

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



DEUTERONOMY

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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Thank You Lord

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 2:7

For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; and thou hast lacked nothing.

DEUTERONOMY 2:7

Outline

- I. Thank You Lord for Your Providence
 - II. Thank You Lord for Your Perception
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Introduction

That's wonderful. Take your Bibles please, and see if you can find the book of Deuteronomy. All right, that's an easy one: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers Deuteronomy. Turn, please, to Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 7. Today, I want to bring a Thanksgiving message called "Thank You Lord"—"Thank You Lord." Now here is a blessed and a precious text to me—one verse and our message will come out of this one verse—Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 7: For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; and thou hast lacked nothing.

You know in the Bible, forty is the number of testing. Moses had forty years as a prince in Egypt, and then he had forty years in the wilderness, and then he had forty years serving the Lord. Somebody said, "He spent the first forty years as a prince, the next forty years as a pauper, and the next forty years as a prophet." He spent the first forty years learning to be somebody, he spent the next forty years learning to be nobody, and he spent the last forty years learning what God could do with somebody who had learned the first two things. And so, Moses went through three periods of testing. Jesus, when He was tempted, was forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, fasting and praying and seeking the face of His Father. And, of course, He saw the face of His Father. And then here we find the story of the Israelites coming from the land of Egypt into the land of promise, and the Bible says, "They were tested or they were tried

for forty years.” Now, the text that we have today is the biography of God’s people while they had forty years of testing in the wilderness. And I would to God that it might be my biography and yours, at least in the sense of verse 7.

Now I want you to notice some things that Moses is thanking the Lord for. And we’ll let them begin with the letter p so they’ll be easier to remember. And I want to give you today six sweet p’s of thanksgiving. All right? They’re all in a pod, and the pod is verse 7—all right—“For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand.”

I. Thank You Lord for Your Providence

And I would say on this Thanksgiving Sunday, thank you Lord for your providence. The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand, not some of the works, but God blessed them in everything they did. God blessed them when they did good, but God also blessed them when they failed. God blessed them when they obeyed, and He also blessed them when they disobeyed. He blessed them in all that they did. You say, “Brother Rogers, how could He bless them when they disobeyed?” He blessed them with chastisement; He whipped them. Now no chastisement for the present time seems to be joyous, but grievous. But afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. I tell you, friend, when you come into a relationship with God, everything that happens is good—everything. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose.”—all things—This scripture says that God blessed them in all the works of their hands. That’s just marvelous. That’s just wonderful. When you get saved, no matter what happens to you, you can just write Romans 8:28 over it.

Now I want to give you, gentlemen, a lesson in cooking. If you were to take your spoon and go into your wife’s kitchen and open the flour bin and take a spoonful of flour, you wouldn’t like it. And if you were to go into your wife’s kitchen and open the can where she keeps her shortening and take a spoonful of shortening, you wouldn’t like it. And if you were to go to the salt cellar, and take a spoonful of salt, you wouldn’t like it. And if you were to take some baking powder, you wouldn’t like it. But, you let your wife get in that kitchen and mix all those things together and put them in the oven and biscuits come out. Isn’t that something? Isn’t that amazing? How when she mixes them together with the touch of an artist and biscuits come out. Not those [plunk sound effect] kind, but I mean the kind, brother, that come out of that oven—the kind I think Dr. Lee was talking about when he said, “The first bite was a half moon and the second bite was a total eclipse.”—those kind of biscuits.

Now, isn’t it wonderful how things that in themselves are not necessarily good, are worked together for good? And God does the same thing. He mixes the events of our life in the crucible of His care, and then He puts them sometime in the oven of affliction.

But when they come out, God has prepared something that will nourish and strengthen our souls. For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to thy purpose. And so we say as we look at our lives, thank you Lord for your providence.

The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand. I'm not saying that God's children won't have any sorrows. I'm not saying that God's children won't have any problems. But oh, how sweet to know that He turns every tear to a pearl, that He turns every hurt to a hallelujah, that He turns every Calvary to an Easter. That all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. When I think of that I'm kind of like the man who said, "You know, since I got saved, I'm happier now being saved when I'm sad, than I was when I was glad before I was saved." I don't know if that makes sense to you or not. What he is saying, friend, is that it is better to be an unhappy Christian than it is to be a so-called happy sinner. Just to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and so, thank you Lord, for your providence.

II. Thank You Lord for Your Perception

But, secondly, as we look at this verse, we would have to say thank you Lord for your perception—for your perception. For listen to the verse: The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness" and this put the emphasis now on God's perception. He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness. My Lord knows the way through the wilderness. All you have to do is follow. He sees and He knows all there is to see about you; He knows all there is to know about you, and what a comfort to know that He knows. What a comfort to know that He knows.

Let me give you some verses in the Bible that tell of the things that God knows about you. In the first place, I want to say that God knows the worst about you. Psalm 69 verse 5: O God, thou knowest my foolishness. He knows. Now you can fool your pastor, and you can fool your wife, although I doubt that. Somebody said, "Reputation is what others think about you; your character is what your wife and God know about you." But anyway, whether she knows or not, God knows. He knows the worst about you. You know the great and grand and glorious thing about that is that God knows all about you and He still loves you. He still loves you! I've said it before: God doesn't love us because we're valuable; we're valuable because God loves us. God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

You want me to tell you what kind of a friend is a real friend? A real friend is somebody who knows the very worst about you and still loves you. I never get too upset when anyone says something bad about me. I just say, "Thank God, they don't know any more." Oh, God knows all about me. He knows things that even Joyce doesn't

know. But, you know He loves me. That's something to be thankful for. There is nothing that can separate me from the love of God.

And not only does He know the worst about me, he knows the best about me. Listen to this verse: Psalm 37 verse 18: The Lord knoweth the days of the upright. Not only does He know my foolishness, but He also knows good things about me. Do you know that I'm really better than my wife understands? I'm better than you know that I am too. Oh, there are times when I am so good, but you don't know it. And the goodness that's in me is Jesus that's in me. But, you just don't understand. And I don't understand just how bad you are and I don't understand just how good you are. But God knows the worst about me and God also knows the best about me. Friend, and that's wonderful to know. God knows my heart. He knows my intentions when sometimes I make a mistake, when sometimes I mean to do good and it doesn't just pan out that way. And pastors make mistakes. My mistakes, I hope, will be mistakes of the head and not mistakes of the heart. But God knows the very best about us, and you know sometimes others don't know it.

I played football and I played in the backfield. But I was like a lineman in the backfield; I was a blocking back. For a while I was a fullback and then I was a blocking back and that's almost like a guard playing in the backfield. You ladies won't understand this and by the way somebody said, "Don't get around Dr. Dave Donovan after the football game yesterday 'cause he's just not fit to live with; he's bragging all over the place." But, ah, you ladies don't understand much about football. But I tell you this, there's a fellow who gets that football and he runs through the line and everybody cheers for him and he's called a backfield man. But you know, the linemen—they have a job. They have to open a hole in the line so that fellow can run through. Now, sometimes those linemen will get down there and open a hole so big and so wide that my grandmother could go through it in a wheelchair, and that back runs through and everybody cheers for the back. They don't worry about those poor slobs on the ground with their noses pushed in—just this fellow who runs through. He gets all the praise but I'll tell you something that every lineman knows: when he gets back to the bench, the coach knows what he did. The coach knows. And that's what keeps these fellows going.

Now I tell you, friend, there may be people who don't understand what you do in serving the Lord. But the Great Coach knows. Now there may be somebody who gets a lot more praise than you. But He knoweth the way of the upright. Isn't that good? He knows: God knows. Somebody said, "You can do a lot of good in this world if you don't care who gets credit for it." Isn't it enough to know that you cannot even give a cup of cold water in His name and lose your reward?

Oh, not only does He know the worst about you, not only does He know the best about you, He knows the weakness about you. Let me give you another verse that talks

about what the Lord knows: Psalm 103 verse 14: He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we're dust. He knows how weak you are. You say, "Oh, I believe I have more than I can bear." That's a slander against God. He knoweth our frame; nothing comes to you but what it comes through Him first of all. Some poet has said that He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, that is, that the Lord understands. "Oh," you say, "Brother Rogers, I got such a burden. I just cannot bear it." God gave you that burden to cause you to lean harder upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

And then not only does he know the worst about you, not only does he know the best about you, not only does he know the weakness about you, but he knows the needs about you. Listen to this verse: Matthew chapter 6 verse 8: Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of. You're saying, "I have needs today." Well, God knows. He knows. David said, "Once I was young, now I'm old. Yet I've not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

You have a need today? Thank God that He knows. And what farmer would take more care of his barnyard fowl than he would his own children? And if God feeds the birds of the air, how much more is He going to take care of you. O ye of little faith. Your Father knoweth what things you have need of.

A little girl went to school and they studied gravity. And she came back home and she was sitting in a very pensive mood and her mother came to her and said, "Sweetheart, what is a little girl like you thinking so solemnly about?" She said, "Gravity." And the mother said, "Well, honey, what is it?" She said, "I don't know." But she said, "I believe it must be God at the center of the world protecting and keeping His children right side up when the world is upside down." That's exactly what it is, dear friends. By Him all things consist. He knows your needs in this upside down, crazy world.

III. Thank You Lord for Your Purpose

And so we would say thank you Father for your providence: all things work together for good. Thank you Lord for your perception: you know all the way we take through this wilderness. You know our sins, you know our good points, you know our weaknesses, and you know our needs. Hallelujah. And then we would say, thirdly, thank you Father for your purpose—for your purpose. Let's go back to our text and look at it again: For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness.

What is God's purpose? God's purpose is that we walk through this great wilderness. Now, this world is a wilderness to every Christian and it is God's plan that we walk through it. It is not God's plan that somehow we escape it, but that we walk

through it. And how are you going to walk through this wilderness world? Well, you walk one step at a time. So many of us want to make one decision that's just somehow going to carry us on through. Now, there is such a thing as being saved once and for all. But, dear friend, the Christian life is a step by step by step experience. The Bible says, "As ye receive the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in Him."

And how did you receive Jesus? You received Him by faith. How do you live? By faith, one step at a time. Faith by faith by faith I go. Being a Christian is like riding a bicycle: when you stop, you fall. You have to keep going. As you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in Him. God's purpose is that we walk through this great wilderness. And notice God says through the wilderness. It is God's training ground. God's not ready to take us to heaven yet. God has some plans for us. Let me share a great verse. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 8 verses 2 and 3 right close. All right, now listen: And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness—now notice the reason. Listen. Remember, forty years God led them in the wilderness—number one: to humble thee and to test thee. You see, God is leading us through a wilderness on purpose. God could just take you to heaven the minute that you get saved but He wants to humble you and He wants to prove you.

When they build a new Chevrolet or a new Buick or whatever it is, they put it on the proving ground and it's not a smooth place. They put rocks and curves and puddles and all these things. God doesn't want you to live just in a smooth, easy place. You don't sharpen an axe on a pound of butter; you sharpen it on a grindstone. God is trying to humble you and God is trying to prove you. God is trying to strengthen you, to test thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments. And He humbled thee—now watch it—and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna.

Why does God let you get hungry? So He can feed you. God wants you to have an appetite. And, friend, in the wilderness, you're gonna get one. That's what it's all about. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

It is not God's purpose that you have a smooth way. It is not God's purpose that you have an easy way. It is not God's purpose that you have a lazy way. Thank you Lord for your purpose that you are leading us through this wilderness! To test us, to prove us, to help us grow up, to help us to be mature. So I'm not all that I ought to be. I'm like the old farmer, when he got saved, he said, "I ain't what I ought to be, and I ain't what I'm gonna be, but thank God, I ain't what I was." And that's the way it is when you get saved. You start to grow and grow and grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus.

IV. Thank You Lord for Your Patience

So we would say thank you Lord—number one: for your providence. Thank you—number two: for your perception. Thank you —number three: for your purpose. And then thank you—number four: for your patience. Go back to the text and look at it: For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee. You talk about patience. Forty years God had been with them and when God was with them for forty years, they had been unfaithful to Him. They had been fickle; they had been disobedient; they had been carnal; they had been sinful; and yet He had been with them and He never stopped being with them. Have you ever thanked God for His patience? In Acts chapter 13 verse 18, the Bible says this concerning this verse of Scripture and it says, “About the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness.” And they had bad spiritual manners for forty years and God put up with them.

Aren't you glad that God puts up with you? You know, sometimes I feel like God ought to blot me out. Don't you feel that way? Don't you feel like—Have you every confessed the same sin to God more than twice? Let's see your hand. All right, put it down. More than five hundred times? Let's see your hand. I believe there's some things that I have confessed to God five thousand times. I really do. Five thousand times. It looks like God would say, “Now wait a moment. Four thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, yes, but five thousand uh-uh.” But for forty years, God put up with their bad manners. Oh, aren't you glad that He is a God of grace? 'Tis grace hath lead me safe thus far, and grace will lead me on.

Simon Peter came to Jesus and as if to say, “Jesus, there's a guy that bugs me. I'm really hacked off. This fellow keeps doing the same thing over and over again and after he does it he says, ‘Simon, I'm sorry. Forgive me.’ I've forgiven him once, and I've forgiven him twice, and I've forgiven him three times, four times, five times, six times. Now, it's the seventh time, Lord, and I know seven is the perfect number. How many times shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Seven times?” Jesus with a twinkle in his eye says, “No, Simon, not seven but seventy times seven.” Four hundred and ninety—and he didn't really mean four hundred and ninety. This was just his way of saying, “Simon Peter, as many times as that faltering, stumbling brother comes to you and asks you to forgive him, you are to forgive him. Now, if God requires that out of us in dealing with one another, how much more will the infinite God of mercy forgive us, when we come to Him? How much more will God forgive us? Aren't you glad for 1 John 1:9 that says that if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness? And I hope that you will join me in saying, thank you God for your patience. Forty years He suffered their bad manners in the wilderness.

No wonder the Bible calls Him in Romans 15 verse 5: the God of patience.

V. Thank You Lord for Your Presence

Now, let's go on and say, "thank you Lord for your presence" because—let us look in our text as we continue to read: For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee." Thank you Lord for your presence. For forty years He had been with them. Oh, He was with them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of cloud by night, and He's with us in a more wonderful way. He's with us in the form of His blessed Holy Spirit of God and He says in Hebrews chapter 13 verses 5 and 6: I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. I don't care what I do. He is with me. I will never leave thee. Isn't that great?

You know, a little boy goes to school and his dog is following him and he says, "You stay here, Fido, and I—I'll pick you up when I come out of school." But friend, when you go to school, the Holy Spirit goes with you. When you go to work, the Holy Spirit goes with you. Wherever you go, God's Holy Spirit is with you. I will never leave thee—never leave thee—never leave thee. In the Greek, those who know Greek tell us that this is an intensive form where it literally says, "I will never, never, never leave thee." Now, a Greek student was talking to an old mother in Israel, an old saint who hardly new English, but she knew Jesus. And he was trying to explain this to her and he said, "You see, Mother, it really says I will never, never, never leave thee." She just smiled and said, "Well, God may have to say it three times for you Greek fellows, but once is enough for me." I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Isn't it wonderful that He will never leave us?

When Joyce and I first started out in the ministry, just recently had graduated from seminary, taken our first little church, many of you know that we had a little baby boy whose name was Phillip. And Phillip went home to be with the Lord. He was born on our first son's birthday. Both of them share the same birthday and he died on Mother's day. And, ah, we were not prepared really; at least we thought we were not prepared. We had never thought about a tragedy like that happening to us, not on Mother's day. But I remember when I was a young man just in my early teens, I used to go to church, Velma Rae. We went to Training Union. And in Training Union, Mr. Hires would get up and heist a tune. And we used to sing that old tune "No, Never Alone." You know what it said? "I've seen the lightning flashing; I've heard the thunder roll. I've felt sin's breakers dashing, trying to conquer my soul. I've heard the voice of Jesus, telling me still to fight on. I promise never to leave thee, never to leave thee alone." And then we used to have a chorus that said, "No, never alone, No, never alone, He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone." And when Mr. Hires would sing that song, when I was a little

boy in Training Union, he used to kinda pat his hand and he'd say, "No, never alone. No, never alone." And we, young 'uns in the church, kinda liked that hand patting, and when he'd pat his hand, we'd stamp our feet. And it got to be quite a show. We'd be in that little old church, and we'd sing that song, and we always egged him in to singing it. When he'd say, "No, never alone," we'd stamp our feet and say, "No, never alone" like that and we got a big kick out of it. That's all it was to me; it was a big kick.

But this little boy of ours went home and took his flight to be with Jesus, and Joyce and I live right next door to that little church in a parsonage. He died on Sunday afternoon. We got some things together and took our trip that Sunday night to West Palm Beach to be with our parents where we were going to bury our little boy. And they had to call in an outside preacher to preach for me that night at little Parkview Baptist church. We didn't have air conditioning and the doors were open. And I guess I shall remember as long as I should live, the song they were singing. "No, never alone, No, never alone, He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone." Joyce and I sang that song halfway from Fort Pierce to West Palm Beach, Florida. "No, never alone, No, never alone, He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone." We sang and praised our Lord for He was so real, and His comfort was so real.

Oh, have you ever thanked God for His presence? These forty years hath the Lord been with thee and He has promised never, never to leave thee alone. You may be in a hospital bed going through some affliction and going through some suffering right now; Jesus is in that room. Oh, my dear friend, He knows. He cares. He feels. He understands. He will never leave you alone. Thank you Lord for your presence.

VI. Thank You Lord for Your Provision

And then I must say finally, thank you Lord for your provision. Look again at the text: For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hands: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years hath the Lord thy God been with thee and thou hast lacked nothing. Isn't that great? Thank you Lord for your provision. God is saying, "You haven't missed a thing you need." "Oh" you say, "well there've been some things I wanted." Well, that's not what this is talking about. Have you ever—have you ever thought about that verse that says, "For my God shall supply all your need according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus"? There've been some times I've wanted some things I didn't need, and there've been some times I needed some things I didn't want. My dad used to say to me, "Son, you need a whipping." You know sure enough I did, but I didn't want one. "You need a whipping," and he gave it to me. He said, "I do this because I love you." Well I guess I was his favorite. He loved me more than my brother, I'm certain. Why? Because I needed it. Thou hast wanted nothing. Oh, isn't it wonderful? The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the

Lord shall not want any good thing. No good thing hath He withheld from them that walk uprightly.

Conclusion

Isn't that great? Oh, how we ought to thank God. Oh, how we ought to say thank you Lord for your providence: all things work together for good. Thank you God for your perception: you know all about me. Thank you God for your purpose: you're leading through a wilderness. Thank you God for your patience: even though I fail, you're still with me. Thank you Lord for your presence: you never leave me nor forsake me. And thank you God for your provision: you supply all my need according to your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Hallelujah, what a Savior! Oh, isn't it great to thank God for his goodness? Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're a Christian, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, may I ask you to thank the Lord? May I ask you right now to praise Him? Praise Him for His goodness. Thank Him. It's good to offer thanks. Shakespeare said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" Thank the Lord. Thank Him. Praise Him. Magnify His name. Bless His name if you're a Christian. Tell Him that you're going to turn your thanksgiving into thanks living, that you're going to show the Lord your thankfulness. And now, if you're not saved, friend, you're missing something wonderful. And God has been good to you even as an unsaved person. And the Bible says, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Friend, if God has been so good, you ought to come to Him and give your heart to Him. How He loves you. And I tell you, if God has been so good and you refuse to humble yourself and receive Christ, how severe your judgment must be. The greater the love bestowed, the greater the punishment if that love is refused.

Father in heaven, we come to thee today, to thank thee and bless thee in the name of Jesus. Thou hast been so good to us and we praise you. And now, Father, I come to pray in Jesus' name, for these who have not yet been saved, for these who have not yet received Christ as their personal Savior. Grant that today, Lord, they shall be saved for we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, look up here. We're going to sing in a moment, what we call an invitation hymn. We're going to stand together when we sing it. Our counselors are going to be down here at the front. We're going to have a gentlemen standing at the head of either of these aisles. Are you listening? Give me your attention now. No one moving. No one stirring. You look at me. Someone will be standing right here. And when we stand and sing, I want many of you who are willing today to give your hearts to Jesus Christ, I want you to leave your seat and come forward. And by your coming forward, you will be saying, "Today I'm trusting Jesus Christ to save me." You don't get saved by joining the

church. You don't get saved by being baptized. You don't get saved by living a good life. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If today, by faith, you will believe in Christ, I want you to leave your seat and come forward. We have some trained counselors here at the front, who want to take the Word of God and confirm you in this decision. And I want you to leave your seat. Come forward. If you want to be saved, tell this man who'll be standing here, or this man who'll be standing here, "I want to be saved."

Secondly, if you have been saved and need to make it public, I want you to come because you owe it to Jesus to give Him the glory and you need the joy of making it public.

Thirdly, if you need to transfer your church membership, I want you to come. Don't make me beg you to do what you ought to do.

Fourthly, if you've been saved, and you need to present yourself for baptism, I want you to come. Just tell these counselors what decision you're making, and step out on the first stanza and do what our Lord would have you do. I don't want anyone to leave unless it is an emergency. I want us to be in a spirit of prayer. And if you have a decision to make for Jesus, on the first note, I want you to step out and come. We're praying for you. We're going to sing one hymn. Three five six, let's stand together as we sing. Step out and come right now. Come on. That's right. Praise the Lord. Come on. Let the Lord have His way. Up here on the balcony, come on. Come to Jesus.

Thank God for the many who have responded. Ah, but there are so many more. You may be up in the third balcony. You may be here in the second balcony. There's time for you to make a decision. Just come right on down the stairs. Right down these aisles. Right in one of these doors. You may leave through any of those doors. Come right down and make your decision. There's plenty of time; we'll wait on you. The people in the back, you have a decision you need to make. You say, Brother Rogers, there's so many people. The crowd is so big. Friend, I want to remind you that Jesus Christ hung naked on the cross for you that you might be redeemed. Surely, you can take your stand for Him. Jesus said, "If you're ashamed of me before men, I'll be ashamed of you when I come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels."

If God has spoken to your heart, the greatest act of thanksgiving you can be and do would be to give your heart to Christ by faith. When you trust Jesus to save you, your sins are forgiven. Jesus Christ comes to live in your heart. When you die or when Jesus comes, you go to heaven. Isn't that wonderful? You come on now, we're praying for you. Others who want to move your membership. You lead the way for these. And those of you, who've been saved— if you've been saved, make it public—don't be ashamed of Jesus. This stanza's for you. Come on. Come. Come on. Come on right now. That's right. Come on. Right now. Step out. God bless you. That's right.

I'm going to ask the choir to sing the last stanza and I'm going to ask God's people to pray. I believe, in an invitation like this, there are always some who are in the very valley of decision. Christ has spoken to the hearts. They know they need to be saved and yet the devil says, "Not this Sunday, perhaps next Sunday." But the Bible says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." This may be God's final public invitation to someone here today. And I want you, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, and while the choir is singing, people are praying, and the angels of heaven are looking down, I want you to step out and say, "yes" to Christ by coming. We're waiting on you. You come. People are praying. You come. Step out. This is for you, come on. Thank you. Would you quietly be seated, prayerfully pray for our counselors as they complete their work. And in just a moment, we'll present these who have come to you.

Thank You, Lord

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: November 24, 1976

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 2:7

Outline

Introduction

- I. Thank Him for His Providence
- II. Thank Him for His Perception
 - A. He Knows the Worst about Us
 - B. He Knows the Best about Us
 - C. He Knows Our Weaknesses and Our Strengths
 - D. He Knows Our Needs
- III. Thank Him for His Purpose
- IV. Thank Him for His Patience
- V. Thank Him for His Presence
- VI. Thank Him for His Provision

Conclusion

Introduction

We're going to depart tonight from our study on spiritual gifts, and we're just going to have a little Thanksgiving message tonight, and just rejoice in our Lord, and rejoice in one another. So turn to the Old Testament, please, to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 7. Here's a verse that we like to share at Thanksgiving time—Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 7. Now, Moses is reflecting the blessings of God upon the people of God, and he is just simply rehearsing what God has done for them in forty years since they had been delivered from the hand of cruel Pharaoh. And verse 7 encapsulates the whole thing. He says in verse 7—Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 7: *“For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7)

Now, while Moses is talking to Israel, certainly this scripture is talking to us. For the Bible tells us clearly and without equivocation, *“These things happened unto them for examples [to us].”* (1 Corinthians 10:11) So we're not misusing the scripture when we take something that happened to God's ancient people and apply it to God's modern people, for the Bible has principles that are all the way through it. And so Moses is just having a time of thanksgiving. I just want to entitle our little message tonight, “Thank You, Lord,” and mention some things that I think we ought to thank the Lord for.

I. Thank Him for His Providence

The first thing I believe we ought to thank the Lord for is for His providence. Thank you, Lord, for your providence. For notice what this verse says. It says, *“The LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hands.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) And I would just underscore the word *all*. Now, sometimes we see the working of the Lord in some of the things. We say, “Yes, this was a blessing, and that was not a blessing”; but, my friend, may I tell you, from the time that you have been redeemed—from the time that you came out of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb and through the Red Sea—from that time till this time, everything that has happened to you has happened for your good. In all things we’re to triumph in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 2:14) Romans 8:28 is still right where it was when Paul wrote it and said that *“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)

Now, that doesn’t mean the Christian won’t have any problems. If you will read the history of Israel as Moses gave it, they had all kinds of problems. But he still says, *“The LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) Now, there are problems: I have problems today, and you have problems. But I want to tell you that I don’t have any problems compared to the problems that I had before I got saved. I’m happier now when I’m sad than I was happy when I was happy before I got saved—just to know the Lord Jesus Christ in this life.

A Christian has problems; but, you see, there’s a difference. In the first place, a Christian has somebody to bear his problems. *“Cast thy burden upon the LORD.”* (Psalms 55:22) Secondly, the Christian’s problems are really not problems, for *“all things work together for good to them that love God.”* (Romans 8:28) They’re just blessings in reverse. And, thirdly, any problem that we have is only temporary, for *“the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* (Romans 8:18) And so we just thank the Lord for His providence. How good God has been to us! I just bless His wonderful, holy, and precious name. You know, He takes our tears and turns them to pearls and makes a diadem for us to wear.

II. Thank Him for His Perception

All right now, the second thing I would say that we ought to thank the Lord for: Not only thank Him for His providence that causes all things to work together for good to those who love the Lord, (Romans 8:28) but we ought to thank Him for His perception.

Notice this verse again. It says, *“He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness”*—*“He knoweth.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) You see, the Lord perceived everything that happened to His ancient people. We used to sing a song when I was coming up in church as a teenager: “My Lord knows the way through the wilderness—all I have to do is follow.” And He does know the way. He knows all about us. He knows our up-rising

and our down-sitting. He sees all there is to see; He knows all there is to know. And that, my friend, is a comfort to me.

A. He Knows the Worst about Us

You see, it's a comfort to me that the Lord knows the worst about me. Now, how could that be a comfort to me? Because even though He knows the worst about me, He hasn't stopped loving me. You know, if I had an idea there were some things He didn't yet know, I might think He may discover them, and then I'd have it. You know, I have a sneaking suspicion if you knew the worst about me, you wouldn't like me anymore. I'm just so glad. You know, Peter Lord said when somebody criticized him, "That doesn't bother me. I just say, 'Thank God they don't know anymore.'" But isn't it good that He knows—He knows, He knows—everything about you? You want to know who a friend is, friend? A real friend—a real friend—is someone who knows the worst about us and loves us just the same. That's the kind of friend we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. He Knows the Best about Us

Now, you see, He knows. But not only does He know the worst about me, friend; He knows the best about me. You know, there are two things that you don't know about me: You don't know the worst about me. And you don't know the best about me. You know, there are some wonderful things about me that you don't know anything about. Do you know I'm so wonderful in some areas, and you don't know anything about it? But He knows.

I was praying the other day, and I was trying to express my love to the Lord Jesus, and I said, "Oh, God, I can't say it," and then the sweetest peace came over me. He said, "My child, I know what's in your heart—I know." You don't know it. I can't express it; I can't verbalize it. But, oh, listen. The Spirit of God knows the things that are in my spirit, and that's a comfort to me—that He knows the worst about me, and there is nothing yet to discover, and He still loves me—He still loves me—and He knows the best about me, and He knows things that I can't say, and things that I can't verbalize, and things that you will never know. But, bless God, He knows, and I want to thank Him for His perception.

But let's go on and think of some other things He knows. He knows the worst about us—Psalms 69, verse 5: "*O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*" (Psalms 69:5) But now, let's notice the best about us—Psalms 37, verse 18: "*The LORD knoweth the days of the upright.*" (Psalms 37:18)

C. He Knows Our Weaknesses and Our Strengths

And then, you know, He knows the weakness about us. Look in Psalms 103, verse 14: "*He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*" (Psalms 103:14) Did you

know the Lord knows how weak you are and He also knows how strong you are? But He knows our weakness: *“He knoweth our frame.”*

Now, what does that mean? What is your frame? Your frame is what you can bear. We take a truck, and we say, “This is a ton-and-a-half truck or a two-ton truck.” Well, the manufacturer of that truck says, “This is a ton-and-a-half truck.” So you put a ton-and-a-half load on it. It’s made to carry a ton-and-a-half load, or a two-ton truck carries a two-ton load, and so forth. Now I think many of you have heard the story about the man who was driving a panel truck, got out at the stoplight, beat on the side, and got back in; went another block, stopped, and beat on the side. Somebody asked him, “What are you doing?” He said, “This is a one-ton truck. I’ve got two tons of canaries in here, and I have to keep half of them in the air all the time.” So the Lord knows the frame—our frame. He knows what we can bear. *“He knoweth our frame.”* He knows what we were built to carry. And, you know, there’s not a burden that comes to you but what it comes through Him first. And somebody has sweetly said that, “He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.” *“He knoweth our frame.”*

D. He Knows Our Needs

Now, look. The Scripture so far says, “He knows the worst about us. He knows the best about us. He knows the weakness about us. And He also knows our needs.” Why, the Bible says in Matthew chapter 6, verse 8, *“Your [heavenly] Father knoweth what things ye have need of.”* (Matthew 6:8) And so we just have to thank the Lord on this Thanksgiving Eve not only for His providence—that He’s blessed us in all of our ways—but we have to thank Him for His perception—that He knows all about us. *“He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7)

III. Thank Him for His Purpose

And then, the third thing I think we ought to thank Him for on our pilgrimage through this wilderness of this world is, we’d have to say, “Lord, thank you for your purpose.” For, you know, God had a purpose for His ancient people. Notice what it says: *“thy walking through this great wilderness.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) You see, God was bringing them through. He brought them out that He might bring them in. And God brought me out that He might bring me in. And right now I’m in a wilderness. But, friend, I’m coming through, and so are you. God has a purpose. God has a plan for me. God has a plan for you. And this world is just simply a training ground; it’s just simply a proving ground. And the Lord is leading me through here. He has a purpose for me, and He’s not finished with me yet. But, thank God, I’m coming through.

While we’re on that same subject, look in chapter 8—Deuteronomy 8 and verse 2: *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty*

years in the wilderness,”—now, notice why. Why did God let them stay forty years in the wilderness? Well, watch it—*“to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger,”*—what? God did that? Certainly. Why?—*“and fed thee with manna . . .”*—He let them be hungry so He could feed them. You know, if we never had any trouble, we’d never have any need. If we never had any need, we’d get independent from God. But God has a purpose. He allows us to be in the wilderness. He suffers us to hunger. He has all of these things; they’re a part of His wonderful plan. And He—*“suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”* (Deuteronomy 8:2–3)

Oh, God has a purpose in this wild wilderness. It doesn’t seem to make sense to us sometimes: “Why this? And why that? And why the confusion?” But God is proving us. God is testing us. God is teaching us. God is leading us. God is building us. Thank you, Lord, for your purpose.

