

## **Reaching Children With The Gospel Of Christ**

### **1 Samuel 2-3**

#### **Introduction:**

1. We have something in this church that is absolutely priceless. It is of more value than those padded pews, chandeliers, or the woodwork of this beautiful building. In fact, it is so valuable you cannot put a price on it. No matter how bad a shape we were in financially, we'd never give this up.
2. What am I talking about? I am talking about the children of this church. What a precious commodity they indeed are.
3. If you asked me, "What is the future of this church? What are its future plans, dreams, and aspirations?" I wouldn't take you to our bank statements or blueprints somewhere. I would walk you to our children's classes, point inside and say, "There's our future."
4. Sometimes I think we fail to realize how important the children and youth are in this church. We grossly underestimate their importance. They are the hope for the future growth and vitality of this church.
5. A person may say, "But they're just a bunch of kids." That is what they said about David. "*Thou art but a youth.*" But before the chapter was over, that **youth** had done what no **man** could do. Here in our text is another example.
6. Samuel was one of the greatest men of God in the Bible. When did it all start? It was when he was a child that God began working in his life (2:18). He was assisting Eli, the high priest, in the tabernacle.
7. If CrossRoads is to continue for years to come, continue to impact this world, and continue to be spiritually healthy, we must reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
8. Let's look in our text and see three powerful reasons why.

#### **First, because children can be greatly used by God – 2:18, 3:15**

1. As a child, Samuel began serving the Lord in the tabernacle. He was Eli the priest's right-hand man, though he was only a child.
2. Did you know children and teens make wonderful workers for God? Have you ever noticed how children love to help?
3. God has put it into children to love to help and serve. Children make great workers because nothing is beneath them (when they're young). cf. 3:15
  - Samuel's job was to open the doors. He didn't care; he was happy to do it.
4. Dealing with adults can be a little more difficult. "What's in it for me? How much recognition will I get? Will I enjoy it?" But kids just want to help!
5. Children also make great workers for God because they tend to be much more honest than adults. 3:16-18
6. Children are very transparent, open, and honest. There are no phony facades; you don't have to wonder what they are thinking. Don't say or do anything around kids that you don't want repeated. Children are just sincere, honest, love to help, and will do anything you ask them to do.

7. But kids have to be raised up and taught how to serve God. Samuel was raised up around God's house and grew up serving God. This is one of the greatest things you can do for your kids – teach them to serve God.
8. On the other hand, Eli's own sons obviously were not taught how to serve God (2:12). They lied, stole from people, exploited women, and worshiped false gods. They ended up losing their lives at an early age because of this.
9. This thing of reaching children with the gospel is a matter of life and death.

### **Second, because children are very special to God – 2:26**

1. Samuel was in favor both with the Lord and also with men. Obviously, God didn't overlook this child or deem him unimportant. He was dear to the heart of God.
2. Turn to Mark 10:13-16. Do you see how close children are to the heart of Jesus? Jesus is right in the middle of a deep, doctrinal dissertation on marriage and divorce, and He's interrupted by these young children.
3. The disciples rebuked them. "Get out of here. Can't you see Jesus is busy? He doesn't have time for a bunch of kids." Verse 14 says that Jesus was "*much displeased*." This means He was moved with indignation. He was flat out angry, and Matthew says He "*rebuked the disciples*." Then He picked the children up and blessed them.
4. You've heard the expression, "Any friend of yours is a friend of mine." Two different times Jesus basically says, "If you are a friend of little children, you are a friend of mine."
5. We must reach children with the gospel of Christ. Why? Because children are very special to God.

### **Third, because children are more apt to listen to God – 3:1-10**

1. Isn't this precious? Samuel was so tenderhearted. When God called, he said, "*Here am I*." Then, after Eli explained that it was God calling, he said, "*Speak, for thy servant heareth*." Samuel as a child was ready to listen and do whatever God said. Compare this to Jonah, a full-grown man. God called him, and he argued and ran the other way.
2. Children, for the most part, are so much more tender towards God. They haven't had years of being hardened by sin. They don't have all the old prejudices to overcome like adults do. You tell them the story of Jesus and salvation, and they don't argue with you or want to hold on to their sin. They simply believe by faith the gospel message.
3. Remember, Jesus didn't say that children must become like adults to be converted. He said that adults must become as the little child if they want to be saved. Children are our example in how to be saved.
4. Every year that goes by, and a child is not reached, it becomes harder. They experience more sin, and the more they practice sin, the stronger the power of sin becomes in their lives. They become harder and harder.
5. We must reach them when they are tender, like Samuel here in our text. God wants us to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**In Conclusion:**

1. God has called us to reach children with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why is this?
  - First, because children can be greatly used by God
  - Second, because children are very special to God
  - Third, because children are more apt to listen to God
2. How about you? What are you doing to help reach children with the gospel? How can you help? Pray, train your own children and grandchildren, serve in one of our children's ministries.
3. You couldn't do anything nearer and dearer to the heart of God!