

The Greatest Mission Field in All the World

By Matthew Black, Pastor

Text: Psalm 34:11

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Series: Children

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Introduction: Open your Bibles to **Psalm 34:11**. Many people volunteer for God's work only to turn back. It is important to finish whatever God calls us to. If God calls us to start something, he calls us to bring it to completion.

The world's greatest mission field is not the Muslim lands of the middle east, nor is it the highlands of Papua New Guinea, or the jungles of South America. The greatest mission field, in fact, is much closer than you think. The greatest mission field today is the hearts of our children.

How many of you was not at one time a child? We were all children once. All kings and ambassadors and presidents were once children. So were all terrorists and murderers. We still believe that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes!

I once met a man whose father was a witchdoctor. When he was a boy he was to follow in his father's footsteps and be a witchdoctor in the country of Haiti. Instead, when the man was just a teenage young man, he was reached by a missionary with the Gospel. Today Lucian Saul is training pastors to reach children and families for Christ in Haiti. He could have been a witchdoctor, but he is now a pastor. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, even for the son of a witchdoctor!

Lucian says the most important ministry of a church is it's outreach to children. He said, "I'd rather build children than repair men." May we all have that heart!

My text is **Psalm 34:11**, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

[Prayer for Guidance]

My first point is this:

- I. The Bible assumes that we are to be **Reaching** children. David says, "**Come, ye children, hearken unto me**". We are to bid children to come! Jesus said in **Mark 10:14**, "**Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God**" David teaches us that we ought to invest in children.
 - A. We need to invest in children because they are already in the **devil's** hands. We know as **Ephesians 2:2-3** says, "**in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh**

and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others".
Children do not need to learn how to be selfish or to lie. They know that by nature.

- B. Secondly, we need to invest in children because the **world** is aggressively trying to reach our children, and if you don't they will!

Who do you think made the following statement?

"I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers that correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and new...Christianity...and the new faith of humanism... It will undoubtedly be a long, arduous, painful struggle replete with much sorrow and many tears, but humanism will emerge triumphant. It must if the family of humankind is to survive."¹

John Dunphy said it in 1983 in the magazine entitled "The Humanist". Listen to the willingness of this man to reach children for secular humanism. How sad it is that he has more enthusiasm for reaching children with atheism than some professing Christians have for reaching children with the Gospel.

John Dewey is recognized as the Father of modern education and was a signer of the "Humanist Manifesto". John Dewey thought if he could reach the children, he could change the world in one generation. He was absolutely right. He came about in the 1930s and said all he needed was a generation, and he could bring the whole society to believe in his philosophy of secular humanism. He said that if he could have the textbooks of the public schools, he could own American culture. He also helped bring in what is now known as Planned Parenthood, and his philosophy is the one that made abortion legal in 1973.

There is a crisis in our culture, and the only way to change the direction is one child at a time. We need to reach the children! Let's not be discouraged! Jesus Christ said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (**Matthew 16:18**). Many who are built by Christ into the church are children!

- C. Consider that Jesus has a concern for reaching children. Listen to His words in **Matthew 18:5-6, 10-11**, "...whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea... 10 Take heed that ye despise [DISCOUNT] not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. 11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost".

Children become men. You can see a child as a child, but that child is going to grow up. How would you look at that child if you saw him as a man? If you don't win him, he could be a terrorist or a witchdoctor. If you knew God could save him, he could be a pastor.

¹ John Dunphy, "A Religion for a New Age," *The Humanist*, Jan-Feb. 1983, 23, 26.

We need to give children the Gospel. Children are easy to find. They are not easy to win. Who here was not a child? What king or president was not a child? It is better busy building children than to be repairing men.

- II. The Bible assumes that we are to be **Teaching** children. We are not just to reach children, play games with them, and keep them out of trouble! No! We are to teach them something! David says in **Psalm 34:11**, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD." We need to bid children to come so that we can TEACH them. They do not need to be taught how to sin. They are already quite capable of that. Children have selfish hearts that are away from God. Our children will never know God unless we teach them.

Our children are not like barren ground with no seed in it. Our children have the seeds of iniquity in their heart. Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

- A. We ought to be careful that we **do** teach our children. There are some men and women today who grew up in Christian homes, but their mother and father never taught them how to live the Christian life. They heard much about the Gospel from their teachers, but mom and dad didn't invest in them. Mother, Father, you need to take time each day and reach your child's heart. Talk to them about Christ. Evangelize them.
- B. We ought to be careful in **how** we teach children. If you teach a child wrongly, he will believe you. What you teach him now, he will probably never forget. You are teaching on brand new soil. Children already have a nature that is selfish, but they can be made more hardened. If you bend an oak tree when it is a sapling, it will grow up bent.
- C. Remember **what** we are teaching them. David says in **Psalm 34:11**, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD." If we come together to teach children geography, it will not harm them eternally if you teach them that New York City is located in California, or that the Nile River is in South America. But we are teaching something far more important than geography. We are teaching children the "fear of the LORD". In other words, we are preparing these children to *meet God*. Therefore we all ought to model what we profess to be: Christians. The children of this church should see all of us with Jesus Christ alive in us!

Teach them the Law and the Gospel.

1. The **Law** is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. **Galatians 3:24**, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith". We need to teach our children that they cannot be good enough to get to heaven.
2. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe! **Romans 1:16**, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Teach them that one day they will certainly meet God, and if they believe that Christ died instead of them, then they are pardoned of all their sin. How beautiful is Christ. "There is none good but God", and Jesus Christ is God. He "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (**1 Corinthians 1:30**).

- III. The Bible assumes that we are to be reaching and teaching children because we have a **Willing** heart. . David says in **Psalm 34:11**, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD." Do you have time for children? Perhaps you have children, and you don't even have time for them. Make time! This day will never be repeated. Take time to teach your children "the fear of the LORD".

Who will volunteer? Who will go for the Lord? Remember the call to Isaiah? Look over at Isaiah 6.

Isaiah 6:1-8, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, **Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.**"

Those who have seen the LORD have time to go for Him. We all need to get back into God's presence and sense the reality of the coming eternity.

Do you see the need for the children of this neighborhood? What have you done to reach them? God does not require that you personally reach every child—that would be impossible. But he does want us to give our all and reach as many as possible. If we make time to go for Him, God will give us fruit.

Conclusion: Wouldn't it be amazing just to have a meeting with all the children of this neighborhood or your neighborhood when they are men and women with families? That will never happen. Some of these children may come to Christ. What a difference that will make for the rest of their lives!

Psalm 34:11, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD."