



# **New Castle First Baptist Church**

*SEPTEMBER 2019*

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (ESV)

Back then it was common for folks to bring their children to Rabbi’s or elders at certain times and ask the wise men to lay hands on and pray for their children. When the people brought their children to Jesus, the apostles became agitated. They rebuked the people and tried to send them away. Who did these parents think that they were? Who did they think Jesus was? He was no mere rabbi or elder. He was the Messiah! He did not have time for this kind of non-sense!

Or did he?

Jesus rebuked the rebukers. The apostles had just demonstrated their authority over the people by telling them to leave the Master alone and get their kids out of there. And Jesus immediately spoke up and told his apostles and the people alike, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them.” Jesus wanted them to see that those children were important to him, and that they should be important to them also.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I am honored to be a part of a church that welcomes little children. Not only do we offer open doors with enthusiastic volunteers and teachers there to greet them, teach them, feed them and love them, but we also have dedicated men in our church that volunteer to go out and get these children every week. I have no doubt that by doing this we are doing exactly what Jesus would have us do. By welcoming these children into our church, we are welcoming Jesus and his Father to join us as well (see Mark 9:37).

Ministering to those who need ministering to can be challenging at times. Sometimes people do not appreciate all we do for them. Sometimes people don’t respond the way we think they should. Sometimes ministry is messy. Sometimes the people that we minister to betray our trust and break our hearts. Let’s face it, sometimes we go home after we are done trying to love and serve the least of these and we wonder why we bother. What difference are we really making? Is this what God is really calling us to do?

I remember one day at another church getting particularly frustrated because a child, whom we invited in to feed, love, and teach about Jesus, rubbed his dung all over the inside of a door in a bathroom stall. I gagged a few times while cleaning it and I remember thinking, "Really God? Really? We show them our love, we welcome them in, and this is how they thank us!?! Should we as a church really put up with this?"

As soon as I was done lifting up this silent prayer conviction settled in. And I thought, "Really Kevin? Really? Jesus puts up with you every second of every day. Not just Wednesday nights. He puts up with my lack of faith when I don't trust Him and needlessly worry, he tolerates the many times a day that my heart and hands stray from what he has called me to, and Jesus puts up with my foolish pride which is what led me to consider that I was above cleaning this mess off the door of a bathroom stall. I, Kevin Kimes, have betrayed Jesus' trust many times. I have broken the heart of our Lord on many occasions. I am no better than a child that might rub dung on a door. I am simply further along in my walk."

Jesus puts up with each and every one of us every moment of every day. While we were still sinners, while we were still enemies of God, Christ suffered and died for us. While we had every opportunity to know him and be obedient to him, we still defiantly went our own ways and sometimes we still do. We have earned God's worst. All of us! But God gave us his very best. He gave us himself. And no matter how evil our deeds might be, or how many times we may have slapped God's hand of friendship away, he still reaches for the lost. He still grasps tightly to his own. And even if we somehow wiped poop on the pearly gates themselves he still loves us, he still welcomes us, and as we learned in the parable of the prodigal son, he still runs to us when we come to our senses and return to him.

So be encouraged! Love even though it will not always be returned. Serve even though it may not be appreciated. Reach even though some will betray our trust and break our hearts. When we love unconditionally, just as Jesus did, we are not only welcoming Christ into our church, we are becoming more like him.

Talk to Jenny Kimes if you would like to serve with our children's ministry team.

Blessings,

Pastor Kevin