

Little Kid - Rich Guy - Fat Camel

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 Wed Night Mark Ritter:** Most of us will go through a time in our lives when we **question our faith, & doubt** the things we believe. This crisis of faith is perfectly natural. **It is OK.** The Lord **doesn't** want us to *shy away* from it. **We are encouraged to examine everything and hold on to the good.** This is an encouragement to be **bold in asking questions** and **seeking the truth in our faith**, and not being cowardly and just hoping all the questions or doubts go away. **They won't.** And it is about **how to help our family and friends find the truth as they go through their own crises or times of doubt.**

II. Slide#3 **Intro:**

- A. **Outline:** Little Kid; Rich Guy; Fat Camel.
1. **We'll meet little children** who get a **bear hug & a blessing** from Jesus.
 2. **We'll meet a young man** who **came to the right person**, showed the **right attitude**, asked the **right question**, received the **right answer**, but made the **wrong response**.
 3. **We'll meet a fat camel** who that can't loose enough weight.

III. Slide#4 **LITTLE KID (13-16)**

- A. **Slide#5** Children of the 1st century were sometimes **loved** & in other cases they were **exploited**...**depending on** how they **benefited** the family.
1. **A papyrus letter** was found (dated June 17, 1 bc) written from Hilarion to his expectant wife Alis, "if it is a **male** child let it [live]; if it was **female**, cast it out."
 2. **Infanticide** was practiced even back in Jesus time & in the early church.
 - a) The practice was *finally outlawed* by Roman Law in 375 ad.
 - b) This wasn't very effective though, as Rome had on its law books the *patria potestas* (which gave the father "absolute power" over his family) & extended to **life & death**.
 3. Children were clearly **not a blessing** in the **non-Christian culture** of Christ's day. But in **Hebrew culture**, children were seen to be **a gift from the Lord**.
 - a) Here Jesus elevates **children as** He did **women** in vs.12.
 4. **Slide#6** What is the prevailing view of **children in society today?** - Have we swung too far the other way now with **child-centric families?**
- B. **Slide#7 (13) Touch them** – OT custom dating back to the **patriarch Jacob** laid his hands upon the heads of his kids Ephraim & Manasseh, and **blessed them**.
1. This was all very **proper, traditional, & wonderful**...**then** it all **stopped**...**people were being chased away**.
- C. (14a) **Jesus was greatly displeased** – only time in the NT. (much grieved). *Indignant*.

1. The things that **grieve** us & make us **indignant** reveal much about the kind of people we are. **And what Jesus said & did here, tells us volumes about Him.**
- D. **Slide#8** (14b) **Let the little children come** - He loves all the little children of the world.
1. **Jesus loves the little children** - All the children of the world - Black and yellow, red and white - They're all precious in His sight - Jesus loves the little children of the world...**Really?**
 - a) What about the sons/daughters that died **early deaths** of our own families in our church? What about the **stillborn** children that never got to see the light of day? What about the 16,200 **abortions** in the world that will take place just during our 90 minute service this morning? *He loved them too?*
 - b) **Maybe**, He loved so much...*He loved them right home unto Himself.*
 - (1) **Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me.**
 - c) *Sometimes God has compassion on the parents & other times on the child.*
 - d) **Yes**, Jesus loves all the children of the world.
- E. **Slide#9** (14c) **Of such is the kingdom?** – He affirms & respects the **personhood & spirituality** of children.
1. **Parents don't think** that they are *too young* to understand. **Don't think** you'll wait till they're older to teach them the truths of God. **A 1000 x's NO!**
 2. Spurgeon said, "Too young? Is there anyone too young to get the **richest treasure, that can make human hearts glad?**"
 3. **If there is a text on child evangelism...Here it is.**
 4. Children can come to Christ early on. **Will they deepen in their understanding & devotion later?** Sure.
 5. **Yet parents, don't** resort to **forcing conversions** on them either.
 - a) **Pray** for them. **Cultivate** their spiritual awareness & sensitivity.
 - (1) **Example:** Jacob Dulaney (Chad & Rachel's son) **praying** at family camp.
 - (2) **Example:** Gisele (Romulo & Linsey's) re: bible on stage, *"it's about Jesus!"*
 - b) **What if they want to, years later, make a profession again?...Should I discourage that?** **No!** (They are just making sure they really understood back then)
 - (1) We know true salvation only takes place once. But now that they have **further revelation** in their heart, they are simply **responding to it.**
- F. **Slide#10** A Gallop Survey showed:
1. **19 out of 20 people** who became Christians did so before the age of 25.
 2. At age 25, 1 in 10,000 will become believers.
 3. At age 35, 1 in 50,000. At 45 1 in 200, 000. At 55 1 in 300,000. At 75 1 in 700,000.
- G. (15) **Receive the Kingdom as a child would** or else *by no means enter it.*

