LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 19 (Part 2) :13-15

Let the Children Come

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Let's go ahead and open up our Bibles to Matthew, chapter 19. We're picking it up in verse 13. Join me there. We'll read a few verses here. Pray.

It says, Then children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands on them. And pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and went away.

Pray with me. Father, God, open our hearts to your Holy Spirit, to the ministry of your words. Speak to us. Give us wisdom. Open our hearts to what you want to say specifically to us that we can apply in our lives.

We look to you, Father. In Jesus' name, amen, amen. The story of the little children being brought to Jesus is a short but very important one. It is covered by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Luke describes them rather than children, actually uses a word that says babies, infants.

He says that they were really little, so you kind of, you have this mental picture of what's going on. The parents are bringing their kids to have Jesus lay his hands on them, and this was done in that sort of a day, when rabbis and elders would be passing by, parents, particularly on the first birth of their child, would bring the child to the rabbi, to the elder, whatever, have that person just pray a blessing over them. I find it kind of interesting that they come to Jesus and ask for prayer, ask him to pray. I mean, remember, guys, Jesus is God, right? So it's kind of like coming to God and asking him to pray.

Not that Jesus never prayed to his Heavenly Father, but it's just kind of an interesting sort of a concept to come to God and ask him to pray. It's like, just come and ask him to bless, sort of a thing. So anyway, Jesus didn't find fault with their lack of understanding related to that whole his relationship to the Father, and so on and so forth. What he did find fault with, as we look at these three short verses, is he found fault

with his own men, his own disciples. Because we're told that the disciples rebuked the people, actually rebuked them.

Now, we don't know exactly what they said, nor do we know why they said it. I looked in all three passages, and nowhere does it explain why exactly the disciples said what they did. They could have been just bothered by kids, you know, I suppose, I mean, it's possible. They could have just felt like it was kind of beneath their master to busy himself or to burden himself with the issues of children for that particular moment. Or it could be even as William Barclay suggested, that maybe the disciples were even protecting Jesus knowing that he was on his way to Jerusalem, and obviously a very important thing happening there.

But in the absence of any reason that's given in any of the gospel accounts, I think we need to be careful not to speculate too much here. But what we do know, what we do know, is that Jesus wanted to bless the children. That's what we do know. We know that the parents were coming, saying, you know, would you please bless my child? And we know that Jesus said, I want to.

I want to do this. And I think, you know, we talked last week about Jesus healing. And remember what I told you the context of that was? He's not just healing because this is what he does. He's healing on his way to Jerusalem for the last time.

He knows that he's going to Jerusalem where he will be arrested, beaten, tortured, and crucified. He knows that. He's been telling his disciples that. We saw last week he took time to heal the people when they came with all their needs. Now he takes time to bless the babies.

Even carrying such a heavy burden as that, in fact it was William Barclay who wrote, it is one of the loveliest things in all the gospel story that Jesus had time for the children, even when he was on his way to Jerusalem to die. And I couldn't agree more. But the really cool thing about this event is that Jesus was able to do two things at once. He was able to bless the children because he wanted to. But he was also able to reinforce a statement that he had made here that he had also made in the previous chapter for you and I.

The statement that he makes here in this passage is in verse 14. Look with me again. In your Bible it says, but Jesus said, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. And then he goes on. And of course that was his first goal.

But the second goal is to reinforce this thing, the end of this verse that says, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. Now that's a very important statement. We talked about it a few weeks ago. I'm coming back to kind of cover it in a slightly different way, but you need to know and understand that this,

this statement by Jesus has been misunderstood by people throughout the years. Jesus did not say to them belongs the kingdom of heaven.

Okay? He didn't say to children belongs the kingdom of heaven as if heaven is populated by children. He said to such, or as the new American standard Bible says, children such as these belong the kingdom of heaven. All right? And the words such as, or such as these speak of a comparative likening of people in heaven to little children.

Okay? In other words, people who choose heaven, hear me now, people who choose heaven are like little children. That's essentially what he's saying. And in chapter 18, where he said almost the same thing, if you want to just turn back to chapter 18 and verse three or two, rather, you'll remember that he said, truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, notice he didn't say unless you turn and become children, we can't do that. We can't go back in time.