IV. Thank Him for His Patience

But not only should we thank Him for His providence, and thank Him for His purpose, and His perception, but I think we ought to thank Him for His patience. Look at that verse again: *“For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7)

Forty years God put up with that bunch. How long have you been saved? Forty years God put up with them. Now, don’t think they’ve been a wonderful people. Friend, they hadn’t been a wonderful people. They had been an unfaithful people. They had been a fickle people. They had been a disobedient people. And yet for forty years He’d been with them. Dr. Luke recorded in Acts chapter 13, verse 18, these words: *“And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness”*—*“about . . . forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.”* (Acts 13:18) For forty years of bad manners, He put up with them and God suffered them. And we just have to say He’s put up with us. He’s put up with me now for about thirty years—since I’ve been saved. Thirty years He’s been suffering me through this wilderness, and I just have to say, “Thank you, Lord, for your patience. I thank you, Lord, that you never ever let me go.”

I’ve confessed many times the same sin over and over. How many of you have ever confessed the same sin more than twice? Okay, aren’t you glad that God has more patience than you have? You know, I’m glad that I’m not God, because if I were God, I would have blotted me out—I would have blotted me out had I been God. But do you

know how the Bible describes our wonderful God in Romans chapter 15? The Bible describes Him as *“the God of patience.”* (Romans 15:5) That’s a great acclamation for our heavenly Father: *“the God of patience.”* And so, Lord, thank you for your patience. Thank you, Lord, that you put up with this bunch for forty years of bad manners in the wilderness.

V. Thank Him for His Presence

All right, and then I just have to say, “Lord, not only do I thank you for that, but I also want to thank you for your presence”—“for your presence.” Notice it says, *“These forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) He never left them—not once! He was with them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. (Exodus 13:21; Numbers 14:14) And He dwells with us even more wonderfully—the blessed Holy Spirit, who lives in our heart. Hebrews 13 says, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* (Hebrews 13:5) Isn’t that so wonderful?

You know, isn’t it grand to know that our heart is not a hotel where He checks in and checks out but He comes to abide with us forever? You know, I have to go, as I did this afternoon, so many times to the gravesite. I have to deal, as I have done today, with so many problems—problems that people have that fiction writers couldn’t think up. And they’re real problems. But I’m so grateful to know that I can tell people and mean it—not just try to make them feel good; I can tell them and mean it: “The Lord is with you. God will not leave you. *‘Underneath are the everlasting arms.’*” (Deuteronomy 33:27) *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”* (Isaiah 41:10) That’s a good one to put down.

Oh, listen—listen: God will never, never, never leave us. Friend, He’s with us in the glad times, and He’s with us in the sad times. He’s with us in the bad times; He’s with us in the mad times. It’s the old-time religion. It’s the new-time religion. It’s the anytime religion. It’s the all-time religion. It’s the every-time religion. Aren’t you glad? Aren’t you glad that He was with them for forty years and never ever forsook them, even when they had bad manners?

“Well,” you say, “Preacher, you haven’t had anything like I’ve had to suffer.” And that’s probably true. But there have been times when I’ve needed to know that the Lord was there. When our baby boy was carried to heaven, Joyce and I never suffered the loss of a loved one—not a close loved one, not a family member. Joyce’s mom and daddy are still living—they live in West Palm Beach, Florida. My mom and daddy are still living—they live also in West Palm Beach, Florida. I have two brothers. One brother is an engineer—lives in Knoxville, a graduate of Georgia Tech, and works for a company over in Knoxville. I have another brother who is a comptroller of a college

down in Florida. And they're both still living. I have a sister who lives in Fort Lauderdale who's a nurse, and she's living. My wife has two brothers who are preachers, and they're still living, and has a sister who's married to a real-estate man, and they're living. We just never had any death in our immediate family. And the Lord took our little boy home on Mother's Day—on Mother's Day—on a Sunday after I had just preached on the glories and the blessings of a Christian home. That afternoon, that little fellow went to be with the Lord—died suddenly, unexpectedly.

We pastored a little church. The pastorium was right next to the church—I mean, hard up against the church. You could just hear what was going on in the church in the pastorium, and I'm afraid, sometimes, what was going on in the pastorium in the church. It was that close; it was just right up against the church. Well, this little fellow went to heaven on that Sunday, and you can imagine how we had to turn to the Lord—just a very young preacher, just out of seminary, just had graduated, only had been at that little church for just a few weeks. And so we decided that we'd get a guest preacher who would preach that Sunday night. And they called over to the First Baptist Church, and the educational director said, "Well, I'll come over and preach." And we thought it would be wise for us to go to West Palm Beach, where our parents lived, and be with them to try to make some plans for what we would do. And I don't guess I shall ever forget passing that little church where I pastored, a little white church there made out of cement block, seeing the light stream out through the windows, and hearing the congregation as they had gathered in there to sing. And this is what they were singing:

I've seen the lightning flashing, I've heard the thunder roll.
I've felt sin's breakers dashing, which almost conquered my soul.
I've heard the voice of my Savior, bidding me still to fight on.
He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone!

—LUDIE D. PICKETT

That's been so true, dear friend—the Lord was so real and so present. I don't believe that Jesus Christ has ever been more real to Joyce and I than He was in that trip to West Palm Beach. I suppose we sang every song about the Lord that we could think of, praising and singing and calling upon the name of the Lord. And His presence—things that I had told people about Him, things that I preached to people about—God gave me the privilege of experiencing firsthand. He has promised never to leave thee, never to leave thee alone.

VI. Thank Him for His Provision

And so, Lord, we just thank you for your presence—not only your patience for forty years, but your presence. Lord, you've been with us these forty years, so thank you for your providence, and your perception, and your purpose, and your patience, and your

presence. And then, finally, Lord, thank you for your provision—for the last phrase says, *“Thou hast lacked nothing”*—*“nothing.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) For forty years in the wilderness they thought they had some needs. They said, “There’s no water.” They said, “There’s no bread. There’s no this; there’s no that.” But they didn’t need a thing, for they had God, and every need their God supplied. Never late, never ahead of time, right on time, as they learned to trust Him—God supplied their every need. *“Thou hast lacked nothing.”*

That’s the reason David said in Psalms 34, verse 10, *“The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.”* (Psalms 34:10) That’s the reason the Bible says in Philippians chapter 4, verse 19, *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19) How I thank God for that! *“My God shall supply all your need.”* I’m glad it doesn’t say, “My God shall supply all your wants.” The worst thing God could do for us would be to give us everything we wanted, because sometimes we want some things we don’t need and many times we need some things we don’t want. My dad used to say, “You need a spanking.” And that was true. But I didn’t want one. And there are times we need some things we don’t want and want some things that we don’t need. But they lacked nothing that they needed. *“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

Conclusion

As we bring this little message to a conclusion, I want you to think of Philippians 4:19 as a check—as a check on heaven’s bank—the check *“my God shall supply.”* (Philippians 4:19) I want to tell you, God’s checks will never bounce, because never a promise has failed from the Word of God. The amount on the check: “all you need”—“all you need.” The capital: *“according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

You know, sometimes a rich man can give, but he doesn’t give according to his riches; he gives out of his riches. Now, if a rich man were to give you—let’s say J. Paul Getty, or Howard Hughes when he was living, or Mr. Hunt, or Mr. MacArthur, Mr. Rockefeller, or one of these—were to give you a hundred dollars or ten dollars, he would be giving you out of his riches but not necessarily according to his riches—you see? Now, that doesn’t say that “my God shall supply all your need *out of His riches.*” It says, *“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches”*; that is, in keeping with His riches.

Now, that’s pretty great when you think about it: that is, God says His riches are measured by Jesus Christ. You see, if God loved you enough—oh, friend, listen to this—if God loved you enough to give Jesus, you’ve got it made. I mean, you think about it: *“He that spared not his own Son...how shall he not with him also freely give us*

all things?” (Romans 8:32) Do you get the logic of that verse? If He gave us the one gift while we were enemies, how much more now that we’re His children? If He gave us His Son, how much more will He give us whatever we need?

I mean, suppose you could talk me out of my boy David. You said, “Preacher, can I have your son David?” “My son David? What do you want with him?” “Well, we’re going to take him out and abuse him, lie on him, beat him, and finally murder him. We’re going to nail him to a cross. Will you give us your son?” “No, I won’t. No, you can’t have him. You couldn’t have him if you were going to be good to him, much less to do that to him. No, you can’t have my son!” But suppose—suppose—you could talk me into giving you my son. And then, after that, you’re saying, “By the way, can we have his football?” I say, “Take it.” “Can we have his bike?” “Sure.” I mean, if I give you my son, I’ll give you his football and his bicycle, amen? You understand what I’m talking about? *“He that spared not his own Son...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*

Oh, friend, listen: *“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”*—not out of His riches, *according* to His riches. And so, the check: *“My God shall supply”*; the amount: *“all your need”*; the capital: *“according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”*; and the signature: *“by Christ Jesus.”* This check is signed in the crimson ink of His own blood. The only thing necessary is for you to cash it, for you to endorse it by faith. It’s made out to you. Thank you, Lord, for your provision. *“Thou hast lacked nothing”*—*“nothing.”* (Deuteronomy 2:7) And, dear friend, if God did that for His ancient people Israel, how much more has He done it for those of us who live on this side of Calvary? We just thank God for His goodness on this Thanksgiving Eve.

My Fortieth Thanksgiving

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 2:7

Outline

Introduction

- I. Thank You, Lord, for Your Providence
- II. Thank You, Lord, for Your Perception
- III. Thank You, Lord, for Your Purpose
- IV. Thank You, Lord, for Your Patience
- V. Thank You, Lord, for Your Presence
- VI. Thank You, Lord, for Your Provision
 - A. The Check
 - B. The Amount on the Check
 - C. The Capital Behind the Check
 - D. The Signature on the Check

Conclusion

Introduction

Now, take your Bibles, please, and open to Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 7. I'm speaking this morning on this subject: "My Fortieth Thanksgiving." Here's our text: *"For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing."* (Deuteronomy 2:7) That is our text. Forty years ago this year, I was born in the middle of the Depression. I don't know whether that started the Depression. I doubt it. I believe it may have started one in my immediate family. I've had, this past September, my fortieth birthday. But I'm going to tell you, they say that life begins at forty; it doesn't. It begins at Calvary, when you meet the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. That's when real life begins.

You know, they're talking about this, asking this question: Is there life after death? Well, you know, some folks don't even know life after birth. I mean that they live, but they don't. Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life," (John 10:10) and this wonderful life begins when you meet Jesus at that place called Mount Calvary. But this Thursday will be my fortieth Thanksgiving, and so I want to use this text in Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 7, as the occasion, as we think in this pre-Thanksgiving service, to speak on this matter of the goodness of God, and to say with this choir, "O Lord, my

God, how wonderful thou art.” I want to look in this text, and I want to give you six sweet peas in a pod here. I want you to notice six things here that we ought to be thankful for, in Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 7: for His providence, for His perception, for His purpose, for His patience, for His presence, and for His provision.

I. Thank You, Lord, for Your Providence

Now, notice, first of all, we ought to be thanking God this Thanksgiving for God’s providence. Notice what this text says: “*For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand.*” Now, underscore that part that says, “*all the works.*” God doesn’t just bless us in some things. God, the great God of the universe, makes all things work together for good to those who love Him. That’s what we call Providence. That’s what Romans 8:28 means. For I’m persuaded, dear friends, that God could take everything, and God mixes these things together, and God causes out of them good to come. And that’s so wonderful, that’s so great, as you look back and see the hand of God working in your life.

I told some of you a while back about a preacher I heard about who got on his knees and he prayed a prayer like this—he said, “Lord, I just hate flour.” And then, he said, “Lord, I just hate baking powder.” Then, he said, “Lord, I just don’t like salt. But,” he said, “Lord, I sure love biscuits.”

Now, you know, a lot of us don’t like things that happen to us when they come one at a time, but we see that when God, through His love, mixes them in the crucible of His care, and bakes them sometimes in the fires of testing and trial, out of them come those things that will nourish our souls—I mean, those big ol’ biscuits, not the kind that come out of a can where you go *pop* like that, but I’m talking about that kind, brother, that when you butter them up with hot butter and marmalade, and the first bite is a half moon, and the second one a total eclipse. You know what I’m talking about—that kind. God is the kind of a God who can take the ordinary things and the vicissitudes of life, and God arranges them, and God mixes them together, and we know that all things work together for good for those who love God. And so we can say, “Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for your providence.”

Now I’m not saying, if you’re Christian, you’re not going to have any trouble. *Christianity is not the subtraction of trouble from life. It’s the addition of power to meet those problems.* I’m going to tell you the difference in a Christian’s problems and the unsaved man’s problems. In the first place, the Christian has somebody to bear his burdens for him. And in the second place, every burden becomes the blessing. God takes our tears, and strings them, and makes a pearl necklace for us to wear. And then, in the third place, all of your burdens that you have right now are just temporary. That’s

what Paul said, when he said, *“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* (Romans 8:18) And so I’m like that person who said, “Oh, it’s so wonderful to be saved!” He said, “Now that I’m saved, I’m happier when I’m sad than I used to be when I was glad.” And I think there’s a truth to that. Even when a Christian is sad, he can still have, underneath it all, and through it all, the joy of the Lord in knowing that all things work together for good for those who love God.

II. Thank You, Lord, for Your Perception

And so we can say, first of all, “Thank you, Lord, for your providence.” But then I want you to notice, secondly, “Thank you, Lord, for your perception.” For notice what our text says: *“The LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness.”* Aren’t you glad that, not only does God bless us in all things, but God knows all things about us? He knows our walking through this wilderness. God knows all about you. There’s not a thought in your mind but God knoweth it altogether. God knows when you get up. God knows when you go to bed. God knows what happened to you in the past. God knows what’s going to happen to you. God knows the worst about you and still loves you. You see, we are not valuable. I mean, God doesn’t love us because we’re valuable; we’re valuable because God loves us. The Bible says, *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Romans 5:8) He knows the worst about us and still loves us.

You want to know how many friends you have? How many people do you have that really know all about you—I mean, the worst about you—and they still love you? God is that kind of a friend: *“a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”* (Proverbs 18:24) And not only does He know the worst about you, but He also knows the best about you. Now I don’t really believe that anybody knows the worst about me, and I don’t believe anybody really knows the best about me. I don’t believe anybody knows the worst about you or the best about you. There are a lot of things that are wonderful about God’s things that nobody knows about, but God Himself.

You know, when I played football, I was kind of like a lineman in the backfield. I played blocking back. That means I was in the backfield, and called the quarterback, but I didn’t do a lot of passing. I didn’t do a lot of ball handling, nor running the ball quite a bit. Now I had my share of running the ball when I played fullback, but then I was moved to blocking back, and, you know, I was like a lineman in the backfield. And it was our job to open up a hole in the line and let these other folks go through. And sometimes this blocking back, and these linemen, man, we worked hard, and we’d open up a hole in

that line that was one that my grandmother could go through in a wheelchair. And here comes a backfield man, and he goes through, you know, and makes ten, fifteen, yards, forty yards, and a touchdown. And everybody cheers. They'd say, "Isn't he wonderful?" And these poor slobs would be lying on the ground there with their nose pushed in. Nobody knew about them. Nobody thought about them.

But I'll tell you something—and all the fellows who play football will know this is true: When you went back to that bench and the coach was there, he knew—he knew. And that makes a big difference, to know that he knows that you did your job right, and he knows what it is to block in that line. And the folks up there in this stands may not know. But I tell you, dear friend, won't it be wonderful when we meet Jesus Christ, the great coach—I mean, Jesus Christ, who knows and understands? And the Bible says that you can't even give a cup of cold water in His name and lose your reward. (Matthew 10:42)

Thank you, Lord, not only for your providence—that you caused all things to work together for good to those that love you—but thank you, Lord, for your perception—that you know all about us. Not only this, but, dear friend, He knows your weakness. You know, the Bible says, in Psalm 103, "*For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust*" (Psalm 103:14)—and that's good. You say, "I don't believe I'll be able to bear the things that come to me." Friend, nothing will come to you but what comes through Him first. He knows your frame. He knows what you're able to bear. Somebody said it this way: "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." "*He knoweth our frame.*" Not only does He know the worst about us, and the best about us; not only does He know our weaknesses; but He also knows our needs. Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*" (Matthew 6:32) He knows your needs, and He's able to supply your needs. Quit your worrying. Quit your complaining. Your Heavenly Father knows the needs that you have, and God is in the business of taking care of His own.