1. Coming as a little child **doesn't mean...**
 - a) **Innocence** – because they are not (if you have a toddler you understand that)
 - b) **Slide#11** I don't even think he means their **ability to trust**, their **receptiveness**, **simplicity**, or **wonder**. I believe he means here...**Helpless Dependence**.
 - (1) Children of the kingdom must enter it **helpless**, ones for whom **everything** must be done.
 - c) **Slide#12** As the old hymn says, “**Nothing** in my hand I bring, Simply to **the cross** I cling; **Naked**, come to Thee for dress, **Helpless**, look to Thee for **grace**.”
 - d) This is the way we must **all** come to Him...it is, **Grace + your nothingness**. *Kent Hughes*
 - (1) This naturally promotes **humility**.
 - (2) The world refuses Christ because of its “**self-respect, pride, & independence!**”
2. **Slide#13** Wiersbe said, **We tell children to behave like adults, but Jesus tells the adults to model themselves after the children**.
 - a) We are to be **child-like**, **not child-ish**.
- H. **Slide#14** (16) **He took them up in his arms** – lit. *folded them in his arms* (aka a *Jesus-bear-hug*).
- I. **Blessed** – The Gk word for blessed is an **intensive compound** meaning, *ferently blessed*.
 1. (*i.e.*) He put His heart into it. **It wasn't mechanical, or out of duty**.
 2. And the **imperfect tense** pictures **the repeated action**.

IV. **Slide#15 RICH GUY (17-22)**

- A. Now we find a perfect **contrast**. From a *helpless dependent child...to an affluent, powerful, self-made young man*.
 1. He was a man that **had** what most people **want out of life**, **but** not **the one thing that really matters**.
- B. This man was looking for a **bargain...the best of both worlds**.
 1. But at **Golgotha**(Calvary) **there is no bargaining**, just **Jesus** giving His all. *Warren Wiersbe*
- C. **Matthew** tells us he was **rich**(19:22). **Luke** tells us he was **a ruler**(18:18)
 1. He was **a good man**, he was **an achiever...but** he had **a need**. **He sensed something was still spiritually missing**.
 2. **He thought he was just 1 payment away from heaven**.
- D. **Slide#16 The Good Question** (17)
- E. Look how he came: **running**(earnest) & **kneeling**(respectful).
- F. From his point of view he certainly had the **ability & will** to **do** whatever was asked of him...*he always did*.
 1. **His greatest mistake then**, that is still made by millions today, **thinking that a person could earn acceptance with God**.

- G. **Slide#17 The Gripping Answer** (18-21)
- H. Jesus seeks to *cool his self-made jets w/o killing his engine*.
1. Jesus is seeking to **awaken him spiritually**.
- I. **Why do you call me good?** – Calling Him **good** was calling him **God**, yet he didn't believe He was God. [That's as odd as someone *taking communion* w/o a relationship with Jesus]
1. Jesus **wasn't denying** He was God; rather, He was **affirming it**.
- J. (20) **All these I have kept from my youth** – from my *coming of age*, from my *Bar Mitzvah* (son of the Law).
1. He meant this, like Paul, from the *external* sense he kept them.
 2. Here, his **morality & good manners** only concealed a **covetous heart**.
- K. (21) **Looking at him...Loved him** - Here is Christ with **eye contact &** with such a **depth of love** in his heart for *this unbeliever* that is *trying so hard*.
1. **So why the radical command to sell all?**
 2. **Slide#18 Materialism** occupied God's rightful place in that man's **heart**.
 - a) So, this man was in *a perpetual state* of breaking the 1st commandment...*having another god before Him*.
 3. The Lord always demands that those who come to Him **put away** their gods, **whether** they be *possessions, position, power, a person, or a passion*.
 4. **Slide#19** So the **one thing** he lacked, was *unrivaled allegiance to God*, since **wealth** was his god. He was devoted to his **wealth rather than God**.
- L. **How do we know he wasn't teaching universal asceticism** (giving up all wealth)? [many rich men in scripture: Abraham, Joseph, Boaz, David, Solomon, Job]
1. We have every right to **enjoy** God's bounty & **thank** Him for it.
 2. Eccl.3:13 **every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor - it is the gift of God**.
- M. **Slide#20 The Great Refusal** (22)
- N. **Slide#21** All the world watches on... **What will he do?**
- O. He was **sad at His word** – Matthew uses this word(16:3) to describe the sky becoming overcast in anticipation of a storm. *“Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and threatening.”*
1. This man's face started darkening. It became a stormy night of the soul.
 2. The man walked **out of the sunshine & into a storm**.
 3. **Slide#22 Dante** the Italian poet in the 13th cent called this, *The Great Refusal*.
 4. **Slide#23** He came to the **right person**, showed the **right attitude**, asked the **right question**, received the **right answer**, but made the **wrong response**.
- P. **Slide#24** In spite of **His love** for him, Jesus **lets Him go**. *Wow!*

