

“ENCOUNTERS ~ Jesus Blesses the Children” [10.25.09]

1000 COATS before winter sets in: an audacious goal for 2 High School students who took up the CIY challenge!

Zach Welch & Marie LeFever’s love for God & others persuaded them to collect 1000 COATS for elementary children from low-income families.

Our church family joined these students on this challenge back in September; many of you sacrificed your gifts to be a part of this worthy cause!

Because of your love for God & others @ least _____ children this winter will be warmer because of your efforts!

THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for making some children’s lives warmer & better this winter in our own back-yard!

Brock’s are real honored to be a part of this loving & generous family!

LET’S PRAY:

One thing we know for certain, as we study the Gospel accounts is that Jesus adored little children ☺

I. Jesus Encounter’s the Little Children

A. (R) Mark 10: 13 – 16 or p. 770 in pew Bible

Bible says, “Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior’s hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!” [Psalm 127: 3 – 5a]

B. Our children’s world is [much different] than the world we grew up in:

- Schoolteachers were asked in 1940 to describe the top 7 disciplinary problems they faced in the classroom. The problems in the 40s:

Talking + chewing gum + Making noise + running in the halls + getting out of turn in line + Wearing improper clothing + not putting waste paper in the waste paper basket.

- In the 1980s, educators were asked the same question by college researchers. Here are the top 7 disciplinary problems that modern-day teachers face:

Sexual misconduct + robbery + Assault + home invasions + Arson + bombings & even murder.

This report is somewhat antiquated; it came from James Dobson & his team-mates [Focus on the Family, March, 1987](#)

There’s no argument or debate that our world has rapidly changed & now has different challenges than when we were growing up:

C. Consider Beloit College's findings

1. Each year since 1998 Beloit College has released a research document entitled the Mindset List.
2.
 - a. This study provides a look @ the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college.
 - b. This is what they found for the College class of 2013; most of these students entering college for the 1st time were born in 1991.
3. Here are some characteristics of the only world they have ever known:
 - a. The Green Giant has always been Shrek, not the big guy picking vegetables ☺
 - b. They have never used a card catalog to find a book.
 - c. Salsa has always outsold ketchup.
 - d. Tattoos have always been very chic & highly visible
 - e. The KGB has never officially existed ☺
 - f. They have never had to "shake down" an oral thermometer.
 - g. They have never understood the meaning of R.S.V.P. ☺
 - h. McDonald's has always been serving Happy Meals in China.
 - i. The American health care system has always been in critical condition.
 - j. There has always been a 'Cartoon Network.'
 - k. Women have always outnumbered men in college.
 - l. For 1 reason or another, California's future has always been in doubt
 - m. NATO has always been looking for a role.
 - n. Conflict in N. Ireland has always been slowly winding down ☺

As much as the world has changed, it oddly is much the same ☺

D. In most cases ~ the headlines from 1991 are much the same as 2009

1. In 1991 the headlines railed against...
 - a. Government intervention + bailouts & bad loans
 - b. Unemployment skyrocketed + headlines railed against...
 - c. Greater regulation of the finance industry + The Tonight Show changed hosts for the 1st time in decades ☺
 - d. & the nation asked "was Iraq worth a war?"
2. As much as our world has changed, it oddly is much the same ☺

[Back to the text]

II. One other CONSTANT in our changing world ☺

A. (R) Mark 10: 13

1. Necessary back-drop "...parents brought their children to Jesus"
 - a. According to the custom of the time, mother's made sure that their children were touched & blessed by a distinguished rabbi after their 1st birthday.
 - b. Mark's usage of the word for 'children' is ambiguous, includes a range from 1 to 12 yrs of age. However v. 16 gives us a clue of their exact age range ☺

- c. v. 16 references, "...Jesus taking the children into His arms," indicating that infants are involved ☺

This is where the rub comes in = why the disciples scold the parents:

2. Couple of reasons WHY...

- a. Pragmatically this was not a handful of mothers bringing their babies to Jesus to have Him bless their little angels ☺ The verb tense Mark uses indicates the parents "kept on bringing their small children" this was a very long line of babies.
- b. [Context] These were momentous days for the disciples; every aspect of their public lives were now @ threat = endangered!
 - i. Jerusalem lay ahead, controversies were afoot, Herod Antipas had threatened, & in the minds of the disciples the Kingdom of God was very near.
 - ii. As tensions mounted ~ the very last thing the disciples thought Jesus needed was to be troubled by these 'little rug rats.'

What good were children anyway?

In the ancient world ~ children had no status & were often treated w/contempt

B. In ancient world ~ children were viewed as merely property:

- 1. A papyrus letter written by a man named [Hi-larion] to his expectant wife [A-lis], dated June 17, 1 B.C., instructs her:
"If it was a male child let it LIVE; if it was a female, CAST it OUT."
- 2. In the ancient world ~ fathers held absolute power over their children. This power is called [Pa-tria] + [Po-tes-tas]
 - a. A father could condemn a child to die simply by commanding it be done.
 - b. A case where this happened was recorded as late as [60 A.D.]
 - c. This practice was finally outlawed in [375 A.D.]

The disciples rebuke [revealed how entrenched] they still were in this world & how little they STILL understood about entrance into the Kingdom of God.

[Back to Jesus' encounter with the little children]

C. (R) Mark 10: 14 – 15 = I'm thankful that some things make Jesus angry!

Jesus takes this moment to teach the disciples 2 lessons that are paramount to the Kingdom of God = that they have missed:

- 1. Don't STOP the little babies from being brought to me = they can't bring themselves!

In effect, Jesus validates the importance of children ~ defying cultural standards!

2. P.S. unless you've got something they possess, you will not get into the Kingdom of God = = a childlike dependent trust; this silly posturing to PROVE your WORTH is absolutely useless!
 - a. [Key-Pivotal] to understanding the passage:
 - i. Don't commit COMMON ERROR = the text does not say that we are to become like children; God forbid
 - ii. There is no need for further child-like behavior; @ times children can be mean-spirited, self-absorbed, & hostile of all creatures.

Jesus WAS NOT saying that "we should become like children," on the contrary, Jesus says, "...we must receive the kingdom like a child."

- b. [Key-Pivotal] A child's identification with the Kingdom of God is their lack of power & their need for help.
 - i. A child in a parents arms has neither social influence nor personal strength upon which to rely.
 - ii. Utter trust relaxes the child in the arms of the parent.
 - iii. Most comforting picture of all who will enter God's Kingdom!

III. Parental take-aways:

- A. 1st, "...our children are a gift from God" = Psalm 127: 3
- B. 2nd, the very best gift we can give our children is...
 1. NOT more stuff - - more toys - - more gadgets
 2. NOT an education = good but will fade away
 3. NOT a financial inheritance = nice but will eventually fade away.

Very BEST GIFT you can give your child is...to AWAKEN the GLORY of GOD within their hearts:

1. [INSERT] Justin Fluhr's = student pastor taught me this principle
2. [INSERT] The older a person gets w/out becoming a Christian...
3. [INSERT] Your highest responsibility is to bring them to Jesus [K-zone]