A little girl had been to school, and she learned about this thing called gravity. Later on, when her mother saw her, she was sitting there with a quizzical look on her face, in deep meditation. And her mother said, "My goodness! What's a little girl like you thinking so deeply about?" She said, "Mama, I was just thinking about gravity." And she said, "I have decided that gravity must be God in the center of the world holding all of His people right side up when the world is upside down."

And I think that's right. That's exactly what God's love is. It is God in the center of this world holding all of His dear people right side up when this crazy world seems to be upside down. He knows what things you have need of. And I can say, "Thank you, God, for your providence." "Thank you, Lord, for your perception." It's great to serve a God who knows: who knows our weakness, who knows our strength, who knows our needs,

who knows our sins, who knows all, and yet He loves us.

III. Thank You, Lord, for Your Purpose

Then I would say, thirdly, “Thank you, Lord, for your purpose.” What is God’s purpose? It’s revealed right here in this passage of Scripture. Would you look at it? *“For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness.”* What is God’s purpose? God’s purpose for you, God’s purpose and plan for me, is that we walk through this great wilderness. Now this great wilderness, to us, is the world in which we live. And the world has become a wilderness through sin. Why doesn’t God just take us on to heaven when He saves us? Well, God is trying to teach us a lesson. And what is the lesson that God wants to teach us? It is to walk through this world with us. God doesn’t take us out of the world, but God goes through this world with us. And God walks through this world with us—through this wilderness—to teach us a lesson. That’s exactly what He was teaching these folks so long ago.

Look in Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 2 and 3: *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness,”*—now, that’s what He did. Now, why did He do it?—*“to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna…”*—isn’t that sweet? He made them hungry, so He could feed them—*“suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”* (Deuteronomy 8:2–3)

Now, why did God allow them to go these forty years in the wilderness? It was God’s proving ground. It was God’s testing ground. Oh, I know there’s a symbolic meaning, I know there’s a spiritual meaning. I’m not talking about that now. I’m talking about the practical aspect of God keeping them there in the wilderness. God was putting them through His proving ground. God was putting them through His testing ground.

Friend, God wants to make something out of you, and that’s why He hasn’t taken you to heaven right away. You see, a man doesn’t sharpen an axe on a pound of butter; he does it on a grindstone. God could make your way smooth and easy. But He won’t do it. God says, to the contrary, *“Cursed is the ground for thy sake.”* (Genesis 3:17) “For your sake, the ground is cursed. You’re going to walk through this wilderness, and as you walk through this wilderness, you’re going to learn what the Christian life is all about. It is walking with me one step at a time.” Isn’t that right? “As you have received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in Him.” (Colossians 2:6) And we’re going to have to learn

this, dear friend, as He taught them, as He fed them with manna day by day: “You can’t get enough manna for tomorrow. You have to gather your day’s supply today, because you are going to walk with me.” You see, God is doing something in my life.

Now, if you were to look at me right now, and wanted to criticize me, you could start here, and go down here; you could start here, and go out here; you could start here, and go in here. You could criticize anything, anything you wanted. And I could do the same thing about you, because we’re just a society of sinners—that’s all we are. But listen. Before you criticize too much, I want to say to you what Mike Hopping said to somebody who criticized him. He said, “Don’t be too hard on me. God is not finished with me yet.” Now, that’s pretty good. You see, God is not finished with us yet. God is working with us. God has a purpose. And so we can say this Thanksgiving week, “Thank you, God, not only for your providence that causes all things to work together; not only for your perception, where you know and understand all about us; but thank you, God, for your purpose, that is to teach us to walk with you through this great wilderness that we call the world. Thank you, Lord, so much.” And I want to say, dear friend, notice that it says “*through*”: we’re coming through.

IV. Thank You, Lord, for Your Patience

Then I want you to notice again the next thing: “Thank you, Lord, for your patience”—because it says He walked with them forty years. Notice what it says: “*For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years.*” Now, that’s amazing that God walked with them forty years. He must be the God of patience. As a matter of fact, the Bible calls Him, in Romans 15, verse 5, “*the God of patience.*” (Romans 15:5) He is the God of patience. For forty years He walked with these complaining, whining, fickle, disobedient, unfaithful people. But He never did forsake them. And that is so great. Thank you, Lord, that you kept up with these folks.

Aren’t you glad that God is patient with you? I mean, have you ever confessed the same sin to God more than once, twice—five hundred times, maybe? I imagine there are some things I’ve confessed to God one thousand times, maybe two thousand. Come to think of it, maybe five thousand—and I’m not exaggerating. I imagine there are things that I have confessed to God five thousand times. And you say, “Oh boy, you must be bad, preacher.” Well, I’m not going to tell you what it is. Over and over again, we say, “Lord, I’m so sorry I failed again. Have mercy on me. Forgive me.” You know, you think that God would just say, “No, friend. I am finished with you. After all, Adrian, how much patience do you expect me to have?” But the God who went with them forty years has been with me that same length of time.

You know, the Bible says, in Acts chapter 13, verse 18, *“And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.”* (Acts 13:18) “He suffered their manners in the wilderness.” Don’t you like the way that it’s put there? Forty years they had bad spiritual manners. And God put up with it. I’m so glad for the patience of the God of all patience. I’m so glad, when Simon Peter came to Jesus, he said, “Lord, now look. There’s a fellow who’s been bothering me. He does the same thing. Then he asks me to forgive him. And then he does the same thing over again. How many times do I have to forgive this fellow, Lord? Seven times?” And the Lord, with a twinkle in His eye, and a smile playing across His lips, said, “No, not seven; seven times seventy, 490 times.” And the Lord doesn’t mean to stop when you get to 490. This was His way of saying, “As many times as this man sins against you, and he comes and says, ‘I’m sorry; I repent; forgive me,’ you forgive him.” (Matthew 18:21–22) Now, if God expects that out of me concerning Jim Whitmire, how much more does God forgive me when I come?

V. Thank You, Lord, for Your Presence

Thank you, Lord. Thank you for your providence. I love you for your providence. Thank you, Lord, for your perception. I love you for your understanding. Thank you, dear God, for your purpose. I love you, Lord, that you have a purpose in my life as I go through this wilderness. And thank you, dear sweet Lord, for your patience, that you’ve been with me forty years. His grace has led me safe thus far, and grace will lead me on. But then I want to say, next of all, “Thank you, Lord, for your presence,” for the text goes on to say, *“These forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee.”*

God never leaves us. God never forsakes us. He was with them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night. He is with us in the person of His Holy Spirit. And even before I was saved, the Spirit of God, I believe, was breathing over me, and protecting me, and keeping me, and guiding me. You know, often we say, “Well, the Lord is only with the saved person.” But, dear friend, if you’re unsaved, I want to tell you that God has been with you, and God has been keeping you, and God has been guiding you, and God has been leading you, and God has been bringing you to this moment today that you might give your heart to Jesus Christ. How wonderful, though, that, if you’re saved, to know that, not only does He abide around you, but He lives within you, in your very heart. You know, that’s what Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6, says—the heart of that text says, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* (Hebrews 13:5–6) Isn’t that a great promise? *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* In the Greek language, there is a form of the language that is so intensive that it literally says, and could be translated, “I will never, never, never leave thee.”

A young Greek scholar was trying to show this to an old saint, an old grandmother who had walked with the Lord for many years. She didn't have much education *here*, but she had plenty down *here*. And he had his Greek Bible out. Can you imagine this young theological student with a Greek Bible talking to an old saint who'd walked with Jesus many, many, years? And he's trying to show off his knowledge to her, in a way, and he's saying to her, "Now, mother, what this really says is, 'I will never, never, never, leave thee.'" She just smiled and said, "Well, son, God may have to say it three times for you Greek fellows, but once is enough for me." And I say, yes, praise God, He has said this: *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

When I was a young man who just started going to church, we had a Training Union joint assembly at Northwood Baptist Church, and we had an old song leader who led music with a twang, and we used to sing a song called, "No, Never Alone"—"No, never alone; He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone." And when we would sing that, he had a way of patting his hand. He'd say, "No, never alone." Well, after a while, the people there, and the teenagers, and we young folks, would get to stamping our feet. Every time he'd say, "no," we'd say, "no, never alone," and we would stop singing it, and we'd start to shout it: "No, never alone." And we enjoyed that. It got a little raucous sometimes, but it was better than the barren monotony that we'd been going through in that service, and so we would sing it that way: "No, never alone. He promised never to leave me. No, never alone."

Well, that song came and lived in my heart for a while, and then dropped out. I was called and saved, called to the ministry, went off to seminary, came back, took my first church, and then Joyce and I had a real tragedy come into our lives. One of our children died on Mother's Day, on Sunday, after I'd just preached on the glory of a Christian home. A young baby, a beautiful son named Philip, died suddenly, instantly, in his crib. Without going into all the details, it was one of those infant deaths.

We'd never had any death in our family. I come from a large family. My wife comes from a large family. And our parents are still living, our brothers and sisters, their children. We'd heard about the comfort that God gives. We'd even preached about it. But we never really experienced it. And I can remember, as I came back to Joyce, as I came back from the hospital, we turned to the Bible for comfort, and I found a passage of Scripture that I'd never seen before, the first verse I turned to—and this was it: *"Blessed be God...the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort [others] by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."* (1 Corinthians 1:3–4) And I said, "Oh, thank you, Lord. I know, if I don't know anything else, that you have done something in this young preacher's heart: that you are going to prove to me that the comfort that you have is

real, so I can comfort other people.”

But as we pulled out of the driveway that Sunday night to go down to West Palm Beach, leaving Fort Pierce, the little church where we pastored had gathered together, heartbroken for their service, and coming out of the windows there—the windows were open, no air-conditioning—we heard them singing this song:

*I've seen the lightning flashing, I've heard the thunder roll.
I've felt sin's breakers dashing, which almost conquered my soul.
I've heard the voice of my Savior, bidding me still to fight on.
He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone!*

*No, never alone, no never alone,
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.*

—LUDIE D. PICKETT

And I thank God for that. I thank God these forty years, as I look back, I can say, “Thank you, dear God, not only for your providence; thank you, dear God, not only for your perception, and your purpose, and your patience; but thank you, Lord, for your presence.” No, never alone. *“These forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee.”*

VI. Thank You, Lord, for Your Provision

Then I'd like to say, last of all, “Thank you Lord. Thank you so much for your provision.” For notice the last part of that verse: *“Thou hast lacked nothing.”* Thank you, Lord, so much for your provision. *“Thou hast lacked nothing.”* There's nothing, dear friend, that I have needed that His hand of mercy has not provided. Psalm 34:10: *“The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.”*

A. The Check

Let me give you a check that you can carry to heaven's bank and cash. Do you want it? All right here it is—Philippians 4:19: *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* That's the check. The number on the check, again, is Philippians 4:19. *“My God shall supply all your need.”* Now God's check will never bounce. His promises are yea and amen in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:20) That's the check.

B. The Amount on the Check

The amount? How much is on the face of that check? *“All your need.”* I'm glad He didn't say “all your wants” for two reasons. In the first place, I have wanted some things I didn't need. One of the worst things God could ever do to us is give us everything we

want. And in the second place, I needed some things I didn't want. When I was a little boy, sometimes they used to say, "You need a spanking." And I did, but I didn't want one. And a lot of times the things that we need we don't want. But isn't it wonderful that the Bible says, "*My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory*"?

C. The Capital Behind the Check

Now, that's the check number; that's the amount on the face of the check. What about the capital? Do think that He will be able to pay? Well, the capital is "*according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*."

I heard of a rich Texan one time who wrote a check, and it came back: "Insufficient funds"—not you, us: the bank bounced.

Now you're not going to bankrupt God's bank. I don't care what your need is, God's got the riches. When the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, she said, "I've never seen so much. Why, the half has not yet been told." (1 Kings 10:4–7; 2 Chronicles 9:3–6) The Bible says, concerning Jesus, "*A greater than Solomon is here*." (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31) Oh, the riches of His glory! The riches of His glory! This is the amount in the treasury. This is the resources of the bank. You can be certain, dear friend, that your check can be cashed.

D. The Signature on the Check

And then I want you to notice the signature on this check. "*My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*." Christ Jesus has signed this check in the crimson ink of His own blood. Now you can carry it to heaven's bank and cash it, but there's one thing you must do: you must endorse it. It's made out to you, but you must endorse it. You must say, "Yes, I will link my name with the name of Jesus Christ, and by faith I will take the provision that God has given me."

Conclusion

Will you do it? Then this Thanksgiving can be a great Thanksgiving, because you can begin to thank God for His providence, for His perception, for His purpose, for His patience, for His presence, and praise God for His provision.

What Fathers Should Teach Their Children about Sex

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 5:18, 21; 6:6–9

Outline

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Introduction

Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 5—Deuteronomy chapter 5. I want to speak today on “What Fathers Should Teach the Children about Sex”—about “What Fathers Should Teach Their Children about Sex.” Now it is the father who is to be the head of the home; and, therefore, the father is to accept the responsibility and to bear the blame if his home is wrong. And so today's message, I trust, will be a very helpful message.

Now, notice what God says in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 18: *“Neither shalt thou commit adultery”* (Deuteronomy 5:18). Then, notice, in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 21: *“Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's”* (Deuteronomy 5:21). And then I want you to skip to chapter 6 and begin reading with me in verse 6: *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:”—*what words? *“Don't commit adultery. Don't covet your neighbor's wife.”* Those words—*“and these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou”—*who? The father—*“shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt*

bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6–9).

Now God is saying, “I’ve given you some commandments, and these commandments are for the home, and for the family, and for the welfare of society, that you might live long in the land that I’ve given you.” And then God said, “Fathers, you are to teach these things to your son.”

Now most fathers really don’t know how to do this. I heard of a wife who said to her husband, “John, it is time you taught our boy about the birds and the bees.” So the father reluctantly took his son for a walk in the park and found a couple there in the park: a man and a woman in a passionate embrace. He said, “Son, you see that? Your mother wants you to know that the birds and the bees do the same thing.” Most fathers have about that much knowledge as to how to teach their children about the facts of life.

A. **Teach Them Vitally**

Now this passage of Scripture says that the fathers are to teach these things to their children, and, number one, they are to teach them vitally. That is, *“these words...shall be in thine heart”* (Deuteronomy 6:6). That’s what he says in verse 6. They should be down in your heart. They’re to be a vital part of your life.

A schoolteacher was taking an examination, and one of the questions on that examination was this: “Can you teach what you do not know?” Her answer was classy: “You can no more teach what you do not know than you can come from where you ain’t been.” Amen?

Folks, a dad can’t teach it unless he knows it. *“These words...shall be in [your] heart.”*

B. **Teach Them Verbally**

Now you shall teach them vitally. And then you shall teach them verbally. Not only should you vitalize it; you should verbalize it. Notice again: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deuteronomy 6:7). Talk freely with your children—and I’m not just talking about an embarrassed moment when you say, “Now, son, sit down. There are some things Dad wants to tell you.” No, that would be awkward for you and for him. This is to be such a part of your life that when you talk, when you rise up, when you lie down, when you go out, when you come in, in a normal conversation, you’re to share these things. Hey, folks, that’s the best teaching.

Now I believe in family worship, but, you know, sometimes family worship can be

painful. You know, you're just trying to cram something down the throats of the kids: "You sit still while I instill." You know, a dose a day keeps the devil away. It's like cod liver oil. We just are giving. That's not the real way to teach the Bible. There is a time for a brief moment when the family comes together and they share. But, oh, let me tell you, when you begin to verbalize it, when you rise up, when you lie down, when you're in the way, when you go out, when you come in, and when you speak the things of God normally and naturally—consistently, everyday—then you're really teaching, daddies. You're really teaching.