But he says, unless you become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Kind of a fairly flat statement, you know, unless you do this, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. So becoming like a child is a prerequisite for heaven. How do we get to heaven? Well, first you got to be like a child.

What? You know, that's just the kind of statement that Jesus would say. You want to get to heaven? Well, you got to be like a child. In fact, if you don't turn and become like a little child, he says, you'll never enter the kingdom of heaven.

And here's what I've been learning lately, in case you want to know what's on the front burner of what God's been doing in my life. I have learned that becoming like a little child is not only the start, it's everything else too. I am learning at 56 years of age, finally, you know, hard noggin and all, that this is just the tip of the iceberg. This is just the beginning. This whole idea of becoming like a child not only gets you into heaven from the standpoint of all the things we'll talk about in a minute, but it keeps you on the path.

It keeps you walking in victory. It keeps you in right relationship with God. And by the way, in case you're wondering, yes, this message will correlate to what we've been dealing with on Wednesday night in Joshua. Because this is what the Lord has really been moving in my heart about. In fact, I want to share with you this morning five things that I think characterize a child or becoming like a child that I think we as adults need to get back.

We need to get these things back into our lives. And they're things that children automatically have, but we need them back in order that we can truly walk with God in victory and walk with him in peace. And if we're not walking in victory and we're not walking in peace, it could be that we're acting too much like grown-ups. Now I'm not telling you to act like a child, I'm telling you to be like a child. That's what Jesus is talking about.

And so here's what we're, I'm going to put these, I always put notes up on the screen for you, don't I? So we're going to do this, and I love to name them dumb and stupid things, so we're going to call this one Rediscovering Your Inner Child. And if that sounds like a lot of psychobabble, don't worry, it's not, just trust me. The first thing that we're going to look at here about a child that we need to get back is a child has not lost a sense of awe and wonder. The British poet Tennyson tells a story about going into his little boy's bedroom and walking in on the boy sitting on the bed who is just totally enamored with a beam of light coming through the window, to the point where he didn't even really acknowledge his dad coming in the room.

And he was so taken aback by that. And he actually wrote it into a poem. I'm not going to quote the poem for you. But he saw his son just sitting there just gazing at a sunbeam and watching it with just wonder. Kids are fascinated by the simplest things.

Parents find this out. Here, we live in this day and age of all these toys, and we think we've got to buy all these toys and all the batteries that go with them. And then eventually, the batteries poop out, and the toys break. And then our kids find the spoon drawer or something like that. Or they find your Tupperware drawer.

And suddenly, they're entertained for hours. And parents will write on Facebook, I don't believe it. All those $50 toys that we got so-and-so for Christmas broke. And the kid has been playing for hours with the lid, Tupperware lid and a spoon. And if I'd have known this before, how much money could we have saved, sort of a thing.

And you see that happening from time to time. But when I think of childlike wonder in my own family, it always takes me back to a photograph of my little boy who led worship here this morning, who isn't little anymore. Let me show you this. This is back in 1991. This is Aaron.

We were up at Warm Lake for the day. Now, what is he doing here? He's watching an ant crawl up his leg. But he didn't just do this for a second. He did this for, no, I couldn't even hold my leg in that position now for very long.

But he sat. He did this for so long that I eventually picked up my camera and took a picture of it. Because I was fascinated by the fact that he was fascinated. But he sat and watched this ant crawling up his leg. That's all he did.

All the kids are out playing in the water. He's watching an ant crawl up his leg. Why? He was fascinated. It was awesome.

It was a sense of wonder. You and I, we see a bug anywhere, we just go, oh, look. OK, all right, get that out of there. What is it about growing older that begins to make life kind of dull and gray? What is it about growing older that causes us to lose our sense of wonder, to lose our sense of awe that a little child has?

Let me show you a passage from the Psalms. This is an important passage. It says, let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Let us be in awe of the Lord our God.

People, we can't afford to lose our awe of God. And that is like a child, you see. Children are just naturally in awe. And they're so interested and so focused. And you and I just become so distracted.

And life, and busyness, and all the things. And pretty soon, we're no longer in awe. So how do we get it back? How do we get back that awe? David actually gives us the secret in the next Psalm that I'm going to show you from Psalm 8.

