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Sermon Notes

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Let the Little Children Come to Jesus

Matthew 19:13-15

John MacArthur's tragic story:

“Some years ago, a family in our church experienced a great tragedy. The mother and two daughters were planning to fly the next day to New Zealand to join the husband and father who was on a preaching mission there. As the wife was learning some new crochet stitches to use on the long flight, the girls went outside to play. A few moments later the mother heard the screeching of automobile tires, but since there was no crash, she thought little of it—until her older daughter came running into the house crying that her little sister, Tanya, had been hit by a car.

The girl was unconscious but showed no sign of serious injury. While the mother bent over her, Tanya breathed a heavy sigh and turned her head to the side. At the hospital the neurosurgeon told the mother that the girl had suffered massive brain damage and had little chance of surviving. Relatives and friends prayed fervently and the mother kept a vigil with her precious daughter throughout the night, praying with great intensity that God would spare and restore her daughter. But she also prayed that, above all, God's will be done, even if it meant taking Tanya to be with Himself.

A relative who was a doctor explained that Tanya's breathing and heartbeat were functioning at the hospital solely by artificial means. “Her body is being kept working,” he said, “but Tanya isn't there anymore. She is with the Lord.” With a radiant face, her mother said to the Lord, “Have thy will, not mine.” To her friends and loved ones, she explained, “I shall not forsake my Lord; because if I did, I would be saying Tanya is gone forever. I will do as David in the Old Testament had done when his child was taken. He washed his face, changed his clothes, and went about his business, satisfied that God knew best.”

At that moment, she determined that there would be no more begging God to bring her little girl back. Tanya was in the Lord's care, and her mother believed she had entered His presences when, lying unconscious on the street, she sighed and turned her head. The mother testifies that she was filled with an inner strength that was foreign to her. She recalled that for several months previously Tanya had prayed, “Lord, I want to go and be with you while I'm young.” When her mother asked why she made that request, Tanya smiled and replied, “Because I want to sit on Jesus' lap when I get there and I don't want to be too big!” On remembering those words, the mother said “New assurance and peace surged through my sorrowful soul.”

We serve a Lord who is incredibly tender and loving to us all, but especially to little children...

And an AMAZINGLY HIGH percentage of Christ's chosen ones come to saving faith in Him very early in life...

In today's passage, we are going to see some of Christ's heart for little children

We are going to try to catch some of that heart for ourselves... to understand the preciousness of the first few years of a child's life, to learn how significant it is to learn to bring our little ones to Jesus day after day for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them

We are also going to understand the powerful attitude that had taken the hearts of His disciples captive that Jesus had to rebuke... the attitude that ADULTS DO IMPORTANT THINGS AND THERE'S NO TIME FOR LITTLE CHILDREN IN ALL OF THAT

We need to come to Jesus again and learn the value of little children, and see the preciousness of the brief time we have with them... to make the most of it

Finally, this sermon is to encourage parents of little children in their awesomely important responsibility to evangelize and disciple their children from the first moment of their relationship with them

And to encourage other church members who also play a vital role in shaping the lives of our little children by their ministry and example

I. Understanding This Encounter: Parents, Children, Disciples and Jesus

Matthew 19:13 Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

A. Understanding the Parents

1. Jewish parents, seeking to raise their children in the Laws of Moses
2. Cherishing their babies, desiring that they be blessed
3. Greek: Mark and Luke both used the imperfect tense; implies that this was a continual process... the parent "kept bringing their little children" to Jesus
 - a. By this time Jesus' reputation as a teacher who delighted in little children was well-known
4. Having heard about Christ's ministry... still short of understanding who He is
 - a. Talmud—Jewish instruction based on the Law of Moses

- b. Taught Jewish parents to bring their children to respected rabbis for prayer and blessing
 - c. Usually a Jewish father would bring his child to the rabbi at the synagogue
 - d. But there was a sense of greater blessing from a more prominent rabbi
 - e. Jesus' reputation as a prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, a man who had actually done miracles... and even more, who had a tender heart for children, was well-established
 - f. So the parents came from all around with little children...
5. Brought their little children for Jesus to place His hands on them and pray for them
 - a. They know the bitterness of life, the challenges they will face
 - b. They know how much God will have to protect them and bless them for them to be fruitful and prosperous in this sin-cursed world
 - c. They want all the help they can get for the growth of their children
 6. They probably didn't know truly who Jesus was... they probably didn't believe He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God... but the parents came anyway

B. Understanding the Children

1. the Greek word is *paidia*... referring to very young children, perhaps from infancy through the toddler age
2. Luke goes even further in making this clear

Luke 18:15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them.