C. Teach Them Visually

You see, you need to vitalize it. It needs to be in your heart. Then you need to verbalize it. And then—listen—you need to visualize it. Notice what else he goes on to say here about this Word of God: "*And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*" The Jews of this day took a little box and put the little scripture in the box and wore it upon their forehead. And they wore it upon their right hand. They were called *phylacteries*. They would just carry the scripture with them as a sign that they loved the Word of God. "*And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates*" (Deuteronomy 6:8–9). That is, visualize it. Let them see it. Have something they can read. Have something they can see. Have something before them constantly, day and night: books, records, films, Christian tapes. Let them be able to visualize what you're saying. Now it may cost a little money. Hey, dads, it's the best investment that you can possibly make. It is up to you; it is your responsibility to vitalize, to verbalize, to visualize these things that God has said about the sanctity of marriage, about premarital purity and post-marital chastity.

I. Dads Should Teach Their Children About the Dangers of Impurity

The dad is to be the teacher. Now you say, "Well, Brother Rogers, I just wish that somehow I had a guide." Well, thank God, you do. So I want us to leave the Book of Deuteronomy, and I want us to turn over to the Book of Proverbs chapter 5. And I want us to do some eavesdropping. I want us to listen to a very wise dad as he's teaching his son the facts of life. And we'll just eavesdrop on this conversation right now. Here is a guideline for a father to teach his son the facts of life. And when I say, "son," I also mean daughter: to teach his children the facts of life.

Now, let's begin reading in Proverbs chapter 5, and you'll see that's exactly what we're talking about. I'll begin in verse 1: "*My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep*

knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb...—now when he says, “a strange woman,” he doesn’t mean an odd woman. The word *strange* here is translated in some scriptures as “alien” or “foreign,” but it doesn’t necessarily even mean a person from another country. What it literally means is “someone who’s not yours; someone you have no right to; an immoral woman”—“*For the lips of [an immoral] woman drop as an honeycomb,*”—old honey-lips, that’s her!—“*and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable,*”—that is, they’re unstable—“*that thou canst not know them*” (Proverbs 5:1–6). That is, you can never ever really trust in this kind of a relationship.

A. **It Will Not Bring Fulfillment**

Now, here’s the first thing that this dad told his son. He said, “Son, immorality does not bring fulfillment”—“immorality does not bring fulfillment.” And every dad needs to teach his son and his daughter that the devil promises much, but he always pays off with counterfeit money.

I want to read to you what a teenage girl who was in college wrote to her dad, and I want to read the answer that he gave. I think both are classic. First of all, I thank God for a daughter who had a good enough relationship with her papa that she could write these words. She said to her dad in this letter, “Dad, when I see how casually sex is taken by my classmates, they make it sound so natural and so inevitable that there are times when I wonder what I am waiting for.” I want you to hear what this dad said. He wrote her back, and he said, “I think I can tell you in six words what you are waiting for: you are waiting to be free—free from the nagging voice of conscience and the grey shadow of guilt, free to give all of yourself, not a panicky fraction. Some deep instinct in you knows what tremendous influence your first complete union with another person can be, and that some instinct keeps you telling you not to blur it, not to waste it, not to make it small.” Oh, what good advice!

Now it almost seems old-fashioned today that boys and girls should come to the marriage altar pure and virgins. That’s old-fashioned. That’s the plan of God. That’s the will of God. One girl who had lived a fast and loose life, and had sacrificed her purity and her virginity upon the altar of some man’s lust and then had become the dirty plaything of even dirtier boys, was with her girlfriend and trying to get her girlfriend who was still pure to compromise herself and go the same way. And this girl who knew God and had quite a bit of wisdom said to this loose girl, “Let me tell you something. Anytime I want to become like you, I can. But anytime you would again become like me, you

never can.” Amen?

Hey, girls, keep yourself for the one you’re going to marry. Fellows, keep yourself for the one you’re going to marry. I’m so glad that God allowed me to come to the marriage altar pure and marry a pure girl. That’s meant so much to our home. It’s been a blessing to us just to know that. That’s a treasure. Don’t blow it. Don’t lose that. That’s God’s plan. And don’t let the devil tell you that there’s something better. Hey, the devil doesn’t love you. He’s a liar. Young people need to learn that, and dads need to teach that. The devil offers much.

I heard about a man—his name is Charlie Dobson—up in Ontario, Canada. They didn’t have regular garbage pickup up there, so he had a good plan to get rid of his garbage. Do you know what he would do? He would take his eggshells, coffee grounds, and grapefruit rinds, put them in a box, wrap that box with tissue paper, put a bow on it, and set it out near the curb. Before long, a car would come along, stop, back up, open the door, in would go the box, and off they would go. Oh, Charlie used to wonder about what people thought when they unwrapped the garbage. The devil offers gift-wrapped garbage—gift-wrapped garbage. Young people need to understand this; they need to see this, and they need a dad who is loving enough, and wise enough, and kind enough to say, “My son, listen to this.”

B. It Will Rob You of Your Future Happiness

But not only does he need to warn about the danger that says that immorality does not bring genuine fulfillment, but there’s another danger that he needs to warn his youngster about, and it is this: that immorality does endanger future happiness. Not only does it not bring present fulfillment, but it steals away joy from the future. Immorality, impurity, kills real love. You see, the more promiscuity prevails, the more women are looked upon as things to be used, and the tenderness and the sensitivity of real love disappears; it can never have the depth and the beauty that God intended for it to have. Now no less university than Stanford University did some surveys, and this is what they found out: an in-depth study at Stanford revealed that, the more promiscuous people were before marriage, the less happy they were after marriage. Another survey has shown that people who were pure when they came to the marriage altar have the highest degree of marital happiness after marriage.

Now, you see, there’s something about impurity before marriage that mitigates against happiness after marriage. For one thing, it causes suspicion. Now a boy will say to a girl, “I just can’t wait. And I love you so much I just can’t wait.” She says, “I know him. He’s the kind of guy who can’t control himself.” What if he says, “Honey, I love you with all of my heart, but I so admire you and I so value you that I’m not going to ask you

to compromise yourself.” You see, when a boy says to a girl, “I love you, I love you, I love you,” you know what he’s really saying when he’s trying to get her to compromise? He’s really saying, “I love me, I love me, I love me.” He calls it love, but it is lust. You see, love wants to give—love wants to give. Love wants to protect. But not lust. You know, the kids today say, “We’re just so unloved we can’t wait.”

Hey, listen, friend. That doesn’t prove love: not being able to wait. Being able to wait proves love. That’s what proves love. I mean, do you love her enough that you could still honor her and respect her without sexual fulfillment? That’s love. The Bible says that Jacob loved a girl, and he had to wait seven years to marry that girl. But the Bible says they were as nothing because of the love that he had for her—love that he had her for. Love can wait. It is lust that cannot wait. And I’m telling you, dear friend, that if you sacrifice the future on the altar of the immediate, you’re making a bad bargain, because what you’re doing is you’re sinning against your future happiness.

Hey, kids, if I could put it one word, it would be this: you eat your cake now, you’ll have a crummy tomorrow. That’s it. Listen. Don’t sacrifice something that is so beautiful and so wonderful!

C. You’ll Have to Answer to God

What did Solomon tell his son? Number one: It will not bring fulfillment now. Number two: It will rob you of future happiness, future joy, and future fulfillment. The third danger he warned him about is, “One of these days, my son, you’re going to have to answer to Almighty God for the way that you do live.” Notice here in Proverbs chapter 5, verse 21, he goes onto tell his son, *“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray”* (Proverbs 5:21–23). That is, “Listen, son. Sin first fascinates; then it assassinates. First of all, it thrills, and then it kills. Son, listen. The ways of a man are before the Lord. You’re going to have to answer to God.”

In one of our messages on “The Home on the Rock,” I mentioned this, but not to this very congregation. But so many times, the kids talk about “going all the way.” You get in the backseat of a car and you say, “We went all the way.” No, you didn’t—you didn’t go all the way. If she gets pregnant, you have to tell her dad: you’ve gone a little further. Or, if you have to tell your mom and dad, lady, you’ve gone a little further. And you catch a disease: you’ve gone a little further. You still haven’t gone all the way. A baby comes along, and you have to get married; you’re not ready to get married: you’ve gone a little further. Or, maybe you have an abortion and have the pangs of a guilty conscience that you’ve taken an innocent life—hey, by the way, there are no illegitimate

babies, only illegitimate parents—and you bear that on your heart. You’ve gone a little further, but you haven’t gone all the way. Hey, you don’t go all the way until you meet God at the Judgment—and then you’ve gone all the way.

That’s what he’s saying here: “One of these days, my son, you’re going to have to face God.” There’s a God that runs this universe, and, like it or not, there is a God that has laid down some holy laws. And the Bible says, “*Thou shall not commit adultery*” (Exodus 20:14). And now you teach these things to your son. That’s what the Bible says. Where are some dads today who will come to their boys and say, “Son, this is right and this is wrong because God says so”? And where are some dads today who will tell them about this sin that so gets itself around a mans life? The Bible says, “*He shall be holden with the cords of his [own iniquity]*” (Proverbs 5:22), in this verse. These people talk about “free love.” They’re not free; they’re bound. There’s nothing that gets its stranglehold more on a person than this kind of a sin, and that’s the reason the Bible says, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 18:, “*Flee fornication.*” Flee it! “*Every sin that a man doeth is without the body;*”—that is, outside his body—“*but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body*” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Dads need to teach this to their children.

II. Dads Should Provide Their Children with Guidance

But not only do the dads need to teach something about the dangers. Hey, that’s not enough. Also, dads need to give their sons some direction: to tell them how to live clean and pure. It’s not just enough to give a warning. “Tell us how, Dad.” And so, what does he do here? Notice in chapter 5, beginning in verse 7: “*Hear me now therefore...*”—he warns him, and then he says—“*Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:*”—he’s talking about honey-lips now: “just don’t come near the door of her house”—“*lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel*” (Proverbs 5:7–9).

Now what he’s saying is, “Son, guard your company. Son, don’t get in a compromising position. Just be very careful the company that you keep.” The Bible says that “*evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Corinthians 15:33). In plain language, that means you’ll get in trouble if you run with the wrong crowd. Twenty-seven times in the New Testament we’re told to run not with the wrong crowd, but from the wrong crowd—to run, to run. The Bible says, “*Flee fornication*” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Don’t see how close you can get. See how far you can stay away. “*Flee fornication.*” It’s not a sin we’re told to fight; it’s a sin we are told to flee. “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be*

tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Let me tell you, many times that way to escape is the King’s highway: two legs and a hard run, amen? Take ’em up; put ’em down. He says, “Don’t come near the door of her house.”

When I was in college, I had on my desk a motto that said this: “He who would not fall down ought not to walk in slippery places”—“He who would not fall down ought not to walk in slippery places.” That is what Solomon is saying to his son: “Hey, son, just get out of those slippery places. Don’t even go near the door of her house. Be careful, my son, about the temptation that you put yourself into.”

Now when you put yourself into temptation, you’ve already sinned—if you’ve willingly, deliberately, put yourself in temptation. You go to a date and go out in one of these R-rated movies, sit there and watch fornication, adultery, and nudity, profanity, then you pray, “Lord, lead us not into temptation,” well, you’ve already put yourself in temptation. You go out there and park on some “lover’s lane.” That’s like playing with matches in dry grass.

Over there in the Smokies we have a sign that says, “Don’t feed the bears.” You know why? Well, a bear comes up, and he looks pretty friendly. And so you give him a sandwich. So far, so good. He likes that sandwich. But you know what it wants? Another one. You give him another one. He liked that one, and now you’ve only got one left, and that was for you. But he looks at you kind of funny like he wants that other one. And you look around, and after a while you decide you’d better give him that one. And you give him that one. And now you’re out of sandwiches. Now, you know what he wants? You. Don’t feed the bears.

Listen. You kids, you get yourself into a situation and you’re going to find yourself with something you can’t handle. And happy is the father who needs to sit down with his son and with his daughter and explain this to them: not to walk in slippery places. It’s not that you don’t trust your children. It’s not that you don’t trust their character. You just don’t trust their instincts.

Now a father, when asked by a child, “Don’t you trust me?” let me tell you what Max Rafferty had to say. I think this word is classic: “When your children asks you, ‘Don’t you trust me?’ say, ‘No.’ Listen to it, of course. ‘I don’t trust you, honey.’ Trust is not something that you dispense freely like pink lemonade to spread a feeling of togetherness;”—now, listen to this—“trust is built on solid experience and not emotion.”

You would not think of trusting your son, who just finished a course in freshman chemistry and wants to be a doctor, to perform an operation. Your trust would be premature and altogether misplaced. To trust young people with the explosive potentials of sex; to throw them completely on their own with no safeguards, rules, or restraints; is

as foolish as thrusting a surgeon's knife into the hands of a pre-med student. This is not trust, but foolish and dangerous irresponsibility. It has nothing to do with a boy's character, if he's not ready to perform surgery. You just don't trust him to perform surgery. He is not ready. And your kids are not ready.

It's not that you don't believe they're basically good kids; they're just not ready to face those things, folks. That's all there is to it. You see to it, dads, when they date, that they date in the right environment. That's up to you. Don't let them go to one of these passion pits called a drive-in theater. Let them go to a football game with 50,000 people around. And there may be a time, one day, for a kiss goodnight, but you let it be on the doorstep with the porch light on and you looking through the keyhole with a shotgun.

Listen. Dads need to point out the dangers, and then dads need to give some direction. It's up to you, dad! It's up to you, dad, to care enough, to set some limits, to guard and guide your daughter and your son.

III. Dads Should Point Out the Delights of Keeping God's Word

Now, third thing: not only should you show some dangers, and not only should you give some directions; but, hey, dads, you ought to point out the delights of keeping God's Word.

Now we go back again to the meat-bone thing. Remember? You want to take the bone out of the dog's mouth: what do you do? You show him the steak! You don't just try to rip that nasty bone out of his mouth without showing him the good side.

Now, here's what Solomon did as we listen to him teaching his son, and he shows him the delights of a wonderful marriage. Look again, if you will, in chapter 5, verse 15: *"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?"* (Proverbs 5:15–20). What he's saying is, "Oh, son, son, don't miss the joy of a Christian home! Don't miss having a wife, the security of a lasting marriage, and the satisfaction of a loving mate. There's no greater joy than this on earth!"

You have to feel sorry for the playboys, the Hugh Hefners, the others—Marilyn Monroe, that sex goddess who ended up a suicide, we suppose. Do you know what she's reported to have said? "I hate sex." That's a shame—that's a shame. Hey, let me tell you something, kids—let me tell you something. God is not trying to keep sex from you. God is trying to keep sex for you—for you. It's God's loving gift. He talks about

being ravished with the love of your wife. Don't envy those who blow it, and miss it, and mess it up. People who keep God's laws concerning sex enjoy more sex, and enjoy sex more, than those who break God's laws.

Conclusion

God has a plan for you. The sad thing would be that you would miss God's best, that you'd mess up, that you would blow it. Peter Marshall said this: "Dearly beloved, the marriage relation, when rightly understood and properly appreciated, is the most delightful, as well as the most sacred and solemn, of human relations. It is the clasping of hands, the blending of lives, and the union of hearts that two may walk together up the hill of life to meet the dawn together, bearing life's burdens, discharging its duties, sharing its joys and sorrows. Marriage is more than moonlight and roses; much more than the singing of love songs and the whispering of vows of undying affection. In our day it is by many lightly regarded, and many as lightly discarded, but marriage will ever remain in the sight of God an eternal union made possible only by the gift of love which God alone can bestow." Don't miss that—don't miss that.

One day, a man in Africa saw some little boys, and they were playing marbles with rocks—bright, shiny rocks. The man picked up one of them and recognized that it was a diamond. And that's the way the South African diamond mines were discovered. Kids, premarital impurity is just playing with diamonds as if they were rocks. Don't do that—don't do that.

Don't miss the best. And dads—hey, dads! Dads!—it's up to you to vitalize it, to verbalize it, to visualize it—to teach your kids the Word of God.

A Future for the Family

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: April 15, 1990

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:1–9

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Introduction

Moses is giving his farewell address to the children of Israel. He has poured his life into them. He wants his work to last. He wants the nation to endure, and he knows that the nation cannot endure unless there is a future for the family. And notice what he says here in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 29. He's speaking of his people, and he says, *"O that there were such an heart in them..."*—now he's speaking for God—*"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"* (Deuteronomy 5:29). "A Future for the Family."

