

ABBEY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING
WORSHIP SERVICE 10.30 AM OCT 27TH 2024
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Theme: Mark 10.15

Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it

Call to Worship:

Lord, to whom shall we go? Your words are words of eternal life.

Lord God, we come here in all kinds of moods and from a variety of situations. You know what they are and what each of us needs to hear at this time. Make us ready for the word that will bring us life.

Hymn BP&W 65: Praise my soul the King of Heaven

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like you his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to blame and swift to bless;
Alleluia, alleluia!
glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Father-like, he tends and spares us,
All our hopes and fears he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia, alleluia!
widely as his mercy flows.

4 Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
praise him all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise with us the God of grace.

Prayer of Praise

Father, we come with hearts full of praise to you. You are the creator of this world, and the universe, with all the planets which shine as stars. We praise you for the beauty of your creation. For the trees, flowers, grass, vegetables, the animals, the birds, the fish in the sea. But most of all, we praise and thank you for your son, who came to this earth and showed us how to live. He gave his life, that we might have eternal life.

With full hearts we praise you Lord.

Prayer of Confession

Father, we come to you with sorrow in our hearts. We know we have done wrong. We have thought about ourselves more than that of others. We have been critical and uncaring. Our thoughts have not been worthy of you Lord. We have not taken care of this world, as we should have done, and we have not shown your love in our lives to others.

Father, forgive us.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Father, how good you are. When we come to you confessing our sins, you, in your mercy, have and will, forgive us our sins. All we can say is thank you. Thank you for your loving touch, for your guidance and for your forgiveness.

We thank you Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Family Time: Child or Adult

There will be an offering taken during the following song, and after the song the children will leave us for their own groups.

Hymn MP 128: Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist

Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist

Without the knowledge of Your parenthood and Your loving care
Now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family and I can never be alone
Because Father God, You're there beside me

I will sing Your praises I will sing Your praises
I will sing Your praises forever more
I will sing Your praises I will sing Your praises
I will sing your praises for evermore

Bible Reading 1: Mark 9. 33-37 Mark 10. 35-45
Bible Reading 2: Mark 10 13-16 Philippians 2. 5-11

Sermon The upside down kingdom

So I thought you would like to see some pictures of our first grandchild – and two more are on the way!
How many of you are grandparents? – much easier than being a parent!
Ivy is now 18 months old and has very devoted parents!

What words come to mind as you look at these pictures?

Loved, precious, special, dependent, happy secure, fun loving, spontaneous .

What more words do you have? Do you wish you could be a little child again? What freedom!

And then Jesus came up with this amazing statement – **Anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it – the kingdom of God belongs to such as these'**

So this morning's challenge – are you responding to living in God's kingdom as a little child, or trying to be there with all your so called adult maturity, and does it matter?

Let's recap where we are in Mark's gospel – we crossed the half way point in chapter 8, when Jesus asked his friends the question ' **Who do you say I am?**

And Peter had responded with faith – **you are the Christ** the long awaited one – you are God

Then Jesus began to teach them how he must begin the journey to Jerusalem to be cruelly treated and put to death, but that he would come back to life. He had also tried to help them understand that the path of following him was also to 'take up their own cross and lay down their own lives' for his sake.

How were the disciples getting on with understanding this?– not really very well. Jesus goes on in the following chapters to share more what it means to live in this **upside down new kingdom** we have been talking about for so many weeks now. **How are you getting on?**

Two passages to think about

In **Mark 9** Jesus tells them for the second time he was on his way to Jerusalem to die and they were to come with him. But the next things we hear is of the argument the disciples had along the way with each other as to 'Who was the greatest among them' ! They still expected Jesus to become a great worldly leader who would free Israel from the Romans and set up a powerful new Jewish nation. They wanted to have key positions of glory in this worldly kingdom.

Then again in **Mark 10** Jesus for the third time tells them in even more detail what is ahead for him in Jerusalem. But in the next sentence we have James and John and their mother asking could they sit one on his right and one on his left hand in the new kingdom. How slow they were to get it and how patient Jesus had to be. Are we also very slow?

How was Jesus going to help them understand ? Twice Jesus uses the picture of little children. These teachings are all repeated in Matthew and Luke and emphasises their importance. In those days children had very little value – they were more like property or giving a man status. The more he had, the safer his future and legacy. How much Jesus had to change their thinking.

