



## Receive the Kingdom of God as a Child

*Mark 10:2-16*

*Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.*

*October 4, 2015*

## Thought for the Week

**Scriptures: Genesis 2: 18-24 • Hebrews 2: 9-11 • Mark 10: 2-16**

Somewhere deep down in a cardboard box of family memorabilia there lies many photos of my mother and father taken long ago day. My mother is always smiling; my father is smiling but is usually slightly uncomfortable in a suit and high-collared shirt. They are never laughing, but I am sure that many of these moments must have been filled with indescribable joy. This is especially true because I knew several of their friends and also knew that they usually had a great time when they socialized together. My father could always get people smiling whenever he wanted. He always liked to tell interesting and funny stories.

Of course, there are also a variety of many photos in that box: my father working at the Phone Company on the telephone equipment, always in a white shirt and tie, befitting a hard working young “switchman”. There are also several photos of my mother in housedress and apron working at some task in the kitchen or dressed in jeans playing baseball or other sports. She was very good in sports.

I am sure they must often have thought about those days when the photos were taken and the great hopes they had then about their future life together. Little did it occur to them then that this marriage of theirs would often put them to the test: two children, born during World War II when nobody knew “what the world was coming to”. There were also, no doubt, countless occasions when illnesses sent them to Doctor Harry Pierce to heal childhood accidents. Nonetheless, I suspect that the days the photos were taken still remained for them special moments they would not forget even though the intervening years were often stressful and challenging.

I have no doubt that my mother and father enjoyed a good marriage and loved their children despite the burdens the times imposed on them.

As I reflect on those photos of my mother and father today, it occurs to me that it must have taken much courage and persistence to stick together throughout all the struggles and challenges they faced throughout their lives. I am quite sure that the issue of divorce or separation were never a serious possibility in their minds; life together, despite its moments of stress was simply too precious to abandon.

These thoughts came to mind as I reflected on the scriptures that speak to us of the “marriage” of Adam and Eve made in paradise and the biblical decree in the Torah forbidding divorce. The “marriage” of Adam and Eve is presented to us in the context of endless joy, free of earthly encounters. Yet, as we read further in Genesis we learn of the first fratricide: Cain kills Abel in a squabble over flocks and fields. From earliest times in human history, therefore, family life appears to be a war of special interests.

Following upon that story we are told of the biblical forbiddance of the bonding of man and wife by divorce. Marriage must be considered a relationship so sacred that it can be erased only by death.

When we lay these two stories side-by-side we are also faced with the fact that despite best promises and intentions, marriage and family life in any era of history face great human conflicts. Human relationships are tenuous at best: man and woman struggle to find a common ground of love and devotion and yet we all know how often such relationships tend to fail; life and law often seem to be at odds with one another.

Even in our own times the Community of Christ is making earnest efforts to face the problems of married life and finding that there are no easy answers. Our General Church Ministers are much concerned about the difficulties married couples face today. They are frequently searching for the means to discern ways to make married life the sacred experience it is meant to be. There will be no simple solutions: law and life often seem to be at odds and seek different sorts of answers to deep questions.

I am sure that my mother and father faced the same life-issues men and women face today. It must have seemed to them, however, that this life together was worth pursuing as long as God gave them the divine grace of commitment. The fact that I am here today, a son of theirs, writing all this reminds me to be thankful that their commitment was not taken lightly.

## Prayer for Peace - Armenia

Gracious God, we praise you for gifts too vast to number. We give thanks for your abundant love, which you extend freely for the sake of all your beloved creation.

We confess our sins of selfishness and pride, which have kept us from being peacemakers. Forgive us we pray, and awaken your spirit of mercy and goodness within us.

God of justice and peace, we pray for the people of Georgia and their leaders. Sustain

them in their struggle for peace, justice and democracy. Inspire the political leaders of all nations, to find just and peaceful ways to resolve conflicts within and between nations.

Help us find strength in forgiveness, as we are forgiven, and oneness in loving as you love. May our lives reflect your desire for all creation to be at peace.

Ever-present God of love, teach us of your peace. Amen.

## Stewardship Thought

*“So out of the ground the Lord God formed every  
beast of the field and every bird of the air, and  
brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature,  
that was its name.” (Genesis 2:19)*

The creation story reminds us of two important points.

First, since the start, God has put the entire world into our care.

Second, stewardship has been around since the beginning of mankind, it isn't something recently invented by the Church.

Just as past generations built our Church,  
it is now our responsibility to continue to nurture  
and develop these gifts for future generations.