The Greek word there is frequently translated "infants"

Even the most tiny human being, barely able to open its eyes and focus, is of infinite worth to Jesus

3. Jesus does not have a sentimental view of children... He knows that they are descended from Adam and thus have his sinful nature
 - a. Children do not have to be taught how to disobey
 - b. Children naturally have a tremendous bent toward self-focus, selfish interests
 - c. Children have a powerful sin nature

- d. Jesus knew that better than anyone... he can search hearts and minds
- 4. But he also understands that children have a natural desire to know God and learn about Him; a natural yieldedness to obeying Him, though they cannot see Him
- 5. Little children have a deep attraction to the invisible God

C. Understanding the Disciples

Matthew 19:13 Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

- 1. So what were the disciples thinking?
- 2. They REBUKED the parents who were bringing the children...
- 3. I wonder what words they used?
- 4. Perhaps they were frustrated that their time alone with Jesus was being interrupted
- 5. Perhaps the children were crying or making other annoying noises
- 6. in any case it seems the issue of "The teacher's time is TOO IMPORTANT to waste on little children" must have been in their minds
 - a. often times you see this with the inner circle of some great figure... a political leader, a military conqueror or great general, an important statesman, the CEO of a major corporation, a well-known singer or entertainer, a famous athlete
 - b. there is a coterie of body-guards and hangers-on in a mighty entourage around this great figure, and you can't approach them
 - c. the entourage put up their hands as a stop sign for the pressing multitude: this far and no farther
 - d. especially these "important people" these "great men" have no time for anyone who cannot further their agenda... they are "great men" meeting with other "great men" and they have no time for distractions
 - e. little children, they think, are a complete waste of time
 - f. sadly, they might not have time even for their own children: they try to avoid having children, and if they should have them, they minimize any time with them

Illus. I was reading about the family lives of royal families in Europe and I found it all very sad; for example, in the English Royal Household a hundred years ago, King George and Queen Mary spent less than 30 minutes a day with their children—the children were raised entirely by nannies, and would frequently cry or shrink back from their parents when they saw them; a recent story in a Dutch newspaper told a similar tale of woe about the Royal Family of the Netherlands. The central figure of the story was a nanny who cared for the little princess Luisa-Maria; she said that 10 days after the little baby girl was born, the royal family left on an official trip to the US, and that more or less from that point on, the baby was the nanny's to raise; so also for the other children born to the family. These little children also would cry when being held by the mother and would want to be back with the nanny. As they grew, the mother would promise a goodnight kiss, but would be distracted by important business for as much as an hour. The children would fight to stay awake for that goodnight kiss—the only encounter they'd had with their mother that day.

Anyway, so many people look on children as an unwelcome intrusion from the vastly important business of their lives

Perhaps the disciples felt the same way when they rebuked the parents for bringing the little ones: “Our Master is too busy saving the world to hug your children.”

Almost certainly, this response flowed from their own pride in their position as well

If Jesus doesn't check this response on their part, they will develop into the kinds of leaders of the church who can't be bothered with ANY “little person”, ANY insignificant person, ANY interruption at all

D. Understanding Jesus

1. Jesus' reactions are amazing... in Mark's gospel, it says he was angry at them

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant.

- a. The word means to be aroused in anger, to be vexed, annoyed, irritated
- b. It is part of the larger display of the emotional life of our Lord

BB Warfield: likened Jesus' response to that of a physical irritation, like a teething child or a rock in a shoe, as well as a mental irritation...

