

Mark 9:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Analysis

Jesus taught: 'Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me' (ὅς ἂν ἐν τῶν τοιούτων παιδίων δέξηται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται· καὶ ὃς ἂν ἐμὲ δέχηται, οὐκ ἐμὲ δέχεται ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με). Receiving children 'in my name' means welcoming them because of Jesus, valuing what He values. This becomes receiving Jesus Himself—how we treat the lowly reveals how we respond to Christ. Jesus then extends the chain: receiving Him is receiving the Father. This establishes profound Trinitarian unity—Father sends Son, Son sends disciples, and treatment of the least reflects response to the greatest. Service to insignificant people isn't charitable addition to following Jesus; it's essential expression of it. Faith without care for the vulnerable is dead (James 2:14-17).

Historical Context

First-century hospitality culture practiced strategic welcoming of those who could reciprocate—hosting prominent people brought social advancement (Luke 14:12-14). Jesus' command to receive children (who couldn't reciprocate) was counter-cultural. The phrase 'in my name' (epi tō onomati mou, ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου) means 'because of me' or 'for my sake.' Receiving someone 'in the name of' another was ancient agency concept—treating the representative as the sender. Jesus applies this to children, identifying Himself with the lowly. The Father-Son unity ('receiving me... receives him who sent me') echoes Jesus' teaching in John

5:23; 12:44-45; 13:20. This became foundational for Christian social ethics: Matthew 25:31-46 describes judgment based on treatment of 'the least of these.'

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' identification with children and the lowly challenge our tendency to pursue relationships with influential people while neglecting the powerless?
2. What does the connection between receiving children, receiving Christ, and receiving the Father teach about God's heart for the vulnerable?

Interlinear Text

ὅς	ἐάν	ἐν	τῶν	τοιούτων	παιδίων	δέχεται	ἐπὶ	τῷ
Whosoever	G1437	one	G3588	of such	children	receiveth	in	G3588
G3739		G1520		G5108	G3813	G1209	G1909	
ὀνόματί	μου	ἐμὲ	δέχεται	καὶ	ὅς	ἐάν	ἐμὲ	δέχεται
name	my	me	receiveth	and	Whosoever	G1437	me	receiveth
G3686	G3450	G1691	G1209	G2532	G3739		G1691	G1209
οὐκ	ἐμὲ	δέχεται	ἀλλὰ	τὸν	ἀποστείλαντά	με		
not	me	receiveth	but	G3588	him that sent	me		
G3756	G1691	G1209	G235		G649	G3165		

Additional Cross-References

Luke 10:16 (Parallel theme): He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

John 10:30 (Parallel theme): I and my Father are one.

Luke 9:48 (Parallel theme): And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Matthew 18:10 (Parallel theme): Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

John 5:23 (Parallel theme): That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.