) This is the kingdom in which every man **ascends** by willingly **going down**.
- E. **Children** were not given much **recognition** in NT time.
1. The **test of greatness** is being ready to **serve** other people **even if** they are as **unimportant** as a little child.
 - a) Jesus turns every day values on their head.
 2. We are to receive **all of Gods people** as we do **children**, *w/no thoughts of their accomplishments, their influence, their fame, or their gifts, but simply because they are His children*.

III. Slide9 RECEIVE CHRIST LIKE A CHILD (1-4)

A. (2) **A child** - Illustrates **humility and dependence**.

1. A child represented someone **completely reliant on others**.
2. Children were **w/o status** in the ancient world **and** at the mercy of adults.
 - a) **Very small children** consumed resources, required constant attention, and needed to be protected. **However**, as they grew, children could help with work, provide for the family, and even defend their town in battle.
3. **Little children** are free from many habits which adults have acquired. They're natural and trustful because they know nothing of deception and diplomacy. They say what they mean and believe what they hear. They have no fear and are not worried about the future. They know their parents take care of them and do not fail to meet their daily needs no matter how poor they are. **This is the trusted child has an loving parents.** George Lamsa, Gospel Light, pg.108.

B. (3) **Become as little children** - Describes a change in attitude.

1. Jesus contrasts **the disciples' pride with the humility** of children.
 - a) Unlike children who had no status, **the disciples** were expecting to be **honored** in God's kingdom.

IV. Slide10 RECEIVE A CHILD LIKE CHRIST (5)

A. One who **has a child heart**, **receives** a child, which in turn **is receiving** Christ himself.

1. **And** the person that **does not have a child heart** will **offend** the child...**see** 6-9.

V. Slide11 ENTICING A CHILD TO SIN (6-9)

A. **Causes one of these little ones to sin** = *skandalizo* (as does **offenses** 3x's in vs.7)

1. Cause/**entice** to sin, trip, stumble & fall.
2. **How can one entice a child to sin?** It could be from **not training up a child in the ways of the Lord**. **But also** look at how child molestation, child abduction, child trafficking, child labor, a child being kept from education,

B. **Slide12a CONTROL WHAT YOU DO** (6-8) *If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off*

C. In these verses, Jesus uses **hyperbole** to make a point about the seriousness of sin.

1. Here the Lord repeats a message from the sermon on the Mount. Why not? Great lessons need to be often taught. Especially lessons that involve *painful self-denial*.
- D. Little ones - If actual children...It is a dangerous thing for parents (or other adults) to cause children to stumble and miss the way of salvation. How important it is to have a good example at home.
1. But it may refer to *status*, not age...this description is likely pointing to new or immature believers, or perhaps humble or lowly disciples of Jesus.
- E. Free Cement shoes for tripping kids (6,7) *Don't cause a child of God to trip up.*
- F. Millstone – The upper millstone that took a donkey to rotate.
1. This was historically the fate of some.
- G. Make sure in *your life* there is **nothing** to make young believers to stumble.
1. But what about my rights to *drink, smoke, & chew, & run w/girls who do?*
 - a) All liberties stop at the door of stumbling.
 2. Christian know this...*someone is watching you. Walk your talk.*
 - a) Jesus said, *free cement shoes for tripping young believers.*
- H. Slide12b **CONTROL WHAT YOU SEE** (9) *If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.*
- I. **Tear it out and throw it from you** - The seriousness of sin that requires radical action.
- J. **Don't Coddle Sin...Crucify it**
1. The last section, don't stumble **others**...Now, don't stumble **yourself**.
- K. **Don't pamper sin in your life.**
1. Here Jesus puts **personal holiness** in the most **dramatic & drastic** terms...in the whole bible.
 2. Deal drastically with sin **like a surgeon going after the cancerous tumor; like a shark after its wounded victim.**
 3. Slide12c Billy Sunday, **One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake.**
- L. Of course the Lord is *not* commanding literal **physical** surgery. [spiritual surgery]
1. He had already made it clear sin comes from the **heart**. Mrk 7:20-23

2. **Slide13** Unfortunately, some in the early church took this literally. **Origen** of Alexandria **castrated himself** in an attempt to overcome sensual desires.
 - a) The Council of Nicea finally outlawed this practice.
 - b) **Why**, because you can hack off your *hands*, chop off your *feet*, & pop out your *eye balls*...even go get *neutered*...& **still** be the most vial of sinners.
3. Jesus didn't want **physical** mutilation **but** **spiritual** mortification.
4. **Hand, foot, & eye** maybe representing the totality of life (i.e. **Hand**/what we **do**; **Foot**/where we **go**; **Eye**/what we **see**) Kent Hughes

M. **What harmful practice does He want you to cut off or out of in your life?**

1. Half-way measures just won't do. **And**, no one can do it for you.

N. **Slide14** Hell – *Gehenna*. [ge=valley - henna=hinnom]

1. Jesus believed in a place called **Gehenna**. It was a place of eternal torment & righteous punishment. **Wait**, doesn't that make God **mean**?
 - a) **No**, A **loving mother** isn't mean giving her child *honest warnings*, don't go too near the fire or you might get burned, Don't play in the road or you might get run over.
 - (1) These are not idle threats **but realistic warnings**. Part of God's love for us is the **honest warnings** He gives.
 - b) Jesus said, *Don't coddle sin...crucify it*.

VI. **Slide15** **DESPISING A CHILD (10-14)**

- A. **Their angels** - The concept of *guardian angels* for individuals *as well as nations* pervades Jewish writings of this period (Dan 10:13; Acts 12:15).
 1. Heb.1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*
 2. Ps.91:11 *For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go.*
 3. Acts 12:15,16 *You're out of your mind! they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel." Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking.*
- B. **Slide16a** **3 reasons** *not* to Despise one of these lil one's...
 1. **Angels** are interested in them (10b)

- a) Angels **don't** despise the lil one's. They watch over them & guard them, & stand in heaven's court for them.
2. **Slide16b Jesus is interested in them** (11,13)
- a) **He** has come to find the little children.
3. **Slide16c The Father is interested in them** (14)
- C. **So**, If **you despise** a lil child (look down on with contempt), your coming against *the Angels, The Son of God, & the Eternal Father*.
- D. (13) **What is Jesus' response to a wayward sheep?** (backslidden, straying)
1. **Slide17 Anger? Disgust?.....No, Joy!**
2. Lk.12:32 **Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**
- E. (14) If the Shepherd goes after an **Adult sheep**, how much more important is it that he protect the **Lambs**.
1. With God it **isn't**, **Win a Few - Lose a Few. Or, Win some/Lose some.**
- F. **What is Greatness?** *The power to manage other men/reign over them?* **No, that's Tyranny.**
- G. **What is Christ's standard of Greatness?** Begin w/the last thing here & move backwards.
1. **Slide18 Despise** not a child, **Offend** not a child, **Receive** a child. **How?** by **becoming like a child.** **And** when you become **like a child**, you become **Great.**
- a) **To Despise a child** is to be out of harmony w/*the Angels, The Son, & the Father*.
- b) **To Offend a child** is to seal your **doom**.
- c) **To Receive a child** is to **entertain** Jesus Christ.
- d) **To Be like a child** is to be **Great**.
- H. **Invite up worship team** (cue for ushers to get communion, stay in back of sanct)
1. **When I start speaking** - cue for ushers to pass out. **I lead when all passed out.**
- I. **Communion**
1. **Bread** -
2. **Cup** -
- J. Have them stand for last part of song.