Jesus is mildly angry at his disciples blatant misunderstanding of His heart and His mission

2. One of the most amazing things about Christ: how INTERRUPTIBLE He was... yes, He had come to save the world, and yes, He had only a short time to do it... but He was NEVER RUSHED and He lingered over every encounter with people... even tiny newborns like here
3. Jesus CHERISHED little children, and was absolutely not annoyed with their interruption

4. Listen to His statement:

Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Let's pick it apart

II. "Let the Little Children Come"

A. The Natural Bent of a Child is GODWARD... More than at any other time in their lives

One commentator puts it with great tenderness:

As the flower in the garden stretches toward the light of the sun, so there is in the child a mysterious inclination toward the eternal light. Have you ever noticed this mysterious thing that, when you tell the smallest child about God, it never asks with strangeness and wonder, "What or who is God? I have never seen Him" – but listens with shining face to the words as though they were soft loving sounds from the land of home? Or when you teach a child to fold its little hands in prayer, it does this as though it were a matter of course, as though there were opening for it that world of which it had been dreaming with longing and anticipation. Or tell them, these little one, the stories of the Savior, show them the pictures with scenes and personages of the Bible [and] see how their pure eyes shine, how their little hearts beat. (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943], p. 743)

1. He wants them to COME to HIM
2. again, proximity to Christ is everything
3. He wants people to come close to Him for salvation
4. so Jesus frequently speaks of Coming to Him

B. Come to Me = For Eternal Life

Matthew 4:19 Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

John 5:40 you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

John 12:32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

C. Let The Little Children Come

1. Encourage their God-given desire to be near God
2. feed their spiritual appetites
3. Let them do what their heart WANTS to do... before the world, the flesh and the devil start to harden them and twist their desires
4. Let them come near to Christ for eternal life... to know Him and to love Him

D. Feed Their Spiritual Appetite and Yours

1. a little child yearns to come to Christ
2. they have an inbred longing for spiritual things
3. we must FEED that appetite... we can't feed it TOO MUCH

Parents frequently are concerned about excesses in their children

Too much sleep... too much food... too much crying... too much play... too much fluoride or salt or sugar in their diets... too much thumbsucking... too much TV... too much music... too much of ANYTHING is harmful

BUT when it comes to their taste for Christ, when it comes to that allurements they have within for Christ, there is NO SUCH THING AS TOO MUCH:

Jonathan Edwards, commenting on Song of Songs 5:1, ***"Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love..."***

"Persons need not and ought not set any bounds to their spiritual and gracious appetites." Rather they ought "to be endeavoring by all possible ways to inflame their desires and obtain more spiritual pleasures... Our hungerings and thirstings after God and Jesus Christ and after holiness can't be too great for the value of these things... [Therefore] endeavor to promote spiritual appetites by laying yourself in the way of allurements. There is no such thing as excess in our taking of this spiritual food."

So as parents of young children, we ought 1) be ravenously pursuing Christ ourselves, putting our love for Jesus on clear display in front of our children; 2) fanning their own love for Christ into a flame more and more. There is NO DANGER of too much of Christ... too much of "letting the little children come to me"

III. “Do Not Forbid Them”

A. Prohibition

1. clearly in context, Jesus is just telling His misguided disciples to stop doing what they’re doing, and allowing the parents to bring as many children as God willed
2. in a deeper sense, He doesn’t want the disciples playing the role of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:

Matthew 23:13 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

3. The word in the Greek can mean “forbid” but it can also mean “hinder”... to make it difficult for children to come to Christ

B. How We Prohibit Children from Coming to Jesus

1. First and foremost, we hinder children from coming to Christ by not telling them about Jesus!! No one can come to Christ apart from hearing about Christ from the Bible:

ESV Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- a. The biggest way a Christian parent can hinder a child coming to Christ is by not taking full advantage of their eagerness to hear Bible stories
 - b. They will sit for hours and listen to you talk about the Bible...
 - c. You will get tired of telling them before they will get tired of listening
 - d. Also at an early age they are very able to memorize Scripture... you hinder them coming to Christ by not studding their growing minds full of the word of the Lord
2. By stifling their enthusiasm for Christ
 - a. If you put their childish excitement down, you are hindering them
 - b. You should fan their affections into a flame
 - c. You should make much of the pictures they draw about Jesus, praise them abundantly when they memorize a Bible verse
 3. by quenching the Spirit