Look what he says. He says, when I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you've set in place, da-da-da-da-da, da-da-da-da-da, it goes on and on. But I don't need to go on and on, because you know what? The first three words are all you need to see. When I consider.

Do you know one of the reasons why we don't stand in awe is because we don't consider anymore. We don't stop to meditate and think on the wonders of God. Again, we're so busy. We're so distracted. We're so worried.

We're so this. We're so that. Running here and there, to and fro, doing our stuff. And David had time to sit out in the pasture as a young man. I can see him sitting on a rock, kind of up where he can overlook the flock, keep an eye on him.

And at the same time, just looking at the clouds during the day, the stars at night, and then writing down and just saying, you know, Lord, when I sit and consider all that you've done, I'm just blown away. People, when was the last time you were blown away by God? When was the last time you sat in awe of

God and just went, God, you are awesome, that you are amazing? Just like looking at that little ant going up Aaron's leg, you know? It's just like, just watch.

Consider. Think about it. We've got to get that back, you guys. We really do. You know, on Wednesday evenings, we changed our format.

Some of you may not even be aware of it. But on Wednesday nights, we do things differently than we actually did. I teach much shorter than I used to. I'm still teaching through the Old Testament. But we give about 15, 20 minutes at the very end of the service, and we give people a handout that has questions for them to answer, write down their answers.

It gives them points of reflection, things just to think about related to the passage. And it gives them prayer points, things to pray about as to how to apply what we've just learned in the passage. And you know, we only give about 15 minutes. But I can tell, for some people, even that was a little bit of a stretch, just sitting. But what we're doing is we're just sitting and considering.

We're considering how that passage applies to us. We're considering how our lives fit around the dynamics of what God is saying in that word. And it's an exercise. It's a stretch. But I've had more and more people come up to me after a Wednesday night and say, you know, I got to tell you, I am just loving this new Wednesday night format because for the very first time in my life, I'm sitting and listening to the word, and then I'm considering it.

I'm considering how it applies to my life. And it used to be that I would just walk out the door and think, oh, that was a great study in the Old Testament or the New Testament or whatever, and just walk out, just back out into the world, back out into the things of life, and just, here we go. David, remember, when I consider. So important. Second thing I want to put up on the notes here is that a child's life is marked by dependence.

And we all know that. When a child is very small, their lives are literally in the hands of those who are caring for them. But that mark of dependence is what makes being like a child a good thing in the kingdom of God. That's why Jesus said, unless you become like a child, a child is utterly dependent. I'm talking about a little child, on their caregivers and so forth.

Let me show you this passage from Colossians. I love this. It says, and he, talking about Jesus, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Do you know why I emphasize that so much there? Because people will come to me sometimes, or come to you, too, just totally stressed out.

And what do they say? I'm just trying to hold it together. Yeah, well, you can't. Guess what? We know someone who not only can, but is holding all things together, and it's Jesus Christ.

And you and I need to let go. We got this white knuckle grip on life, right? And we need to begin to say, you know what, God? I am utterly dependent on you for my next breath, for my next heartbeat, for everything. The Bible says he holds all things together, and you don't.

And you can't. And you are dependent on him. You know what, that's either going to freak you out, or it's going to give you a sense of peace, whether you're a control freak or whatever, I suppose. And you know what, we can all be control freaks in different areas of life. Eventually, though, we got to come to the place of understanding.

There's only one person who's really in control. Let me show you another interesting passage from Acts 17. Paul quotes this statement. He says, in him we live and move and have our being. In who?

In him, in Jesus. In God, we live, we move, we have our being. Our very being is in him, not in us. We are dependent upon him. I love those verses.

Next, we got to get back the amazing ability that a child has to forgive. This is one thing that really marks the life of a child. We forget how forgiveness keeps our heart open to the things of God. You know, raising four children over the last almost 30 years, there were many, many times that I felt the need to go to my children and ask for forgiveness. And I did.