And I'm telling you, ladies and gentleman, it may not be well for us and for our children unless we make some radical changes. One hundred thousand of America's children are in prison. Four out of ten live in a broken home. Sixty-five out of 1,000 between seven and eleven have already received psychiatric help. The average age of those who begin to smoke cigarettes have dropped from fourteen to ten. A million of our girls between twelve and seventeen will get pregnant. This does not even take into

account those who are going to have an abortion. One out of five of America's children uses drugs twice a week. Ten million minors are infected with venereal diseases. Something tragic is wrong in America. Our kids are walking through a minefield, and they're being blown to bits. And God's answer is what it has always been: the family. And God's Word still says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6).

Now, after Deuteronomy chapter 5, Moses gives the most important passage in all of the Book of Deuteronomy—and one of the key passages in all of the Bible. To our Jewish friends, this is one of the most important scriptures that they know, and Jewish children memorize it as a child. Deuteronomy chapter 6—look at it: *"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee,"*—now, watch it—*"thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged."* What is he saying? That there may be a future for the family. Now, here's the instruction. Listen to it: *"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates"* (Deuteronomy 6:1–9). Now this is God's plan; this is God's formula that the family might have a future.

Now I have to look back to the time that I was born and the day in which I was raised, and I have to say that things are different for me than they are for my children and grandchildren. Somebody was reminiscing, and this is what a couple of old timers were saying one to another: "We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees, and *the pill*. We were born before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams, and ballpoint pens; before panty hose, dishwashers, clothes driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes; and before man walked on the moon. We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for clothes, not coming out of. Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. *Designer jeans* were

scheming girls named Jean. And having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins. We were born before house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers, and computer marriages. We were born before daycare centers, group therapy, and nursing homes. We never heard of FM Radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, *time sharing* meant togetherness, not computers or condominiums. A *chip* meant a piece of wood. *Hardware* meant hardware, and *software* wasn't even a word. In 1940, *made in Japan* meant junk. And the term *making out* meant how you did on your exam. Pizzas, McDonald's, and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day, grass was mowed, coke was a drink, and pot was something you cooked in. Rock music was a grandma's lullaby, and aids were helpers in the principal's office. We were certainly not born before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were surely born before the sex change. We made do with what we had, and we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby. No wonder we're so confused. And there's such a generation gap today. But we survived."

I'm just wondering if this new generation is going to survive. We talk about *progress*, but I wonder just how much progress are we making. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to tell you, with a note of urgency and alarm in my heart, that I am concerned, and therefore I have felt impressed of the Holy Spirit to bring this series of messages entitled "A Future for the Family."

A. Kids Are Facing Liberalism in the Churches

Again, I want to say that your children and your grandchildren are walking through a minefield. There are so many churches that are filled with liberalism. Kids are going to those churches where the authority of the Word of God and the life of the Lord Jesus Christ are not being made manifest, and the worship is empty and futile—and even dangerous. And these kids have lost their moorings. Somebody has well said, "In the fifties, kids lost their innocence, and somehow they seemed to be liberated by music and films and education and cars and money; and they had a freedom. And, after having lost their innocence, in the sixties—that time of rebellion—then they lost their authority, and all of the answers were challenged. If you can remember the sixties, the kids challenged their parents, the religion, the government; nothing replaced the authorities. And so the youth were left without anything to believe. And then, in the seventies, they lost their ability to love. It became a "me-decade." Not knowing how to love, kids who had an innate ability to love substituted sex for love, and they didn't know the difference. And now, in our day and in our age, having lost their innocence, and having lost their authorities, and having lost the ability to love, folks, they've lost hope."

That's the reason you can pick up our newspaper, or any newspaper, and find teenagers killing themselves in an epidemic way—teenagers who, in the bloom of youth, have no hope. They've stopped believing in the future. That's the reason I want to bring this series of messages entitled "A Future for the Family."

B. Kids Are Facing Secularism and Humanism in the Schools

And not only are the kids facing this liberalism in the churches; they're facing secularism and humanism in the schools, and it breaks my heart. We were laughing about the forties—back when some of us were children—but do you remember what the problems were in the forties in school? Skipping school; running in the halls; talking in class; not having your homework done; talking during study hall; every now and again, breaking a window. With the exception of one or two of those, I plead guilty to every one, and I think most of us would. But what's happening in the schools today—and I do not blame the educators, as such; many of them are godly people who are doing the best they can—but the problems today: violence, stealing, rape, teacher abuse, deadly weapons on the school grounds, vandalism, arson, gang war, dope—right in the schools.

C. Kids Are Facing Paganism in Society

Again, I want to ask the question, how are the kids going to survive? You think about what the kids are seeing in society today: liberalism in the churches, humanism in the schools, and paganism in society. Did you know the alcohol industry is spending, literally, millions of dollars every year in advertising trying to seduce your teenager? They deny it, but they're lying—they're lying. They're trying to seduce your teenager, and they're doing a good job.

Thirty-two gallons of beer every year per capita: that is, everybody in the United States averages thirty-two gallons per year. Now somebody drank sixty-four, because I didn't drink any, but that's an average per capita. I read something the other day that broke my heart: ninety-five percent of college students drink beer—ninety-five percent! "Well," you say, "that's harmless!" It's not harmless. One out of every fifteen who begins to drink will become an alcoholic. That's not harmless. That's absolutely dangerous! But the beer distributors are liars. They don't tell the truth. They show those fellows out there in that Old Milwaukee bass boat, and they catch a big bass—you know, about a nine pounder. And then they're coming to the shore, and they're cooking him. And they're sitting around hoisting a foamy beer. And one of them says to the other one, "It just doesn't get any better than this!" Well, maybe he is telling the truth there, because, dear friend, it never gets better than that; it always gets worse. It may not get that good. But they never show the drunk in the back alley covered with vomit and flies; they don't

show that. They show these healthy, robust young men sitting around the campfire having a big time. They don't show the teenager sliced up in the emergency room. They don't show the old lady who's just been run over by a drunkard, beered up.

My dear friend, it's a minefield out there. You think of what the kids are watching. Did you know, dear friend, that on television, if a drink is served, do you know what that drink will be? Ten times to one, it will be alcohol—not milk, not a soft drink, not a milkshake. Ten times to one, it will be alcohol, in any situation. Have you ever seen a situation when something's a little tense, and somebody says, "I need a drink"? Sure. You see, that is conditioning the minds of these young people to think when you're tense, when there's a problem, when there's emergency, where do you go? You go to the liquor cabinet. Did you know that, in any kind of a sexual situation on television, eighty-eight percent of all sexual encounters are shown on television as being outside the bonds of matrimony? Eighty-eight percent! Friend, there is a problem.

And then, the kids are being inundated by this rock music. And do you know what the ultimate pornography is? MTV: pornography set to music. And you'd be amazed at what is happening. The message of rock music is primarily sexual promiscuity, bisexuality, fatalism, demonic worship, alcohol, and rebellion. And concerning sex, rock music gives the message that you can go all the way without consequences. These kids talk about "going all the way." They don't know what "going all the way" is. That's the problem. They haven't gone all the way. When she gets pregnant, you've gone a little further down the way. When you contract a venereal disease, you've gone a little further down the way. Or, when there is a baby conceived, and you have to drop out of school to take care that baby—or, worse, you go into an abortitorium to have that baby put to death: you've gone a little further down the way. When you have to face her father, you've gone a little further, mister. But you haven't gone all the way until you face God in the judgment, who says, "*Flee fornication*" (1 Corinthians 6:18); "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" (Exodus 20:14)—when you face a God whose laws you've broken. But these kids are having this drummed into their heads day after day after day.

What are we going to do? What is God's plan? Well, go back to Deuteronomy chapter 6. And I hated to give that litany, but I wanted to set the stage for something that is vibrating in my heart and in my soul. And this will be a series of messages, and I pray God that you'll not miss a single one.

Now there are three basic things Deuteronomy tells us—and all of this is just to set the stage.

I. A Future for the Family Is Promised

First of all, a future for the family is promised. Write it down: a future for the family is

promised. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 1 and 2: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee,”*—now, here’s the promise—*“thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son,”*—that’s your grandson—*“all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged”* (Deuteronomy 6:1–2). God has promised a future for the family, and it starts with the parents. Plato said, “The life of the nation is the life of the family written large.” A juvenile delinquent is so many times a child just trying to act like his parents.

II. A Foundation for the Family Is Provided

The second thing I want you to notice: not only is a future for the family promised, but a foundation for the family is provided. Now, what is the foundation for the family? Look in verses 3 through 5: *“Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.”* Now, here’s the foundation for the family: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”* (Deuteronomy 6:3–5). That is the foundation of the family: it is a love for God. That may sound simple, even simplistic, but it is incredibly truthful and profound.

A. Love God with a Sincere Love

Love God with a sincere love. That means with all of your heart, moms and dads. Now if you do not sincerely love God, you don’t have much of a chance of having a successful family. As a matter of fact, you have no real chance of having a successful family. Many kids are turned off because they see that their parents, while they profess religion, they don’t love God with all of their heart.

Karl Marx, as a little child, was raised in a Jewish family. They lived in Germany. One day, Karl’s father said to him, “We’re moving to another city.” They moved to another city. They had been attending synagogue faithfully. When they moved to another city, Karl Marx’s father came home and said, “We’re no longer going to synagogue; we’re going to go to the Lutheran church.” And Karl asked his father and said, “Why, father, are we going to the Lutheran church?” And do you know what Karl Marx’s father said? He said, “Because of business reasons.” He said, “I could make contacts in the Lutheran church—business contacts.” Karl Marx was so disillusioned with his father that something died within him. He said to himself, “My father had no real

convictions.” He moved to England, and he later, of course, founded the movement that we know of as Communism. And in his writings, he said this: “Religion is the opiate of the people.” Religion is just a dope, an opiate, because he had a father and he saw that the father did not have a sincere love for God.

B. Love God with a Selfless Love

We’re to love God with a sincere love. We’re to love God with a selfless love: “*with all [your] soul*” (Deuteronomy 6:5). Now the soul is the self. Kids are looking for parents who have such integrity—there’s nothing in their life that is marked off as private: “God, stay out.” Kids want to see parents who bring God into their family recreation, into the business, and the relationship with husband and wife.

C. Love God with a Strong Love

A sincere love. And a selfless love. And a strong love. “Love God with all of your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). Now that’s the foundation from the family—with all of your strength: physical strength, emotional strength, financial strength, intellectual strength.

Love God: that’s the foundation for the family.

III. A Formula for the Family is Prescribed

Now, let’s get down to the last and most important thing. Listen. There’s a future for the family that’s promised. There’s a foundation for the family that’s provided—that is, to love God with all of your heart, your soul, and your might. Now, last of all, let me tell you, there is a formula for the family that is prescribed right here. Now this is where you parents need to tune in. God says that your faith is to go from you to your children. It is not my job, nor the Sunday School teacher’s job, nor the college professor, nor anybody at a club or anybody else to teach your children. It is primarily your job. That’s what Deuteronomy chapter 6 is talking about. A psychiatrist at the Menninger Clinic said this: “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos. The father is to provide stability and leadership and character and strength for the family.”

Now the Bible makes it very plain and very clear. Look, if you will, in verse 6: “*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). God is saying that nobody can do this for you. We have mothers now being pushed out of their God-given assignment in the home. And millions of unattended children are roaming the streets, or they’re put in daycare centers. And there are forces—powerful and sinister forces—that are taking the plastic mentality of

these children and molding those minds. And, as I've said before, the television has become a babysitter for so many kids. God made your child to be dependent upon you, and you cannot pay somebody else to take this responsibility.

You need to start with the children when they're young, when their minds are ready to receive. How old should a child be when you begin to train him for God? A woman asked a pastor—she said to the pastor, “How soon should I start the spiritual training of my child?” And the pastor said, “Well, how old is the child?” She said, “Five.” He said, “You're five years too late.”

And, actually, now they're saying that you should begin singing to the baby in the mother's womb—that the baby listens in the womb. And you ought to be singing and making those melodic songs to that baby in the womb. Francis Xavier, the Catholic educator, said, “You give me the children until they're seven, and anyone can have them from there on.” You see, you need to start with the children early.

Now, let me tell you, dear friend, how you are to teach your children, and then I will be finished. I want to give you about five ways—and you just jot them down.

A. Teach Your Children the Word of God Convincingly

First of all, you are to do it convincingly. Look, if you will, in verse 6. The Bible says, *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart”* (Deuteronomy 6:6). If you're a phony, your kids will spot you right away. My children know that their daddy is not perfect, but none of my children will say their dad is a phony. And they know their mama's not a phony. They know that we have our faults, but they know that they know that we love God with all of our hearts. *“These words...shall be in thine heart.”*

B. Teach Your Children the Word of God Creatively

But not only should God's Word be taught convincingly; it ought to be taught creatively. Look in verse 7, if you will, of this same chapter: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deuteronomy 6:7). Now the problem in so many of our homes: all of a sudden we get on a religion jag, and we say, “You kids are going to learn the Bible. You sit still while I instill.” That's not the way God's Word is to be taught. God's Word is to be taught creatively. When you go in and out of the office, when you wake up in the morning, when you go to bed at work, constantly, you are to be teaching the Word of God. How do you do it? Oh sure, there is to be a time—a set time—of Bible reading, but Bible stories and games—just two nights ago, my kids and I had a wonderful game of Bible trivia, and I want you to know my granddaughter beat me in Bible trivia—Bible games,

Bible memory, Christian books, Christian albums.

C. Teach Your Children the Word of God Consistently

You see, teach it convincingly, my dear friend. Teach it creatively. Teach it consistently. Look, if you will, in verse 7 of this same chapter: again, the Bible says, *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children”* (Deuteronomy 6:7). What that means is “consistently.” The problem with so many of us is we just get started, and then we stop; and then we start, and then we stop. But God’s Word says, “diligently.” How many of you are diligent in teaching your children?

Isaiah 28, verses 9 and 10, says this: *“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little”* (Isaiah 28:9–10). Friend, that’s the way to teach the Word of God. Just do it diligently—here a little, there a little; line upon line, precept upon precept. It’s not easy, but, oh, the cumulative force is so wonderful!

D. Teach Your Children the Word of God Conversationally

But not only should you teach it convincingly, and not only should you teach it creatively, and not only consistently, but teach it conversationally. Look, if you will, again in verse 7: *“And thou shalt...talk of them”* (Deuteronomy 6:7)—not just simply recite them, but talk of them in your conversation. What does this mean? If you are a wise parent, or grandparents, you’ll find hundreds of ways every day to apply the Word of God. It doesn’t have to be dull. It can be so interesting. You don’t give them the Word of God like cod liver oil: “a dose a day keeps the devil away.” You see, faith *is* caught *as well as* taught. And bad things are caught. Some of you go home after Sunday services, and you have roast preacher for dinner. Those little ears are listening. My dear friend, be careful what you say. Talk of the Word of God. Apply the Bible to life’s situations.

E. Teach Your Children the Word of God Conspicuously

And then may I say that you teach the Word of God conspicuously. Look in verse 8: *“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes”* (Deuteronomy 6:8). Now the Jews had little boxes they called *phylacteries*. With leather, they would tie a portion of the Word of God to their hands and put some right between their eyes here on their forehead. They took this literally. And there’s certainly nothing wrong with that. But I think there’s a far deeper meaning. “The Word of God between your eyes” means whatever you think is to be controlled by the Word of God. “The Word of God on your hand” means whatever you do is to be controlled by the Word of God. But there is a principle here—verse 9: *“And thou shalt*

write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:9). That means your house ought to have scriptural mottos, the Word of God, and pictures, and everything that will remind people of Jesus—the atmosphere of your home. Conspicuously teach the Word of God.

Conclusion

Now my time has gone, and all I've tried to do in this message is just simply to say that God has given us a promise of a future. God says, "You do this; it will be well with you, and your son, and your son's son" (Deuteronomy 6:2). And then God has given us a foundation. God says that, "If you will love me with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your strength," God says that, "it will be well with you" (Deuteronomy 6:5). There will be a future for your family. And then God says it is up to you parents—listen—it is up to you to teach your children the Word of God.

Family Future

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: February 07, 1999

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:1–9

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Conclusion

Introduction

Take your Bibles, and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 5. And in a moment we are going to look at verse 29.

But look up here for just a moment, and let me tell you about a funeral that took place some years ago. It was a very unusual funeral. The coffin was draped with the folds of Old Glory, and the President of the United States of America was there at that funeral. He had his head bowed. The President's cabinet was all there. There were dignitaries from the Congress and from the Senate. There were representatives from all over the world that had come to this funeral; and if you had been a stranger, and walked up, and had not seen the President, you would have thought that perhaps it was the President himself whose funeral was being held. And you have to ask yourself whose body was in that casket, because he'd never really sculptured a great piece of art. He had never written a great book. He certainly wasn't a war hero. He was a man who was

in the Foreign Service, and he had died in Tripoli. And they buried his body in Tripoli, but by common command and consent they disinterred his body and brought it back to the United States for a very special funeral. They sent a United States Man of War to go pick up that body and to bring it back on that vessel. And when the Man of War came back to the United States, there was a band playing to greet the arrival of that body, and great guns boomed in the air. And there was a parade, and all of the flags in the United States hung at half-mast.

This person, a very important person, was a man whose name you may know or you may not know. It was John Howard Payne. Now, what had John Howard Payne done? And why were people so excited about this man? And why did they want to pay to John Howard Payne such honor? For one line that he had written. You want to know what it is?

*Mid pleasures and palaces,
Though oft I may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home.*

—JOHN H. PAYNE

That's what he wrote, and that so touched the hearts of people around the world from that day to this day that we wanted to honor the man who wrote those words: "no place like home."

And I want to talk to you about home; I want to talk to you about the family, because, as I told you last week, the family is a little part of the Garden of Eden that we still have left, because God established the family in the Garden of Eden, and it is the family that we look forward to in the Father's house through all eternity.

Now anthropologists and sociologists would like to tell us that the family just somehow came out of the ooze and slime of evolution, and out of the onward, gradual process of sociology and biology, but it is not so. The family had its origin in the heart and mind of Almighty God. It was the first institution that God formed, and it was put there to meet the deepest physical, social, spiritual, and physiological needs of mankind. And it is so important that we understand the importance of the family, because children should be born into the family.

A. A Child Gets His Concept of Self in the Home

And a child in a family, first of all, gets his own self-concept from the home. A little child born in a home, he has no self-concept. He doesn't know who he is or what he is. He has no real self-consciousness. It is in the home that a child should learn who he is, what he can do, and what is expected of him. And so a child's psyche is formed by the

family.

The child needs to learn in the family the sense of security, a sense of confidence. He needs to learn that he is so loved, that he is worth something. A child looks into its mother's face, and the child sees in that mother that love—that love. And what that child sees when that child looks in its mother's face is, "I am special, because my mother loves me so; my father loves me so." I often heard about the child who said he was an unwanted child; but by the time he was nineteen, he was wanted in seven states.

B. A Child Gets His Concept of Life in the Home

A child gets a concept of himself in the home. A child gets a concept of life in the home. In the home, if there are limitations and disciplines and rules, then the child learns that he is not a law unto himself. He learns that he has to live with other individuals. He has to learn to respect authority. And the Bible says, "*A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame*" (Proverbs 29:15). And the Bible says, "If we will discipline a child, he will not die, but we'll deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:14). The child that doesn't learn to respect authority in the home is not going to respect authority in the school, in the government. He's not going to respect God's authority, and he may end up going to hell.

C. A Child Gets His Concept of God in the Home

And then the child gets his concept of God in the home. God is spoken of as a father; and if the home does not give to that child love and mercy and grace and concern, the child's concept of God Himself may be warped.

The family is the basic unit of society, and because of that, Satan, from the Garden of Eden to this day, has waged an all-out war on the family. And there are some who are asking a question—seriously asking it: Does the family have a future? I mean, will the family, as an institution, continue to exist, or will it be like the mastodon? Will it be like the saber tooth tiger? Will it be like the dinosaur? Will it become extinct? Will it become just a relic of another age? Well, there is a war against the family, and before I get into the main body of the message, I just want to remind you that there is a philosophical war—listen—a philosophical war against the family. People, with their minds, are working against the family.

Dr. James Dobson, on whose board I serve, reported on the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in the late summer of 1995 in Beijing, China. And there was a conference, and in that conference they discussed the deconstruction of gender. Now, what on earth is the deconstruction of gender? Well, let me tell you. As they gave it, "The goal is to give members of the human family five genders from which to choose, instead of two. No longer do we say *male* and *female*. Now you have five

opportunities. When freed from traditional bias”—notice what they call it: “traditional bias”—“a person can decide to be male, female, homosexual, lesbian, or transgender. Some may want to try all five in time. Homosexuality is considered the moral equivalent of heterosexuality. For women, however, the preferred love relationship is lesbian in nature. In that way male oppressiveness can be negated. Artificial insemination is the ideal method of producing a pregnancy, and a lesbian partner could have the same parenting rights accorded historically to the biological father.”

Now, friend, that is a philosophical approach in an international conference, where people from nations of all over the world came to learn this kind of a thing. I tell you, there is a war on the family.

And then, on top of that, we have, in the United States and other nations of the world, many who are living together without the benefit of a marriage ceremony. Now to live together, to cohabit, is illegal. It was illegal throughout the country until about 1970. It is still illegal in twelve states in the United States, but that law is scarcely, if ever, enforced: 4.1 million couples, according to the latest statistics, are living together without the benefit of marriage. Now that's 4.1 million couples, so that equates to more than eight million individuals. Now the sad thing about that is that in one year, it's up from 3.96 million—in just one year—but in 1960 only 430,000 were living together without the benefit of marriage. So you see what is happening? Young people today are not even bothering to get married. They are living together—sort-of “try before you buy, if we ever do get married.” Young people, I want to tell you, the Bible clearly forbids that—the Bible clearly forbids that. It is against the law of God, and therefore it is against your best welfare.

And then, on top of that—I'm just talking about the war on the family—not only is there this philosophical war, not only are there those who don't have to get married, but there is an increased disregard for life. Families are made to protect life, but precious babies today, in their mother's wombs, are being treated as non-persons and so many times are being disregarded and massacred for the comfort or the ease of the mother. January 22, 1973, in my estimation, is the blackest day in American history, when nine black-robed justices of the Supreme Court, the self-appointed high priests of humanism, said that little babies in their mother's womb—unborn babies—are non-persons.

Now leading in that is Planned Parenthood. I have absolutely, totally, no respect for Planned Parenthood—none! Margaret Sanger who planned, who founded, Planned Parenthood, said—and I quote—“The most merciful thing the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.” That's the founder of Planned Parenthood. And much of what is done to put to death the unborn in the womb is done with your tax money.

There's a war against the family, and the war against the family is compounded by

the easy divorce laws in America. Today we have throwaway marriages, and there is an accumulating body of evidence that shows that the family breakup devastates children in great numbers. There are physiological wounds that are given to children when the home breaks up that may never heal and may prohibit those children themselves—unless those wounds are healed—from having a stable marriage themselves. Broken homes produce broken children, which produce broken homes, which produce broken children. Thank God that cycle can be broken. I'm not here to say that there is no hope; I'm just saying that this kind of a thing has a devastating effect on children.

And then, on top of all of that, the nation itself, so called "God-blessed" America, is in a moral freefall right now. As we talk, old standards are toppling, and it seems, concerning the White House, that America is going to get what it wants. We're going to have two more years of a President who cheats on his wife, embarrasses his daughter, lies to his closest associates, has a perverted view of sex, and uses his office for his own glory. He is more concerned about how history will view him than he is, in my estimation, how God will view him and judge him. But the sad thing is this: that the American public—the American public—does not give this man high ratings, in spite of his vices, but many, because of them. I mean, after all, "if the President can live this way, then so can we." And so, as I heard Alan Keyes say last week, "Bill Clinton has become the poster boy for immorality." That's what's happening in America today.

And then, on top of that—I'm talking about the war on the family—on top of that, we have now the most vile kinds of pornography that are being displayed across America via the Internet. Dr. Richard Land said, "There is a subterranean electronic river of pornographic slime running under every city, town, village, and hamlet in America. Grotesque and degenerate material is now available, not in the back alley of some so-called *adult theater*, but right in the living rooms, the classrooms, the public libraries of America."

Then, on top of all of that, we have our children who are being educated in an educational system that says that we cannot speak of God in a positive way in the educational system, because that somehow negates the idea of the separation of church and state. The Founding Fathers believed in the separation of church and state if it meant that there was to be no national denomination, but not for one breath did they believe in the separation of God and government—not at all! They say, "Well, we're going to be neutral. So we're not going to be for God; we're not going to be against God." Of course, they are not neutral, because they teach godless evolution. When you talk to children and tell them there's a fairytale about a frog that became a prince, we say, "That's a fairytale," when we're talking in the nursery school. But in the classroom, that's science: when frogs become princes.

They say, “Well, we’re just going to be neutral about it.” There are some things you can’t be neutral about. Suppose we’re just going to say, “Brother Jim, we’re going to be neutral about food, so nobody’s going to eat.” You see, there are some things you are not neutral about. You can’t be neutral about God, but our children are being raised, by and large, in humanistic institutions where man, not God, is the sum, the substance, the center, and the circumference of everything. I’m just talking about the war on the family.

And then, that is compounded by the ignorance of so many of us who call ourselves Bible-believing Christians. And Satan has tried to keep us in darkness and to give us the idea that we have to go along to get along. And what I have already said today is very politically incorrect—I realize that—but I want to say to you don’t bother writing me a letter, because I’m not going to argue with you. There are certain things that are non-negotiable. There are certain things that we need to learn if there’s going to be a future for our family. And if there’s no future for our families, you can put it down big, plain, and straight: there is no future for this nation.

Now, in Deuteronomy chapter 5, God gave the Ten Commandments. Actually, Deuteronomy chapter 5 is a restatement, a reinforcement, of the Ten Commandments. And then, after God gave these commandments, God says, in chapter 5 and verse 29, concerning His people—now, listen to me; here’s what God says: *“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always”*—now, listen to this—*“that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever”* (Deuteronomy 5:29). God is saying, “If they will keep my commandments, there will be a future for the family.” That’s what God is saying. Now He has given the commandments, and you know the commandments. They are there in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and Exodus 20.

And then God says—if you will go to chapter 6 and begin in verse 1: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land wither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments,”*—now, watch this—*“which I commanded thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life;”*—what He’s talking about here is a future for the family—*“and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.”* And then He begins, in verse 4, the *Great Shema*. This is perhaps the most important verse to Orthodox Jews, or the most important passage in all of the Bible. The word *Shema* means, “hear,” and it begins with the word *hear*: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy*

soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:1–9).

Now, here’s what God says we’re to do for the future of the family. I want you to think now of how, therefore, we are to train our children, so that we as a nation can have a future—so we as a family can have a future.

I. The Home Is the University of Life

Number one: the first thing I want you to understand is that home is the university of life—the home is the university of life. God says that these commandments are to be taught in the home. God did not give the Ten Commandments to government—though government should abide by them. God did not give the Ten Commandments to industry—though industry should learn from them. God did not give the Ten Commandments to education—though education should take note of them. God gave the Ten Commandments to the family. Read all of this context. It is the family. This is God’s priority plan: that faith is to go from parent to child. Our children are to see our faith in God in all that we do, in all that we say. And the very atmosphere in which a child is raised is to be supercharged with godliness based on the Ten Commandments.

Now I want to tell you again that it is the family that is the center and core; and, therefore, the all-out war is against the family. So that’s the first thing I want you to learn: is that home is to be the university of life—the home is to be the university of life.

II. Parents Are the Professors in That University

Now, here’s the second thing: Parents are the professors in that university—parents are professors. Look again, if you will, in verse 7—and he says here, *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children”* (Deuteronomy 6:7). Do you know what a juvenile delinquent is, so many times? He is a child trying to act like his parents. And we talk about *dropout kids* today. I say that the problem is not primarily dropout kids: it’s dropout parents; it is shirker dads and slacker moms who have not done what they ought to do and have dropped their responsibilities.

Now, what are the qualifications if you would be a professor in this university? Well, look, if you will, and see in verse 5—here are the qualifications: *“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”* (Deuteronomy 6:5). Now there are certain qualifications if you are to be a professor in

this university. Now, let me tell you something. There's a control center in every child, and you cannot control the control center. That child controls it. God will not override it. God is not going to force you or anybody else to behave in a certain way. God will enable you to do so. God will lead you to do so. God will love you to do so. But, ultimately, you must decide. Therefore, one of the wisest things that you can ever learn is that you cannot make decisions for your children. Oh, you can when they're little. You can guide them, but a child has to come to a place where he or she must make his or her own decisions. But you can make a decision for yourself. I've said this before, and I want to say it again—listen carefully: Never set goals for somebody else—never set goals for anybody else—because you can't control somebody else. Don't set goals for your children—don't set goals for your children.

I don't set goals for my children. I have desires for my children. Do you know what I desire for my children? That my children love God with all of their heart; that they live pure, clean, godly lives; that they love father and mother, they love brother and sister; that God will use them mightily. That is my desire; that is my heart's prayer and desire to God for them. And I pray every day for them, as Joyce and I have already prayed this morning, for all of our children by name. Yes, that is my desire. But I don't have goals for my children. I have desires for my children. You know who I have a goal for? Adrian. I have desires for my children; I have a goal for me. Do you know what my goal for me is? My desire is I'll have godly children. My goal is I will be a godly dad—I will be a godly dad. I've made up my mind that's what I'm going to do, because, you see, I can choose for me. I choose Jesus. I choose God. I choose, by the grace of God, to be a godly dad and to love God with all of my heart.

A. A Sincere Love

Here is the qualification. Look at it—look at it. Here's what you can choose to do in verse 5: *“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”* (Deuteronomy 6:5). To love God with all your heart is a sincere love, not a halfhearted love. Our children need to see in us a heartfelt, burning, passionate, emotional, and sincere love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And I'm going to tell you something about kids. They can spot a phony a mile away. Your kids know that you're not perfect, but they want to know that you're sincere, that you love God with all your heart.

B. A Selfless Love

Then, you're to love God, not only with a sincere love, but with a selfless love, with all of your soul. The soul is the self. The whole self—100 percent—needs to be given over to God, not part-time. And, by the way, you want to know if you love God with all of

your soul? Two books you might consult: your checkbook and your calendar—your datebook. Just look at those things: see where you're investing your time and your money. What really matters to you? Your kids need to see there is no place in your life that is marked off "Private: God, stay out!" That includes what you watch on television, what you read, etc.

C. A Strong Love

Number three: You are to love God, not only with a sincere love, and not only with a selfless love, but you're to love Him with a strong love, with all of your might. Now, what does that include? It includes everything, all of your might: your physical strength, your emotional strength, your financial strength, your intellectual strength. You are to love God with all of your might.

And kids need to see if you are a professor in the university of life. They need to see a sincere, selfless, and strong love. Why? Because you cannot teach what you do not know and do not practice. Jesus, when somebody asked Him what is the first and great commandment, Jesus quotes this: verse 5. That's what Jesus quoted.

III. The Ten Commandments Are the Curriculum

Now, here's a third thing I want you to see. Number one: Remember that the home is the university of life. Number two: The parents are the professors—and I gave you the qualifications. Number three: The Ten Commandments are the curriculum—the Ten Commandments are the curriculum. Now, in chapter 5, God gave the Ten Commandments; and then, in chapter 6, He says, "Parents, you are to teach these."

I wrote a book called *Ten Secrets for a Successful Family*, and the ten secrets are an open secret. They are the Ten Commandments. I preached a message here to you people—a series: "A Perfect Ten for Homes That Win." That perfect ten are the Ten Commandments. They are not accidental; they're not incidental. They are fundamental. And, again, I tell you that the Ten Commandments are given primarily to the father, and those who are to teach the Ten Commandments are parents who are to teach their children and their grandchildren. These commandments are ironclad. They are rock-ribbed, but they are not cold, rigid restrictions. They are the liberating laws of life. They are the tracks upon which your family is to run.