- a. the Spirit may be moving in them, urging them to love Jesus more
 - b. a parent or older person can quench the Spirit by refusing to take their spiritual hunger seriously
 - c. when they ask you spiritual questions, make the most of that time to tell them what they need to know
4. by exasperating them in discipline

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- 5. by being overly skeptical or negative toward their budding spirituality
- 6. by curtly cutting off their childish questions or worship or enthusiasm
 - a. during family devotions, by not allowing them to speak... or sighing when they bring up some childish issue... the older children can groan and say “Don’t let him speak... He’s too young... he never says anything worth listening to
 - b. that can crush a little child’s spirit

IV. “Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven”

A. The Kingdom of Heaven: the theme of the Gospel of Matthew

- 1. Mentioned often throughout Matthew’s Gospel
 - a. 32 times the exact phrase is used
 - b. four times “the Kingdom of God”
 - c. “the Kingdom” 4 times
 - d. once “your kingdom” in prayer
 - e. also uses expressions like “the Kingdom of My Father”
 - f. frequently introduces His parables with the phrase “The Kingdom of Heaven is like...”
 - g. central concept: that God is sovereign over all creation, actively ruling by His omnipotence and His perfect wisdom, according to His perfect plan; but the Kingdom of Heaven especially shines in the hearts of people who are converted through faith in Christ

h. the advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven then is an advancement of human salvation through the gospel

2. people must ENTER the Kingdom of Heaven through repentance and faith

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matthew 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 21:31 "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

B. poignantly here: OF SUCH IS the Kingdom of Heaven

1. that means the Kingdom of Heaven is made up of little infants in God's sight

a. first, then, infants themselves

John MacArthur: "It's not that small children are regenerate and then lose their salvation if they do not later receive Christ as Lord and Savior. It is rather that His atoning death is applied on their behalf if they die before they are able to choose on their own. It may be that infant mortality rate is so high in many countries where the gospel has not yet penetrated because the Lord is taking those little ones to Himself before they can grow up in a culture where it is so difficult to encounter the gospel and believe." [Commentary, 181]

b. second, those who are like infants

John Calvin: "The passage broadens to give kingdom citizenship to both children and those who are like them."

c. humble, lowly, faith-filled people enter the Kingdom of Heaven; arrogant people do not

2. already bumped against this concept recently in Matthew 18

Matthew 18:3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

a. The danger for the disciples is that they will be hardened through pride in misunderstanding the heart attitude God delights in for entering the Kingdom of Heaven

James 4:6 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

- b. If the disciples were to continue rejecting children and rebuking parents, their own grasp of the gospel itself would be seriously jeopardized
- 3. CEF President, Reese Kauffman
 - a. We spend so much of our efforts in evangelism of adults in getting them to that humble, childlike state necessary for them to call on the name of Jesus for salvation, but a child is already there
 - b. With adults, we have to cut through years of pride and sin and habits and hardness... children don't have any of that built up

V. Jesus Touches Them and Prays for Them

Matthew 19:15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

A. The Power of the Incarnation

- 1. Jesus frequently TOUCHED people, especially when healing them
- 2. so also he reaches out and touches these little babies
- 3. this is part of the reason why the Word Became Flesh... so that He might touch sinners and minister to them that way

B. Touch AND Blessing

Mark 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

- 1. Intrinsic in the touch was Jesus' desire to BLESS these children

Greek word is intensive, indicating a passionate fervency in blessing; Jesus must have smiled with a sweet tenderness as He looked into the face of those tiny children

- 2. blessing is an old Jewish ritual... patriarchs would extend their hands and touch children or grandchildren and speak powerful words of blessing over them, and those words would become prophecies that would guide their lives
 - a. so significant that Jacob was willing to lie to his blind father, Isaac, and swindle his elder brother Esau from his blessing
 - b. at the end of his life, Jacob roused himself from his death bed to speak a patriarchal blessing on Joseph's two sons in Egypt
- 3. how much more significant would it be to have Jesus bless your children??!!