1. **In Ch 9** in response to his disciples wanting human greatness, he took a child in his arms and said whoever welcomes and loves one of these, welcomes me and also my Father. What great value he was giving children. Then he went on to teach whoever wants to be great must be willing to be the very last and the servant of all! What an upside down kingdom!
2. **In Ch 10** Jesus was being crowded by mums bringing their children for him to touch them and bless them. His disciples were cross and tried to send them all away – they still saw no value in these little

ones. Jesus was angry with them – how slow they were to understand ! Let them come to me he said, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these – unless you respond like them you cannot enter in.

So really two strands of linked teaching going on.

- A. First – to be great in the kingdom you have to turn your ideas about greatness upside down. **You have to be willing to be last not first and to be the servant of all** – what a high calling!! But Jesus was showing them how to do it by the way he behaved.

This whole sections ends with **Mark 10. 41 – 45** – let’s look at it again.

Jesus called them together and said don’t be like the world’s leaders – they think they are so much better than others and control and dictate – not so with you. If you want to be great become a servant, if you want to be first be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. Remember our reading in Philippians Jesus came to humble himself, make himself like a servant, and walked the obedient path to death. How does this challenge you? Are we also willing to give our life away to serve and bless others – making ourselves of least importance?

- B. **You need to come with the same attitudes of a little child to enter God’s kingdom** – so opposite of how the disciples were trying to enter, wanting position and greatness. What do you think this would look like??

A child is naturally dependent, trusting, uncomplicated, ready for the new experience. An adult becomes so easily the opposite with such thoughts as ‘I need to manage by myself, hold back, only trust myself, need to work it out with my mind, wary and fearful.’ So hard for us to just put down all our past ways of thinking and jump into the wonder and freedom of God’s kingdom.

Jesus says to us today, simply come to me as a little child. I want you to just be a ‘Child of God’ in my family – secure, happy, dependent, trusting in my care and guidance. Let me truly be your Father – just as little Ivy so enjoys her Dad.

Could he be asking you, ‘Just run into my arms today, I want to hug you and bless you as my beloved son or daughter’ – **to find the glorious freedom of being a child of God** Romans 8.21

So the challenge of this upside down Kingdom of God– the invitation is still there for each of us. We make a start by putting down all our learnt ‘adult behaviours’ and jumping into the Kingdom as a little child. But then day by day we must walk as a trusting child, learning the joy of being last and the slave of all as we follow Jesus’ example and find what it is to walk in the glorious freedom of being a child of God.

Hymn MP 142: Father we love you

Father, we love You We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth
Glorify Thy Name Glorify Thy Name
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth

Jesus, we love You We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth
Glorify Thy Name Glorify Thy Name
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth

Spirit, we love You We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth
Glorify Thy Name Glorify Thy Name
Glorify Thy Name in all the earth

Prayers for Others: Ernest and Benna

Merciful and Loving God, we come before you with hearts longing for peace in Middle East, Russia and Ukraine. Lord, you see the pain, the suffering, and the conflict that has burdened these regions for so long. We pray for peace. Let your hand be at work to protect the innocent, comfort the grieving, and heal the wounds of those affected by war and violence. Let the people turn their hearts toward you and open their eyes to seek the kingdom of God, remind them that you are a refuge and a fortress in times of trouble.

Lord, speak to the hearts of the world leaders and grant them wisdom and compassion. Help them to lead with humility and justice. May they seek peace and turn away from violence. Guide their actions so that they may lead with integrity, fairness, and a spirit of service.

Father God, we come before you for the upcoming presidential election in the United States. May they ask for your guidance, wisdom and peace throughout the election.

During these difficult times of economic uncertainty and hardship, we thank you Lord for your blessing upon us at Abbey church. Thank you we can offer help to the people in need in Reading. We will stand firm in our faith in you Lord.

Lord, we ask for your blessing on all our families and friends overseas in our home countries that mean so much to us. Bless them with health, happiness, and peace. In times of worry or fear, may they turn to You and trust in Your love and faithfulness.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Hymn MP 59: Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of his Spirit, washed in His blood

This is my story, this is my song

Praising my Savior all the day long
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long

Perfect submission, perfect delight

Visions of rapture now burst on my sight
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love

This is my story, this is my song

Praising my Savior all the day long
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long
Praising my Savior all the day long

Blessing

Go out into the world with faith as of a child, fully trusting, fully believing, totally loving him. May God keep you safe until we meet again. Amen.

The Grace:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.