

I had a pastoral meeting this week, and I know, every June, when we get together, I know exactly what the topic is going to be because it's the only time of the year we talk about it. Kids, kids in the churches. We don't talk about it around Christmas because everybody already has their pageants in place. We don't talk about it around graduation because graduates aren't kids anymore. We don't talk about them at confirmation. We don't talk about them at the beginning of the school year. We only talk about kids in June, because no matter what nobody likes, their VBS, And so they're always going off of everybody else trying to get ideas. Because whatever they do doesn't work.

And this year, we're talking, and I shared a story about last week. Last week after church, I got to spend time with the Sunday school kids. We went to the youth room, and we watched the Chosen Adventures. If you haven't seen those, they are like seven minutes. They're just a little snippet of the Bible put in a term that the kids can see, so it's like told from a child's perspective. And I was grateful because I don't get to do that. I don't get to spend Sunday school with them, because obviously they're there now. So, I'm telling this to the other pastors, and they kind of blow it off. One pastor's like, well, we don't have any kids, so this doesn't relate to me. And another pastor said, well, we make sure and have Sunday school before service. So the kids are gone by the time service starts.

Now, think about that for a second. They intentionally have their service before, so that the kids are gone. Not so the kids can participate in the service, but so the kids will be out of the building by that point. And so I asked him why. And he said, "Why what?" Like, why are you so proud of the fact that you don't have kids in your service? You didn't say that you do it so you can include them. You did it so that you can intentionally exclude them. What do you think is going to happen to your church when those kids grow up and become adults? Are they going to remember that you honored them with waking up early on Sunday morning, especially during the summer? You gave them the privilege to go and not see any adults. You gave them an opportunity to hear God's word in the way you want them to hear it without their family.

And he was really surprised. He was surprised that I said it that way. Because he said, well, no. Our intention is so that the kids will be there with us. I said, okay, so this is great. You want to include the kids, even though you just said you do it so that they're not there.

Why? Why is that important? It made me think about today's reading. And I know it's kind of funny because they're not here. But they just left. But it made me specifically think about today's reading, because what else are we missing?

The kids are being brought into seeing Jesus. They're being brought to be a part of his love. Their being brought in so that they can feel the warmth of what it means to be part of the fellowship. And the disciples are telling them no, no, no, go go. We want it quiet. We want to focus. We want to do these things. We forget. And Jesus tells him no. We need to be like children. We want them to be quiet so we can focus, right? So we can hear God's word the way adults are meant to hear God's word. But try hearing it from them. Try hearing how they hear us talk about God.

That was a great thing I saw last week because The Chosen Adventures has a talking pigeon and a talking sheep. But the people can't hear it. It's only the sheep and the pigeon that can hear it. And the thing that all the kids love doing right now is they always ask, is this real? That's the first question. Anytime a Bible story comes up anytime, we're talking about a movie or anything. It's always, "Is this real?" That's what they want to know. And Ella looks right at me.

She's like pigeons do not talk. This is not real. I'm like, do they not talk, or can we not hear them? That's a big question.

Kids express themselves in so many ways that we can't hear because we have forgotten. Their love of God is stronger than so many of our own, but we don't hear it because they express it differently. Even as adults we express how we feel about God in different ways that others might not hear as well. When the rich man comes up and says that he's done all these things, right? He's done the Ten Commands. He knows them by heart. He knows what he's supposed to do, and he does them. And Jesus tells him, then do this. He doesn't want to. He doesn't want to give up his Earthly needs. He doesn't want to be that person. He likes the idea of the person that he can become, but he's not willing to do that last a little bit. It's like with that Pastor. I said, you love the idea of having children in your church, but you're not willing to have the children in your church.

Where else do we do those things? One of the most popular phrases that I have heard, and I don't hear it here as much anymore. But everywhere else, I always hear well, that's just how we've always done it. Right? That is such a church phrase. It's just how we've always done it. We said it last week in the board meeting. Why?

Children are great because they don't know that phrase. They don't hear that's just how we've always done it. They know we're not supposed to do that. And they like going to the well, that's how we've always done a part. So, what can we do? What can we do that we're not supposed to do? We love each other. We love sharing God's word. How can we do both of those things in a way that we haven't done them before? How can we be like the children and find new creative ways to express ourselves. That we can share it with others? That's our goal, right? We all want to be in heaven. We all want to be there together, and we worry about the people who aren't here with us right now. We worry about the people that don't have a church. We worry about the people that we're not sure have found God yet. And what we've always done is the same thing we always do. We let them be because that's just how we've always done it. It's easy. We can pray for them, and they don't know. We can sit here and wonder, what would it be like if we had these people here with us now? So, how do we get them? We need to stop being adults. We need to stop living in that's how we've always done it, and be like the kids. And be the part of. Let's try; Let's find new ways. Let's embrace what it means to be. Kids.

Let us pray.