C. Children Need Touch

1. tragic stories of orphans in Russia or China or Romania who never received any human touch

Human Touch Project: Eight years ago Charlotte resident Karmelle Chaise traveled to the former Soviet state on a humanitarian mission. While there she was appalled at the conditions she witnessed at state-run orphanages -- diaperless babies packed in sheetless cribs where the sun rarely shined. Children who were never held, touched or hugged.

Karmelle's efforts focused on educating Ukrainian child care workers about the physiological and emotional benefits of human touch... she started the "Human Touch Project"

Karmelle preaches how human touch can be worked into a daily regimen with little extra cost or time. Karmelle's most poignant moment came when she watched an otherwise healthy 4-year-old boy lay motionless in a metal crib, his hands bandaged to keep him from scratching himself from scabies. An overworked caregiver came in and tried to force-feed a bowl of gruel to the child as he lay on his back; most of which ended up on his face and neck.

"I just could not bear to watch her shoveling that mush into that poor child's little mouth," Karmelle said. "We later lifted him and he was rigid as a board, but in time curled up on our laps just like any child would."

AIDS babies:

"AIDS Babies Who Die Alone" ; pictures of rows of iron cribs, or cots. Each iron crib held one baby, all alone, and there was also a close-up photograph of a baby crying to be held. The wonderful caretakers in the article are 2 people...one couple, by themselves, are trying their best to care for 30 dying AIDS babies at once. The babies live in rows of metal cribs, or iron cots. Babies, caged in white iron bars, crying for the comfort of a human touch. The overwhelmed caregivers in the article did not ask for money. They simply requested the comfort of the human touch and a teddy bear, so the dying AIDS orphaned babies would have the company of a toy as they wait for death, all alone by themselves, in white metal cages.

These stories illustrate just how powerfully little children need to be touched and held and cherished and loved

[Note: there are controversies about the power of human touch with healing; some with a New Age bent believe that there is healing energy just in human touch... I don't want to digress here!!]

2. Jesus yearned to touch these little ones and minister His love to them in a way they could understand
3. these infants are pre-lingual and from an early stage their faith can be built up by touch and other physical things

Psalm 22:9 Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.

The word “you” is not in the Hebrew of Psalm 22

Basic idea: the ability to trust in general is developed long before the ability to trust God is possible; so a mother’s gentle touch for her nursing infant is PRE-EVANGELISM... teaching the child to trust before he or she even knows what trust is... a feeling of security that all needs will be met, that everything’s going to be alright in the future

Later, they get that same feeling from the Word of God but now focused on the invisible Christ

VI. Applications

So how do we put this command into practice now?

FBC has been richly blessed with a sweet abundance of children... especially infants born to our couples over the last many years

How can we obey Christ’s command here:

Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The greatest desire a Christian parent should have in life is this: the eternal salvation of all your children... therefore you should be CONSTANTLY bringing your children to Christ, to the gospel, to the eternal realities of judgment day, of heaven and hell, of Christ’s death on the cross, of His glorious resurrection from the dead, of their sinfulness and their need for repentance and faith

Jonathan Edwards was an excellent father in this regard... when his ten year old son Jonathan Jr, was serving on a mission station among Indians in upstate New York, his father Jonathan Edwards wrote him a letter. Amazingly, the day before the date of that letter, the elder Jonathan had fallen off his horse and the horse had rolled over him. But the godly father didn’t even mention that in his letter... instead he wrote to his little ten year old son of one thing: the urgency of being certain that his soul was in Christ through faith:

Edwards wrote to his boy that he was always thinking about the boy, but glad that he was always in God; the one thing the boy had always to remember was that he might die at any time; recently David, an Indian boy who’d been a playmate of little Jonathan’s had died; Edwards wrote: “This is a loud call of God to you to prepare for death; never give yourself any rest until you have good evidence you are converted and have become a new creature.”

So... in light of that urgency, here are ten quick exhortations to parents for the souls of their little ones:

A. Parental Responsibilities

1. Receive Your Children Thankfully

Children are a gift of God; on loan from Him; they are infinitely more HIS than they are OURS; therefore cherish them as the gifts they are, and don't be arrogant over them

2. Love Your Children Deeply

Let your heart frequently melt for your children; be willing to make the greatest sacrifices for them cheerfully; deeply yearn for the best for them, especially in eternity through the gospel

3. Understand Your Children—Positively and Negatively

- a. Positively: they are in the image of God and have immense potential
- b. Negatively: they are descended from Adam and have an inbred sin nature

4. Teach Your Children Constantly

- a. Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

- b. Even more: saturate them with the gospel of Christ (Romans 10:17)

5. Be Christ-Centered Daily

- a. Make Christ the central part of your conversation with your children
- b. Talk to them about Him in everything you do... “Jesus gave us this beautiful say! Isn't Jesus wonderful!!”

6. Discipline Your Children Wisely

- a. Proverbs speaks much of the “rod of reproof”... corporal punishment is an essential part of discipline
- b. However, do it wisely... with tenderness, with moderation, with justice, with love... and with no anger or pride or selfishness

7. Pray for Your Children Consistently

Charles Spurgeon, “Children Brought to Christ and Not to the Font”: How can we bring children to Jesus Christ to be blessed? We cannot do it in a corporeal sense, for Jesus is not here, “he is risen;” but we can bring our children in a true, real, and spiritual sense. We take them up in the arms of our *prayer*. I hope many of us, so soon as our children saw the light, if not before, presented them to God with this anxious prayer, that they might sooner die than live to disgrace their father's God. We only desired children that we might in them live over again another life of service to God; and when we looked

into their young faces, we never asked wealth for them, nor fame, nor anything else, but that they might be dear unto God, and that their names might be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We did then bring our children to Christ as far as we could do it, by presenting them before God, by earnest prayer on their behalf. And have we ceased to bring them to Christ? Nay, I hope we seldom bow the knee without praying for our children. Our daily cry is, "O, that they might live before thee!" God knows that nothing would give us more joy than to see evidence of their conversion; our souls would almost leap out of our bodies with joy, if we should but know that they were the children of the living God. Nor has this privilege been denied to us, for there are some here who can rejoice in a converted household. Truly we can say with the apostle John, "I have no greater joy than this, that my children walk in the truth." We continue, therefore, to bring them to Christ by daily, constant, earnest prayer on their behalf.

8. Model Christ for Your Children Faithfully

9. Involve Your Children in Church Early

10. Encourage Your Children Tenderly

B. A Word About Child Baptism

1. We Baptists are committed to the concept of believer baptism... that an individual must make a credible profession of faith in Christ before they can be baptized
2. Unlike most other Christian denominations, we do not baptize infants
3. But in the case of baptizing older children, we Baptists have a problem... at what age can a child make a credible profession of faith in Christ? And at what age should they testify to that in water baptism?
4. First of all, I believe a child can come to a genuine saving faith very early in age... but I also believe it is very difficult to determine if that has happened
5. I believe baptism should happen only once in life, if at all possible... too often Baptist kids get baptized at some young age after they have "prayed the sinner's prayer", then they come to a deeper knowledge of the gospel as teens and are baptized again
6. We do not believe that water baptism is required to go to heaven, and that genuine saving faith is what really matters
7. I would counsel parents of young children to wait on baptism until their confession can be tested

8. I would also counsel a wide measure of grace and love on that issue... too many have judged the motives of pastors and parents alike; the goal, parents, is not baptism, but salvation... and that is a constantly ongoing work
- C. A Word to and About Children's Workers here at FBC
1. to Children's workers
 - a. First, THANK YOU
 - b. Second, never underestimate the significance of your ministry
 - c. do not become discouraged at all about what you are doing
 2. God may be leading some of you to assist with children in some way... please do not despise this ministry... it is unspeakably precious!!!