

The Final Authority

(Why Evangelize Children?)

I. God's message is for everyone

- A. God _____ the disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).
- B. God's love extends to _____ individual in the world (John 3:16).
- C. The promise of salvation was not given with age limits.

John 3:16—" . . . **whosoever** believeth . . . "

John 1:12—" . . . **as many as** received him . . . "

Romans 10:13—" . . . **whosoever** shall call . . . "

II. Children are lost

- A. Children have a _____ nature.

Romans 3:23—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 5:12—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Psalms 51:5—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

- B. Children need to be made aware of their condition before God.

The Bible commands us to evangelize EVERYBODY (Mark 16:15). This means we are required to evangelize all children in a thorough, biblical way—and leave the question of regeneration in the hands of God.

Illustration

David Livingstone, the famous Scottish missionary and explorer, said, "Our business is to teach children about sin and the Savior, without even a hint about a certain age to accept Christ. The Holy Spirit will, in due time, convict them of sin. When he convicts of sin, whatever the age, who are we to dare to interfere with His work? It is at this, of all times, that we show our sympathetic interest. Any child is old enough to accept Christ when he realizes that his sin is against God and that because of that sin, he is lost without Christ."

III. Scripture commands us

Teachings of Christ in Matthew 18:1-14

1. The age which children should be evangelized is often debated.
 - Christ begins this section speaking of a little child (v. 2)—Little child = paidiόν (**παιδίον**).
 - Mark 9:36 shows the child was very little—“He took him in his arms.”
2. Adults are required to enter the kingdom as little children, depending humbly on God (vv. 3-4)—Little children, little children = paidiόν (**παιδίον**).
 - Adults must return to childhood attitudes, not actions.
 - Children live in a natural environment of dependence.
3. The Lord Jesus placed great value on a little child (v. 5)—Little child = paidiόν (**παιδίον**).
 - Jesus settled forever the question as to whether little children can believe and be saved (v. 6)—Little ones = mikros (**μικρός**).
 - Said “. . . little ones which believe in me . . . ”
 - Christ affirmed this was saving faith; “believe in me” the same words used in John 3:16; Acts 16:31.
 - Warns us not to offend believing children.
4. Christ gives a second warning about regarding children lightly (v. 10)—Little ones = mikros (**μικρός**).
5. Christ taught the importance of one child (v. 12).
 - Rejoicing over each one saved (v. 13).
 - Not His will that one should perish (v. 14)—Little ones = mikros (**μικρός**).

IV. Children are under attack

Children today are attacked on every side by the world’s influence.

V. Children can be born again

Some people are skeptical and find it difficult to believe in the reality of child conversion. However, there is **no** verse in the whole Bible which says that a child cannot come into a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

A. Children are more ready to receive the Savior.

1. Children have open, ready hearts.
2. Children are naturally humble, teachable, trusting.
3. Tomorrow, young impressionable hearts may be hardened to the things of the Lord and His Word.

Illustration

In a sermon by Charles Spurgeon, he states, "A child of five, if properly instructed, can as truly believe and be regenerated as an adult. My conviction is that our converts from among children are among the best that we have. I should judge them to have been more numerous, genuine than any other class, more constant, and in the long run, more solid."

B. Children are more likely to have many years to serve the Lord.

Many preachers and evangelists were saved as children.

Illustration

Stephen Olford has written, "I believe in child evangelism for three reasons: First, because I was born again when I was only seven; second, because the history of general evangelism shows that by far the greatest proportion of conversions take place before age 20; third, because the Bible makes it plain that youth is the time to turn to God (Eccl. 12:1)¹."

Many notable Christians were saved as children.

Illustration

"Henrietta Mears, Mrs. Ruth Graham, Corrie ten Boom, and evangelist Leighton Ford all received Christ at age 5. If all the facts were revealed we would probably be astounded at the number of prominent Christians who were saved as children."²

Remember, the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts the child of sin and causes him to be ready to accept Christ as Savior (John 16:8).

C. Children are dependent upon us to show them the way.

VI. Children are the future of our nation

A. God warns that if children are not taught, future generations will cease to follow His Word.

See the example in Judges 2:10-11.

Study carefully Psalm 78:1-8.

Illustration

Billy Sunday, a renowned evangelist said, "The only way on God's earth you will solve the problem of reaching the masses is by getting hold of the children."

B. If you win a child for Christ, you have saved an entire life. If you win an adult, you may have only saved a soul.

C. Now is the time to reach the children (2 Cor. 6:2).

Teaching Aids Which Emphasize the Need to Evangelize Children

1. *Children's Ministry Resource Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)
 - Full-page articles
 - "Reaching Children in the Neighborhood" (page 1468)
 - "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Evangelism" (page 1508)
 - "God's Word Teaches Children to Evangelize" (page 1140)
2. Children's Ministries Institute® cefcmi.com
 - Training opportunities

Children's Ministries Institute is a registered trademark of Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.

¹Stephen F. Olford, *Christian and You*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Co., 1958) . Used by permission.

²William Benke and Milt Bryan, "The World's Most Fruitful Field," *Evangelizing Today's Child*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (November 1975): p. 44. Used by permission.