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Proper 22B - Ordinary 27B - Pentecost +18

Sunday, October 4, 2009

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

I thought we might just pause today and think a little bit about what we're doing here. Why is it important that we come to church? (Solicit children's answers)

That's right. Church is a place that we come to worship God and to learn about Jesus' teachings. We could do those things on our own, but there's something kind of special about coming to church and worshipping with others, isn't there? Our church is like a family.

But think for a minute about your own family. You know, most of you began coming to church even before you were old enough to really understand what it was. (As appropriate, you may wish to acknowledge the presence of infants at your own service.) Why do you think your parents thought it was important to start bringing you to church when you were very little? (Solicit children's answers.)

That's right. Being a Christian is something that begin learning very early – and while you might not have understood everything at first, even as very little children we begin to understand what a special, loving place church is.

The reason I brought this up is that Jesus talks about children in today's Gospel story. There are some people who are bringing their young children to be blessed by Jesus and the disciples don't understand why and try to send them away. But Jesus explains to them that the very best time to learn about the kingdom of God is as a child. It's why we pause and take this time to make sure that there's a special time during our service that's just for you.

Do you think this story might be where the song Jesus Loves the Little Children comes from? He certainly does. I thought maybe instead of closing with a prayer, we might sing it quickly? Will you join me?

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they're all precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.

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