And you know what I'm very pleased to say? There's not one time they ever refused me. Not one time did my kids ever go, eh, we'll think about it. Dad. They were quick to forgive, always.

throwing their arms around my neck, and just extending the most blessed forgiveness that you can imagine. Children naturally have forgiving hearts. And it's just once we get older, somehow, we become slower and slower in our willingness to extend forgiveness to other. I'm not gonna belabor this, because it was just a couple of weeks ago we dealt with that whole story of the master and the two servants and the forgiveness issue. And we talked about it a lot.

But if you would allow me, I wanna read a small excerpt here in just a moment from a book by Corrie Ten Boom called Tramp for the Lord, which I've picked up off my nightstand to read for the umpteenth time. I used to read it to my children around the campfire when we'd go camping. And we're kind of a camping family. And so even when my kids were little, we'd sit around the campfire and read chapters

from Tramp for the Lord. In case you don't know, Corrie Ten Boom was a woman who, for 11 months out of her life, was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp for hiding Jews along with her family.

And during that time in that German prison camp, she saw unspeakable cruelty and lost most of the members of her immediate family. But it was after the war that Corrie began to travel around, or what she called tramping around for the Lord. She traveled around the world to tell people about the love of Jesus Christ. And there were times that she found herself ministering to people who were victims of the war, just like she was. And I want to show you this.

I think I have this, yeah. She writes, since the end of the war, I had a home in Holland for the victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were also able to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

And there you go. To forgive is to be free. Free to love God, free to love people. Free to move on with your life, to hold back, to nurse bitterness and unforgiveness is to be enslaved and to become an invalid in a very real, you may not be bedridden from the standpoint of what we think an invalid might be, but you will be an invalid nonetheless. And that's such an important thing to remember related to forgiveness.

The next thing on our notes here that we need to get back is a child readily admits their inabilities. Somehow, someway as adults, we just stop doing that. We try to be the big, hairy person that can do it all, super person or something like that. You know, sometimes my grandkids will want me to pick them up. Grandpa, pick me up.

And I like to tease them. I'll just say, well, you know what? I'm kind of tired. Why don't you pick me up? And they go, Grandpa, I can't pick you up.

I'm small and you're big. And, you know, we laugh. It's just, kids do that though. They don't have any trouble admitting their inability. They'll look at me for a minute like, are you kidding?

Are you kidding me? You know, but they know, they understand. And they're quick to say, I can't do that. When did we lose that? When did we lose the ability to say, I can't do that?

I can't do that. You know, Paul, the apostle, had to learn that lesson. We sang it this morning. His grace is sufficient for me. Look at this from 2 Corinthians.

Love this passage. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you. For my power, you see, Paul, is made perfect in weakness, son. And so Paul went on to say this. So he says, you know what?

In that case, I'm gonna boast about my weaknesses. That's the lesson he learned. I'm actually gonna boast about the things that make me a weak person. And he says, in fact, I'm gonna do it gladly. Why?

Because then the power of Christ rests on me. He learned that lesson. When I am weak, then I am strong because Christ's power is perfected in my weakness. And like little children, we gotta be able to look up to our heavenly daddy and just say, I can't do that. But you can.

You can pick me up. I can't pick you up. I can't do that. I am unable. You are able.

I mean, we try to infuse this into our children at a young age when we teach them the song, Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so, you know. And little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong. Somehow we think we've kind of outgrown that little line in the song.

Now we've gotta be, we gotta walk around and show everybody our faith, our faith muscles, you know. Anyway. And finally, a child's life is based on believing. Have you ever noticed how quickly children will just believe? They'll just believe, which is why you can take advantage of them.

But I mean, how long did it take for you to stop believing that a little fairy would come and get your tooth and put money in its place? You know, or frankly, even Santa Claus. Now I was the last of four children, so I got to believe a lot shorter time. And somehow my siblings felt it was their duty, their family duty to say to me, Paul, sit down. We have something we need to tell you.

There's no Santa Claus, or something like that, you know. Not that my parents were ever big on it anyway, but kids will just naturally believe. And here's the point, guys. Because they believe, they trust. Because they believe, they trust.

Belief and trust go hand in hand. My niece, when she was about two years old, was one of those kids who was completely fearless when it came to water, which made the rest of us afraid. But she was fearless. She would literally, at two years of age, go down this slide into the pool and sit on the bottom of the pool, waiting for my brother to come get her off. And I'll just let you know, she's in her 30s now, so he obviously did a good job.

