

Matthew 19:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Analysis

Jesus rebukes disciples: 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven' (Greek: ἀφετε τὰ παιδία καὶ μὴ κωλύετε αὐτὰ ἐλθεῖν πρός με, 'permit the children and do not hinder them to come to me'). 'Suffer' (ἀφετε) means 'allow, permit.' Disciples tried blocking children from Jesus, viewing them as unimportant. Jesus invites them, declaring 'of such is the kingdom' (τοιούτων γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία) - the kingdom belongs to those with childlike faith. This affirms children's spiritual capacity and models humility, trust, and receptivity required for salvation.

Historical Context

In ancient culture, children had no social status. Disciples reflected cultural values by dismissing children as unimportant. Jesus' embrace of children was radically countercultural, affirming their worth and spiritual responsiveness. This teaching grounded infant baptism practices (though some dispute application) and emphasized evangelism of children. Early Christian communities welcomed children in worship, contrasting with pagan practices of infant exposure and neglect. Jesus' treatment of children demonstrated kingdom values inverting worldly hierarchies.

Related Passages

[John 3:16 — God's love and salvation](#)

Study Questions

1. Why did disciples try to prevent children from coming to Jesus?
2. What does Jesus' welcome of children teach about kingdom values and who belongs?
3. How should churches demonstrate Jesus' priority of welcoming children?

Interlinear Text

ο	δε	Ιησοῦς	εἶπεν	Ἄφετε	τὰ	παῖδια	καὶ	μὴ
G3588	But	Jesus	said	Suffer	G3588	little children	and	not
G1161	G2424	G2036	G863		G3813		G2532	G3361
κωλύετε	αὐτὰ	ἐλθεῖν	πρός	με	τῶν	γὰρ	τοιούτων	ἐστὶν
forbid	them	to come	unto	me	G3588	for	of such	is
G2967	G846	G2064	G4314	G3165	G1063	G5108	G2076	
ἡ	βασιλεία	τῶν	οὐρανῶν					
G3588	the kingdom	G3588	of heaven					
G932			G3772					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 18:3 (Kingdom): And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

1 Corinthians 14:20 (Parallel theme): Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

Mark 10:14 (Kingdom): But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Matthew 11:25 (References Jesus): At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

