

## Chat with the Children

- Take various "volunteers", get them to stand at the front:
  - what do people see?
  - aiming at more than just clothes, to characteristics associated with age, gender, background...
- Jesus took a child and had the child stand amongst the disciples...

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## Introduction

- *Jesus: sent fed asked changed healed...*
- He's showing something of himself to the disciples:
  - that they might know who he is
  - and that knowing, they might follow him
  - and follow his example...
- **WDJD?** So "what will we do?"

## A Child (v.46-48)

- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Disciples aspired to greatness:
  - perhaps overtones of revolutionary movement, who'll run the XXX when we are in power?
- What are the associations we have for little children?
  - hugely high value - education, Dunblane, CRBS, Brandon Muir, etc!
  - it seems so obviously the way things **should** be, we can't imagine anyone thinking differently!
- But it has not always been so (isn't so in other parts of the world today)
  - eg, child workers in Victorian Britain;
- **More specifically, in Jesus' day children were very much looked down on, denigrated, thought of as nothing.**
  - how a decision affected a child was never a consideration;
  - they were not thought to be able to be part of God's Kingdom until the age of 12
    - that's why the Bar Mitzvah is to this day a very important stage in a Jewish boy's life!
  - they were **weak, powerless, voiceless;**
  - **probably not helped by high infant mortality rates - not worth caring much for a child if they only had a 50/50 chance of survival?**
- This is the context into which Jesus comes to speak and to act as he did in this passage.
- **"How do you welcome me?", he asks**
  - by welcoming those like a child - the weak, the powerless, the insignificant, the frail...
  - not the cute, those with a future...
- You want to be great in God's kingdom? Go for service! Go for welcoming the weak and helpless and powerless
- **Jesus' showed the disciples what it means to aspire to greatness**

## A Friend? (v.49-50)

- Next little incident is about who gets to do ministry:
  - disciples have been sent out to cast out demons
  - though as we saw last week, not always successfully!!
  - but they felt their turf was being invaded by someone else coming in on the act -

in Jesus' name - but not one of the disciples

- Jesus' challenge is to their attitude:
  - do you have all the truth, all the ministry?
  - do we sometimes go so far as to act as if God could only act through us, our church?
- No way!
  - and our attitude should reflect that
  - that's why it was so good to have LifeGate with us for a while, using the building, rubbing up against us...
- Jesus' showed the disciples what it means to accept other Christians

## A Village (v.51-55)

- Finally, what happens when rubbing up against direct opposition:
- Jesus held back judging, trusted in God's sovereignty, and knew that God would not be thwarted...
- Jesus' showed the disciples what it means to hold back judgement on others actions

## Conclusion

- How do we cope with others around us:
  - who we are "better" than?
  - who say they are Christians but do stuff we wouldn't do?
  - who seem to reject God's ways?
- *By following Jesus' example!*