

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

September 17, 2023 // KB Weekend // Child Hope

KINGDOM BUILDERS SUNDAY

FEATURING CHILD HOPE

SEPTEMBER 17



ABOUT THIS SERMON...

Kingdom Builders at Newbreak Church is how we fund the people and projects working both locally and globally to bring the life-changing gift of God's grace to their world. This weekend, we are focusing on Child Hope. Poverty and despair can steal away the dreams of children, but through our partnership with ChildHope, we are providing hope and a bright future to children living in Latin America. ChildHope transforms children from the inside out by providing a quality education and social skills that build the confidence needed to break the cycle of poverty. At the same time, children are learning about the eternal hope of Jesus. See our ministry partners in action and then join us as we bring hope and the love of Jesus to the children of Bolivia.

ICE BREAKERS

- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What is one of your favorite games you played as a kid?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Read Matthew 18:1-5 (See also Luke 9:46-48)

Point 1 –Jesus values children.

The disciples came to Jesus with a question regarding greatness and authority in Jesus' Kingdom. Thinking that Jesus was planning on setting up a physical kingdom on this earth, they wanted to know who would get the most important roles and the highest positions of influence. Jesus' response was to invite a child into their midst (vs.2), challenge them to change their ways (vs.3), and take on the lowly position like a child (vs.4). In order for the disciples to be welcomed into God's Kingdom, they needed to become more like that child.

During this time, children had no social status to boast about nor to measure themselves by. They had very little physical strength to offer and they couldn't confound the wise with their wisdom. By nature, they were humble, needy, and totally reliant on others to live. They received from others what they could never gain by themselves.

Jesus was inviting His disciples then and invites us now to let go of ambition, striving, and the "comparison" game. When we simply receive the grace of God, becoming totally dependent like a child, we are free to experience the goodness and kindness of God.

It's also amazing to see the ways that Jesus cared for, acknowledged, and provided for the children during His earthly ministry. He included the children when he fed the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21), He took the children in his arms and blessed them (Mark 10:13-16), He healed them (John 4:46-52), and casted out demons from them (Mark 7:24-30). The more you look, the more you will notice the number of times that Jesus intentionally showed love and kindness to children.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- In what ways does a child express pure faith or dependence on others? How can we approach God with a similar heart of dependence?
- How can we love children in our lives like Jesus loved them in the New Testament?
- "Was there ever a need you had as a child that you wished an adult would have noticed and cared for? How did this impact you?"

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Read Matthew 18:6-10 (NIV)

Point 2 – Jesus takes the safety of children seriously.

Jesus then goes on to warn the disciples about the danger of causing “little ones” to stumble. Exploiting children and/or anyone who is powerless, vulnerable, or at risk comes with a huge price. Many of us have heard this passage referred to in the past but aren’t sure the background or meaning behind it.

In Jesus’ time, Mills were either turned by hand or by beasts. Large millstone wheels were attached to a horizontal bar connected to a large animal’s harness. As the animal walked around in circles, the wheel rolled over a raised stone slab (similar in appearance to a large birdbath), crushing the grain underneath. (New American Commentary). Anyone who had a millstone tied to their neck and thrown into the water would certainly have been killed.

Exploitation of such people is inevitable, granted the way the world now is. But those who indulge in it are given this warning, far sterner than anything that Jesus ever says about what we think of as the ‘big’ sins such as murder, adultery and theft. They matter, but causing one of the little ones to ‘stumble’ or ‘trip up’ matters even more. Harsh words to address a harsh reality. Learning about God’s kingdom means facing the real evils of the world and realizing that God hates them far more than we do.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Jesus uses the hand, foot, and eye as metaphors for things that cause you to sin. What does He imply you should do with those things that cause you to sin (vv. 8-9)? Why should a person deal with sin in such a radical way?
- What are some of the ways that a person can be the direct cause of “a little one” to stumble? What are some of the ways that a person can be the indirect cause of “a little one” to stumble?
- Matthew 18:10 (NIV) *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”* The Greek word for “despise” (*kataphroneō*) means to condemn, despise, disdain, think little or nothing of. How can we avoid “despising” little children outside of Newbreak?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Point 3 – Jesus goes to great lengths to protect children.

Each life that God creates is precious to Him and He wants us to be like minded with Him. If He would leave the 99 to go and rescue one of His children, that’s what He wants us to do. He created us to do good works that He prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). We are the hands and feet of

Jesus here on this earth. When we see an injustice being done to children, it's our duty to Jesus to do what we can to help those children.

God prepared us to be able to help out in some way when He brings the ills of the world to our attention. Maybe we can take some time off work and go volunteer somewhere. Maybe we can give financially to those who are already there or are already going and support the work that they are doing. Maybe we can commit to praying for the protection of the kids and a change of heart in the people attacking them and putting them in danger. Maybe we can use our social media platforms to bring awareness to situations that other people don't know exist. Maybe we can get to know our neighbors better, so we'll be in a position to see when something may be amiss. Each one of us is in a position to do something to help the kids we see being abused and mistreated.

Jesus wants us to care for His children because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. They are important to Him and protecting them is important to Him. Jesus said in John 15:14, "*You are my friends if you do what I command.*" If we want to be considered friends of Jesus, we will do what He commands. A lot of us ask God what He wants us to do with our lives: move here or there, marry this person or that person, get this job or that job. He has answered us what He wants us to do in this passage. He commands us to take care of the little ones of this world.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- How has God prepared a good work for you to do to help Child Hope? What does this look like? How can you get others involved?
- How can you pray for this ministry? What can we do to support you in your commitment to pray?
- What can you do this week to go after the 99?

FINAL CHALLENGE

- How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
- How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?
- BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?