

Bring lost children to Jesus! Pentecost 16 September 24, 2017 (Children's Talk: globe of the world)
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God's grace and peace for the world belong to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

God's Word to remind us of how many people Christ wants to bless is written in Mark 10:13-16

These are Your words for us, heavenly Father. Use Your Word to reach the lost. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear Christians, seeking the lost,

If we hear on the news of an amber alert, we know that a child is missing and we are to watch for a lost or stolen child. Sometimes on the news we hear of a child lost in a forest. Search parties are formed to find the lost child before he or she gets into serious trouble. Young children seem so vulnerable in life. Some are exploited while others become orphans especially in other countries like India. But there are worse situations for millions of children, and not just little ones. God created all people to be His children. But, too many are living without Him or even as His enemies without Jesus. But, God doesn't want anyone to be lost. Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to Me!*" It should be our prayer that God help us to:

Bring lost children to Jesus!

First, Jesus wants us to care about lost people. But, that doesn't always happen. We read in v. 13, "*People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them (for blessing), but the disciples rebuked them.*" Some adults showed love for children by wanting Jesus to bless them. Why would the disciples stop them? They may have thought that Jesus was too tired or too busy or that the children weren't important. But, they were wrong! This is one of the times that mentions Jesus getting angry.

Why was He so angry? Jesus loved these children as He loves all people. He knew that they needed Him even as children. Psalm 51:5 states, "*I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*" Paul wrote, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" (*Romans 3:23*) Jesus had said, "*Flesh gives birth to flesh.*" (*John 3:6*) Children are sinful and need Christ's help as much as anyone!

People feel terrible when hearing news of a child getting lost. They pray that he or she will be found. Our concern is greater for anyone spiritually lost. To the world, evil people might seem beyond help. But, Jesus sees them as spiritually lost children. How did the disciples feel after hearing from Jesus that they were standing in the way of Jesus helping people? We don't want to delay spiritual help getting to others. We can pray for and support Gospel outreach near and far.

A few years ago some of you may remember a boy in India named Shalem. He had a kidney disease and would die without a transplant. Local Hindu officials offered money to get an operation until they found out he was Christian. Appeals were quickly sent out to our churches and enough money was raised so he had the surgery. He is alive and well today and plans to be a Lutheran pastor. Through our support, only God knows how many more people will be learn of Christ through him!

It is difficult for us as a congregation to balance priorities between our own needs for members and outreach. Both are needed. Jesus said, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*" (*Matthew 9:37-38*) So, we are constantly instructing people to prepare more of us to be workers in the field, and we need to pray to see the field of harvest near us. After the disciples prayed, Jesus sent them out to do mission work. Yesterday, our mission speaker talked about his work in Japan. There are only 1,000's of believers among millions of people. He made it a point whenever he met people to say, "I'm here because God gave me a treasure and I want to share it with the people of Japan. Jesus is that treasure to gives eternal life! We need grow in our knowledge of God so that we can help the lost and to let them know that Christ is the only way to true happiness. Only God knows the length of a person's life. Let us share the news of Christ now so the lost can come to Jesus!"

No matter how old we are, we spiritually need our heavenly Father. We don't want to be misled by the devil and we don't want others lost either. We need God's Word to help others in spiritual danger. Our country has serious problems: a lack of morals with children so often in harm's way and many leaders who call evil "good." We need to daily pray to God. Pray that God's will to be done for the lost! Jesus told us to go into the world with the Good News. The world begins among our own family and friends.

Second, Jesus has enough blessing for all! He said, "*Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.* (v.14) How happy the parents must have been when Jesus welcomed the children! '*He took them in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.*' (v.16) We have personally been blessed by Jesus. We were baptized into Christ and received forgiveness and life. We have grown in faith by being taught God's Word at home, at school and church. Now we have the opportunity to bring those same blessings in Christ to others.

Jesus blesses us to support mission work. There is a door offering for special mission projects that the women of the ELS are doing. They are supporting over 300 children in 20 orphanages in India. Those children have been baptized. They are hearing about Christ from pastors and teachers. Normally because of the strong Hindu influence, the Indian government would not allow Christians to do this work. But, there are too many children for them to care for them all and the government doesn't think children are important. Also, in Chile we offer English classes. People learn English by reading the Bible! And, through our support, we have a growing number of Christians in the jungles of Peru with schools to train the children to turn away from witch doctors and their evil to Christ. We are supporting work in South Korea. They are sponsoring over 70 Korean teens to come to America and attend Lutheran high schools. What a blessing! This same church now has a seminary to train men to go to China where Koreans live. In a former atheistic country, the Czech Republic, pastors find it difficult to work with adults, but we have a school reaching 300 students! Some children are leading their parents to Jesus so they receive Christ's blessing!

Jesus said about the children, "*I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.*" Even adults need the faith of a child. What kind of faith is that? They have a humble trust that accepts the promises in Christ as pure truth. God's Word says: "*He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.*" (Mark 16:16) "*God ... gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16). Are Jesus' blessings still valid? Yes! He blessed the children with His hands. Later He allowed His hands to be bound and then nailed to a cross. There in death He offered forgiveness and life for all. God raised Jesus' body as proof that He was fully satisfied by Jesus' completed work. In Christ we say with a child-like faith: Jesus has rescued us! We will live forever with Him! We pray to Him trusting that "*nothing is impossible for God.*" (Luke 1:37) This good news that we receive by faith is the same news for all people near or far to hear!

In life, when a missing child is found safe, the news quickly spreads! How much more heaven rejoices, when the Holy Spirit works through the words about Jesus and our offerings to help bring lost children and adults to Jesus! We thank God for His blessings of grace to us who once were lost but now are found in Jesus! May Christ's love keep us looking and praying to bring more lost people to Him! Amen.