

Always Bring a Bottle of Jesus

Carry His Blessing | Follow His Stream | Drink His Forgiveness

Pastor Matthew Ude | August 30, 2026

Matthew 19:13-15 ¹³ Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." ¹⁵ And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

Aaron and I, in our younger years, were camping in the Rocky Mountains National Park. We got up early to go hiking hoping to see more animals. It was cool and cloudy. We had just drunk a bunch of water, and we weren't planning to go far. We didn't think about bringing a water bottle with us. We started hiking and always wanted to go a little farther. Before we knew it the sun was out of the clouds, the day was hot and we were five hours from our car and without water.

Jesus reminds us that he is the water of life. Just as we ought to never go hiking without water, so too we should never go through our day without a bottle of Jesus.

We need Christ. We need him for ourselves. We need him for our kids.

Carry His Blessing

We need to start by drinking His blessing

How foolish of the disciples to rebuke and/or forbid the parents to bring the children, as if any parent, pastor, or teacher can accomplish anything unless they start with Jesus' blessing.

It is for this very reason that Christ said:

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

First, he says baptize. That is first we bring them to Christ in baptism that he may bless them and fill them with his gifts. Only after Christ has blessed them will we be able to teach them all that he has commanded. Only after receiving his blessing are they able to grow in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.

Solomon teaches us:

Psalms 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

To teach, to labor, to parent without Christ's blessing is useless. First, we seek Christ's blessing then we are able to teach.

The high priest Ezra was not afraid to return from the land of Babylon to the Land of Israel. And when Artaxerxes, the great king of Persia offered to send troops to make sure that Ezra made it safely to Jerusalem, Ezra politely refused the offered saying,

Ezra 8:22 The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him

It was not sinful. It was not wrong for Ezra to accept the troops, but in faith he used the opportunity to witness. And indeed, the Lord did bring him safely to Jerusalem and the Lord was with Ezra to rebuild the temple and the nation.

The point is that the choices aren't always right or wrong, but whatever choice we make if we start with God's blessing we can go forth with confidence. We have the same promise from Christ

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

We need Christ's blessings on us and our children. We need to start with his blessing. We need to carry it with us wherever we go.

Follow His Stream

We Need to follow Christ

In the book the Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon, Trisha gets lost in the woods. She decides to follow a stream assuming it must eventually lead her out of the woods. But as the stream gets harder to follow, she gives up. What she doesn't know is that if she had kept with it just a bit longer it would have led her to a town.

Jesus is the stream that will lead us to safety. How often do we give up when it gets tough to follow him.

It is easy to get lost in life. So many choices and no sure way to know which way they will lead. Life is difficult and doubly so when you are a parent or a teacher. There are few tasks that are so difficult and so fraught with danger and regret as being a parent or a teacher.

If I had only . . . Would my child be better if I had . . . Am I failing as a parent . . .

So many ifs, so many regrets, so many unknowns. We often feel so inadequate for the task.

With all the difficult decisions in life there is one decision these parents in our text made that they will never regret. They brought their little ones to Christ. In all the uncertainties and confusion and doubts and regrets of life, the one thing that is sure and certain, the one thing we will never regret is bringing our kids to Christ.

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

We may not always know which way is the right way or the best way. But we have the promise from God that he will keep us from heading down a path of our own destruction.

We remember the prophet Balaam. God sent him three visions telling him not to go the way he wanted to go. Then when he went anyway God sent an angel who stood in his path and would not let him continue.

God doesn't simply put up warning signs saying, "stop" he often gets in our way with a flaming sword, saying, "I will not let you proceed down this path."

We have his promise that his angel will surround us and keep us from the wrong path.

Following Christ is the only thing that will keep us safe. It is his promises that lead us through the woods.

We Need Christ to Forgive us

We need to regularly drink the refreshing water of Christ's forgiveness.

How sad is it that the Apostles, the very ones who were supposed to be bringing people to Christ, are the ones forbidding and stopping people from coming to Christ. They should have been out in the villages gathering the children to Christ. Instead, they are preventing them.

Why would they do this? Because they thought they knew better. Yet Christ forgives and fixes their failures. This is what it means to walk in the baptism of Christ. It means we walk in his forgiveness and in his blessings.

Even though we are all lost in the woods together we often act exactly like these apostles. Telling, denying, denouncing others, other parents, other teachers, because we like the apostles are so certain that we know what is best.

There was a famous doctor who spent most of his career before germs and sterilization were understood. When he was older and someone told him the theory of germs, he confidently proclaimed that such a thing was impossible.

"How can you be so sure," someone inquired.

"Because I would rather believe this theory impossible than to believe I have been endangering my patients all my life."

So often we attack others simply because it's easier than admitting that we might be wrong. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, blaming others is our favorite game. I didn't do anything wrong, it's his/her fault. Instead of turning on one another we need to turn to Christ.

Having received the blessing of Christ in baptism, we know that we walk in His forgiveness and his love. Even though we might mess up as parents and teachers, yet we still have his forgiveness and his love. We even have the confidence that he can fix what we mess up. We don't need to live in fear of being wrong when we live in Christ.

We need Christ. We need Christ to forgive and fix the mistakes we make as parents and teachers. We need Christ to lead us and keep us from all harm and danger. But above all we need Christ to bless us and our children, therefore we pray:

“O Christ we bring our children to you this day, that your blessing may live with them always. Keep them by your grace and forgive our many failings.” Amen