Got children of her own. My point is, she believed that her daddy was gonna take care of her, and it translated into this trust. Children do that, you know? Maybe not in that particular area. Not all children feel the same way about water.

But the point is, children have this belief that translates into trust, and that's what you and I need to get back. It's called childlike faith. Childlike faith. I've been thinking a lot about childlike faith lately. I would

define childlike faith as the ability to see the promises of God's word and to believe them without question.

And I find that the older I get, the more I struggle with the temptation to exalt my reason over and above the simple revelation of God's word. And that is always dangerous. But it becomes more of a potential. And all the while, God says to you and I through Proverbs chapter three, he says, trust, trust in me, trust in the Lord with all of your heart. And lean not, don't lean.

Don't lean on your own understanding. Your own understanding is, it's faulty. But the older we get, we do, don't we? You know, have you ever noticed kids don't lean on their own understanding because they really don't have any? I mean, it's incomplete, you know?

They don't get it. I mean, that's why they do stupid things. We call them stupid, but they're really just ignorance because they don't have the understanding to guide their decision-making process like you and I, and so they'll just kind of, they'll take steps of faith. You know, you say to a child, it never amazed me, or it never ceased to amaze me, rather, when I would say to my children, you know, when I'd take them, like, to the dentist. But I wouldn't tell them, necessarily, where we were going, you know?

Because you didn't want to scream and hissy fit before you get there. But, you know, I'd just say, hey, come on, let's go. We're gonna go. And they go, okay, you know? And they didn't ask, like, where are you taking me?

You know, they never did that. You know, when they're, like, three years old, they don't go, all right, let me see your itinerary. Where are we going, mall? Toys R Us? What?

Sort of a thing. They just were like, yeah! You know, they get on their coats and they run out to the car and they get in the, and I always had this tinge of guilt. I know I'm taking them to the dentist, you know? But they're sitting back there going, yeah!

You know, they're just having a great old time. Then we pull up in front of the dentist. But, you know, but they just, they trust. We need to get back to that. We need to get back to a heart that does not give in to the temptation to exalt human reason above the trust in our Heavenly Father.

Oh, I find that so hard. I feel, sometimes I'm angry, almost angry at the fact that, as a teacher, I feel like God has made me an analytical sort of a person. Many of you guys are analytical thinkers too. And we analyze things to our undoing. You know, we overanalyze.

And we analyze ourselves sometimes into a tailspin, emotionally. Because we're sitting there just kind of thinking, okay, here's the then, put that in front, carry the one. I'm dead, sort of a thing, you know what I mean? Instead of just naturally trusting God, we naturally analyze. And I've been saying, Lord, I want to learn to trust you like a child.

And the other thing I've been telling God is, I want you to talk to me, I want to hear from you. And the Lord reminded me of something about those whom he reveals himself to. Do you remember who he reveals himself to? Look at this, Jesus is praying here, he says, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from who? The wise and understanding.

Who have you revealed them to? Little children. Is he literally saying that all the prophets, whoever spoke, were like under five? Obviously not. He's talking again like those who are such as these.

Who does God reveal himself to? Those with a childlike heart. Not those who are always sitting back going, all right, God, what are you up to today? Because you know, before you do anything, it's got to get past me. And I'll let you know whether I think it's an okay thing.

But I might just, you know, put the kibosh on this thing, you just need to know that. Children don't do that. A childlike heart doesn't do that. A childlike heart says, talk to me. Where are we going today?

What are we doing today? You know, and trusts. The more I consider myself wise and understanding, the more I find myself left out from the things God is revealing. Isn't that an interesting thought? So let's review these five things one last time, shall we?

We need to get back these things. A child hasn't lost their sense of awe and wonder. We need to get back that sense of awe and wonder because, and the way we're going to do it is we're going to stop and consider, right? We need to get back a life marked by dependence on God because that's something a child naturally does. We need to be like children with their amazing ability to extend forgiveness because that keeps the heart open to God.

We like children need to be readily able to admit our weaknesses and our inabilities so that God's power might rest on us, right? And then finally, we must get back that childlike faith that believes and trusts, amen. Amen.