1. He can't compromise the standards of the kingdom, **even for** such a promising candidate.
 2. **How should this effect our approach to evangelism?** (let them go)
- Q. **Slide#25** **An old fable** tells about **a crane** that was wading in a stream looking for snails when a beautiful **swan** landed nearby. The crane had never seen a swan before, so he asked, "What are you?" "I'm a swan," came the reply. "And where did you come from?" the crane inquired. "Heaven," the swan answered. "What is that?" asked the crane. The swan eagerly began to explain its beauty and glory. He spoke of the new Jerusalem, the city of pure gold with a jasper wall and pearly gates. He described its *"pure river of water of life, clear as crystal."* At that point the crane interrupted, "Tell me, are there any **snails in heaven?**" "No, I'm afraid not," the swan said. "Then I don't care to go there," the crane stated decisively. **"I like snails!"**

V. **Slide#26 FAT CAMEL (23-31)**

- A. (23,24) **Astonished** – All our lives we are **rewarded for performance**.
1. **In school**, **good grades for good study**; do a good job **at work**, **better pay to compensate** it.
 2. Jesus says, **what you desire is far more than you can pay**. *"You don't need a system you need a **Savior**. You don't need a resume you need a **Redeemer**."*
- B. **Slide#27** (25) Here a camel gets the squeeze. This is simply an illustration of **Impossibility**.
1. Jesus **doesn't say improbable, unlikely, or tough..but impossible**.
 2. The **Babylonian Talmud** contains a quote regarding **elephants** passing through the eye of a needle. - **In Israel the Camel was the largest animal**.
 3. **Slide#28a+b** If your **trusting in riches**⁽²⁴⁾ it is **not difficult, but IMPOSSIBLE**, to get into heaven!!!
- C. (26) The disciples were **greatly astonished at this** – **Why?** Because they believed in the ancient rabbinical **prosperity theology**.
1. In Judaism **riches** were a mark of God's favor **and thus an advantage, not a barrier, in relation to God's kingdom**.
 - a) Thus equating God's blessings w/material prosperity.
- D. **Slide#28c**(27) **All things, necessary for people's salvation (rich and poor alike) are possible with God**.
- E. (28) Matthew adds, **Therefore what shall we have?** (19:27)
1. Kind of a **commercial** view of Christianity.
 2. "If you **give** because it **pays**, it **won't pay**." [R.J.LeTourneau famous Christian Industrialist]
 3. Peter changes that later to, **Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you**. – He moves from, **Slide#28d** **What do I get?** to **What can I give?**

- F. (30) The one who gives himself completely to Christ, *lock, stock & barrel*, finds 100 houses open to him; innumerable brethren & sisters & moms & dads *in the Lord*; & many spiritual children (converts).
1. When you follow Christ...you simply can't lose.
- G. (31) To *the general public* the rich ruler stood first & the poor disciples stood last.
1. But God looking from eternity, watched the 1st become last & the last become 1st.
- H. **End:** A wealthy man was dying in his mansion, and his friends gathered round to ask him for his last wish. "Before I die," he said, "I would like to take a ride." And they asked the rich man what he required for that final ride before entering the kingdom of heaven. And he said, "I *Slide#29* would like a very small camel and a very large needle."
1. Eternal life is a gift to be received w/child-like trust, not a reward for personal goodness.
- I. Are you ready today to turn from your trust in self-attainments, your earthly securities, your goodness to trust in Jesus? *Slide#30,31* Or will you remain looking for *snails*?