Let me say something. It's very hypocritical of many of us. I've known many evangelical Christians who are complaining and mouthing and carping that the Ten Commandments are no longer on the classroom walls of America's schools. And I think that's sad, and I agree. But how many of you have the Ten Commandments on the walls of your home? How many of you have those Ten Commandments, for example, in

your children's bedroom, or in the foyer of your house, or somewhere where we can read these things? God said to these Jews, "You are to post these on the doorposts of your house, the gates of your house, so people can see them as they come in and as they go out" (Deuteronomy 11:20). God has given us the Ten Commandments as the tracks to run on. And you're never going to have a successful family unless you set some boundaries for those kids. And, friend, today, in today's society, it is not enough for you to say, "Because I said so." You need to say, "Here's what God teaches, darling. Here's what the Word of God says."

And you need to set some boundaries. If your children don't have some boundaries, if they don't have some rules, if they don't have some restriction, they are going to grow up with a sense of insecurity. You give them boundaries. Now they're going to push against those boundaries. That is normal; that is natural. And there's nothing wrong with that. It's just the instinct of life. They are going to push against those boundaries when you say, "Thou shalt," and, "Thou shalt not." This is what we do as a family, and there are a lot of little subsets that come out of these Ten Commandments. For example, if you say, "Honor father and mother," then there are some subsets that might say, "Son, you'll never sass your mother in my presence and get away with it." See, that's just a subset of honoring father and mother. But you just have those boundaries that are there.

If your child pushes against that boundary—we'll just say that this rug is the boundary—and your child pushes against that, and it gives, and they can go right on through, do you know what happens to that child? From that moment on, he loses his security—he loses his security. He says, "Well, in our world there really are no real laws; there are no boundaries." And you know what he'll do? He'll go right on through, and come over here, and let somebody else set boundaries for him: somebody that you don't agree with. And he'll get in that situation; and he'll get in some club; he'll get in some cult; he'll get in some organization that will set their own boundaries—whatever they may be and as wired and weird and wild as they may be.

Listen, folks. We need to understand that there need to be boundaries. The Ten Commandments are those boundaries. Don't make yourself the issue. If you make yourself the issue, being a parent is going to be a twenty-year ride through Ulcer Gulch. I mean, don't let them argue with you and say, "Mama, can I, please? Daddy, can I, please?" "No, I don't think so, son." Just simply say, "Son, here are the laws which our family operates by. They are God's laws, not our laws." You don't make yourself the issue. You don't have to keep putting on the black hat and white hat.

Have you ever been stopped by a highway patrolman? How many of you have ever been stopped? Let me see your hand. Come on, okay. Now you've been stopped by

that highway patrolman. If he's like the average highway patrolman, you know what he does? He gets out of the car. He walks up to you. He says, "Good afternoon." And he says, "May I see your license please, sir?" Your hands are trembling. You get the thing out. You can't find it. It was in there somewhere, you know. And you get that out, and you hand it over to him. And he says, "Ha hum." He says, "Mr. Rogers, did you realize that you were doing sixty-five miles an hour in a fifty-mile-an-hour zone?" "Well, no, officer. I didn't realize that. I was thinking about my sermon." I want him to know I'm a preacher, you know. He says, "Now, Mr. Rogers, you know, you have broken one of our ordinances, and I'm going to have to write you a ticket." And he's writing, and so forth, and so forth, and he says, "Now, here. You can pay this if you wish, or you can come into the court. And have a nice day. So long." I don't have to get in an argument with him. He doesn't get in an argument with me. He is not the issue. The law is the issue. Do you see that? He doesn't make himself the issue. I mean—listen, folks—you don't have to continually have these battles with your kids once you get some boundaries—once you say, "It's not Mom. It's not Dad. We just have certain boundaries that we live by."

And I'm telling you, you need to establish some boundaries. And if you don't establish those boundaries, it's going to be a long, long, hard parenting that you're going to have. And don't make yourself the continual issue, where they can move against you, and argue with you, and get you to lower the standards, or whatever. The Ten Commandments are the curriculum.

IV. The Children Are the Students

Next: Children are the students—children are the students. Verse 7 says, you teach these things to your children (Deuteronomy 6:7). And since they're the students, let me tell you, they need to be enrolled early in the university of life. How early? Francis Xavier, a Roman Catholic leader, said, "You can give me the children until they are seven, and anybody can have them from there on." What he meant is that the character is formed by the time they are seven.

A woman asked her pastor—said, "How old should my child be before I begin his spiritual training?" And the pastor said, "Well, how old is he now?" She said, "Five years old." He said, "You started five years too late." Actually, five years and nine months too late, in my estimation. Children should be given to God before they are born.

And the children are yours to raise, and it's not the church's responsibility to raise your children. You say, "Well, I send them down there to Bellevue Baptist Church," or, "I sent them off to a Christian school." Friend, they are your responsibility—they are your responsibility. We have to learn this. Now I thank God for our church. I thank God for

our youth group. I think we have one of the best youth groups—if not the best—in the whole wide world. And, by the way, while we are having the service right now, our youth are over there in the gymnasium with a great weekend called Disciple Now. I met some of these kids last night in a restaurant—so pretty, so bright-faced, so happy. And guess what? They like me. They are great kids—they are great kids. But this church can't do it, and that Christian school can't do it. And there's nobody that you can pay to do it. It's your responsibility, and you need to enroll these kids early in the school of life. Now the kids are the students.

V. Life Is the Laboratory

All right now, fifthly and finally: Life is the laboratory—life is the laboratory. Look, if you will now, in verses 7 through 9: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house”* (Deuteronomy 6:7–9).

Do you get the idea that life itself is where these things are taught? How are you to teach the Word of God?

A. Teach the Word of God Convictionally

Well, number one: You are to teach them convictionally—convictionally. Verse 6 says, “These words are to be in your heart” (Deuteronomy 6:6). Now if they're not in your heart, then you're not going to be able to teach them. And so the very first thing you have to do, dad, mom, is to get your heart right with God and let God's Word be in your heart. Teach them convictionally.

B. Teach the Word of God Consistently

Number two: Teach them consistently. Look in verse 7. God says, “And you'll teach them diligently” (Deuteronomy 6:7). You know what the word *diligently* means? It means, “over and over again.” Put in your margin Isaiah 28, verse 10: *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little”* (Isaiah 28:10). Don't say, “Well, I've told them now. What's next?” No, every day you put truth upon truth upon truth, and there is a cumulative affect. One of these days what you've taught them is going to come back. As you put a little bit in the bank, it's going to come back with compound interest. You've got to be consistent.

C. Teach the Word of God Creatively

Now, teach them, not only convictionally, consistently, but creatively. Notice in verse

7 he says, “*And thou shalt...talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way,*” etc. (Deuteronomy 6:7). There are so many ways to teach the Bible. A lot of times so-called *family worship*—and I believe in family worship—but it can be an ordeal. I’ll tell you, sometimes in our family, when we had little children, that’s the time we lost our religion: trying to have family worship—till we learned how to do it creatively with Bible reading, and stories, and games, and memory, and Christian books, and songs, and rewards for doing good. You say, “Well I don’t believe in bribing kids.” Oh, listen, friend. A bribe is an inducement to do evil; a reward is a recognition for doing right. God gives rewards. Reward them for doing right. And teach them these principles here—teach it creatively.

D. Teach the Word of God Conversationally

Teach it conversationally. Look in verse 7: “*And thou shalt...talk of them*” (Deuteronomy 6:7). Just talk of them. Go on down to verse 20, and look at verse 20: “*And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son*” (Deuteronomy 6:20–21). There are so many teachable opportunities in life. Last Wednesday night, we were going to the Black Eyed Pea to get something to eat afterwards, and I had my little grandson Jonathan in the car with me. And I won’t tell you what the teachable moment is: you don’t need to know all of that. But I just felt that what we were doing, just in the distance from the car to the Black Eyed Pea over here on Highway 64, was such a teachable moment, and about something that was so very important. That was worth more to me than for him to sit through one of the sermons that I might have taught, because I could share with this grandson, who is so bright, brilliant, handsome, articulate, and will be the greatest man in the world. I could teach him in that moment. You teach them conversationally.

E. Teach the Word of God Conspicuously

And then, you teach them conspicuously. Verses 8 and 9 say, “Look, put these things on the doorposts. Bind them for a sign on your hand; put them as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 6:8). What does that mean? Well, the Jews had phylacteries. With leather straps they would bind this *Shema* to their wrist and put them between the frontlets of their eyes. And there’s nothing wrong with that, but I think God meant more than that. I think God meant, “Whatever you do”—speaking of the right hand—“is to be controlled by the Word of God; whatever you think is to be controlled by the Word of God.”

Put them upon the doorposts of your house as you go out, as you come in. Everything you do—all of life—it is to be conspicuous that your house is a house of

God. If you come to our house, you'll see a plaque on the left-hand side of the door that mentions God: "Great and marvelous are thy works." If you come into our foyer, you'll see the scripture going all around the foyer: "This house belongs to God." You go in our kitchen, you'll see the Ten Commandments there on the walls of our kitchen. And we want our home to be a home—a house—of prayer, where the very presence of God is there.

Conclusion

Well, I wish I had more time. I had something else I wanted to share. If you'll stay to the next service, maybe you'll get it. Psalm 112, verse 2, says, "*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" And, "*His seed*"—his descendants—"*shall be mighty upon the earth*" (Psalm 112:2). Do you know what Joyce and I are praying? We're praying not just for our children and our grandchildren; we're praying for our great-grandchildren and our great-great-grandchildren. If the Lord delays, we're praying prayers with a delayed detonation, and that our seed, our descendants, will be mighty upon the earth. Is there a future for the family? I'll tell you, God has told us, in Deuteronomy 5 and 6, there can be a future for your family—and you need to claim it.

Leaving a Legacy

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: August 26, 2001

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:1–9, 18–23

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Introduction

Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 29—would you be finding it? It is a key verse—Deuteronomy chapter 5 and verse 29.

A number of years ago, there was a very significant funeral that was held in the United States of America. The coffin was draped with the American flag. The President was there with his head bowed, his hat off; members of the Cabinet were there; dignitaries from various nations around the world, from Berlin and London and faraway places. The flags were flying at half-staff, and this funeral was taking place. Had you been there, not seen the President, there was so much circumstance and pomp going on that you might have thought that this was the funeral for the President of the United States. Who was in this coffin? The man named Howard Payne—John Howard Payne—was in this coffin.

Now he was not a wealthy man. He held no political office. He had not written any great books; he'd not made any great inventions. He was in many ways an ordinary man. He was in public service, and he served as a representative to the United States in Tripoli. And the one thing that he did that caused so many people to honor him is he wrote one line that has been written upon my heart, and your heart, and the hearts of people not only here but around the world. What was that one line? Why was this man so honored? Here's what he wrote:

*Mid pleasures and palaces,
Though oft I may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home.*
—JOHN H. PAYNE

“There's no place like home.”

So I want to talk to us today about home, about the family, and how to celebrate the family. Now we're going to be in an entire series; but, today, we're going to be talking about leaving a legacy. It is so important—listen—so important that we understand God's plan for the home and for the family. Now, don't go to the sociologist; don't go to the anthropologist, who would have you to believe that the family originated out of some primordial ooze. And evolution is a product of sociology itself. No, the family was founded by God to meet the deepest spiritual, physical, emotional, and sociological needs that all of us have.

A. Why the Family Is So Important

Let me tell you why family is so important.

1. A Child Gets His Idea of Himself from His Family

A child gets his idea of himself from his family. By the way, folks, we've got a brand new granddaughter in our family. Her name is Breanna. She is so beautiful, so intelligent, and so deeply spiritual. You would not believe this little girl, Breanna. Well, she's going to grow up; she becomes just sort of neutral. Of course, she has a sin nature, but she doesn't know who she is. She is dependent upon her parents, her grandparents, the home, the environment, the people around her to get some concept of who she is and what she's worth.

I was reading about Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who's now deceased—the world-famous atheist. Do you know she kept a journal—she kept a diary? Over 2,000 pages. At least one-half dozen times, she wrote these words—I want you to listen to them—she said, “Somebody, somewhere, please love me.” That's surprising, isn't it? I was surprised when I read that. That's the abrasive, in-your-face atheist: “Somebody,

somewhere, please love me.” When I read that, I thought, “I wonder what kind of a family she was raised in.”

You’ve heard the story about the boy who said, “You know, when I was born, I was an unwanted child; and now I am wanted in seventeen states.”

2. A Child Gets a Picture of Life from His Family

We get our idea—a child gets his idea—of himself from his family. The child gets a picture of life from the family. You see, a child who grows up, for example, in a home where there are no limitations and no discipline, then gets the idea that he’s a law unto himself. A child who doesn’t learn to respect authority in the home is not going to respect the authority in the school. He’s not going to respect authority in the church. He’s not going to respect authority in society. He’s not going to respect God’s authority. And, actually, he’s pre-conditioned to go to hell.

3. A Child Gets a Picture of God from His Family

A child gets a picture of God from the family—from the family. You see, if the family does not provide an environment of love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, it’s so much harder for a child to understand those concepts in God. That’s the reason there is from the pit of hell an all-out war on the family—not just some families; your family. And I don’t want you to miss one of these messages on the home: whether you are married, single, divorced, widowed, hope to get married, whatever it is, we need these messages.

Now there is a war. There is a philosophical war on the family. There’s something so deadly, devilish, and dirty that is working. Dr. James Dobson, whom we all love and respect, reported a while back on the Fourth World Conference on Women held in the late summer of 1995 in Beijing, China—by the way, where we’re going to hold the Olympics. And this conference on women, now worldwide, talked about, for example, the deconstruction of gender. Let me tell you what the goal is that they hope to establish. Let me read it for you: “The goal is to give members of the human family five genders from which to choose, instead of two.” Now God made them in the beginning male and female (Genesis 1:27). They say, “Well, God didn’t do a very good job. Now we’re going to give five genders from which to choose, instead of two.” “When freed from traditional bias, a person can decide whether to be male, female, homosexual, lesbian, or transgender. Some may want to try all five in time. Homosexuality is considered a moral equivalent to heterosexuality. For women, however, the preferred love relationship is lesbian in nature. That way, male oppression can be negated. Artificial insemination is the ideal method of producing a pregnancy. A lesbian partner would have the same parenting rights accorded historically to a biological father.”

And I was reading also about a recent book written by a woman named Shere Hite.

She scorned the idea of a two-parent family. She says, ‘Why a two-parent family? That just brings societal injustice.’ She says that a two-parent family is a structure not worth saving. Now if she’s just some yoyo from off the wall, that would be one thing, but she is widely read. And the report I’m reading was reported in our *Commercial Appeal*, and here’s what she said. She said, “For example, the holy family model of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph is essentially a repressive one, teaching the authoritarian psychological pattern and a belief in the unchanging rightness of male power.” So even Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus did not sit well with this woman.

B. Seven Things That Are Warring Against the Family

Now I want to mention about seven things that are warring against the family before we get right into the body of the message.

1. People Are Trying to Redefine the Family

There’s the psychological war: people are trying to redefine the family.

2. Cohabitation

Secondly, we have so many people today living together without the benefit of marriage. And cohabitation was illegal in the United States until about 1970; however—listen to me—cohabitation has increased—are you ready?—600% since 1970—600% since, basically, the time since I have been your pastor. Now I didn’t cause that, but 600%—and that’s tragic. Sometimes we have people, couples, come to join our church. We notice they have the same address but they don’t have the same last name. Well, we tell them, “Look, when you get right with God, you’re going to have to get married.” “Huh?” Yes. Let me tell you something, friend. God’s Word forbids people living together without the benefit of marriage. We’re not being cruel when we say that that’s God’s way; that’s God’s plan. *When God says, “Thou shalt,” He’s saying, “Help yourself to happiness.” When God says, “Thou shalt not,” He’s saying, “Don’t hurt yourself.”*

3. An Increasing Disregard for Life

Now that’s compounded by, in America today, an increasing disregard for life. Little preborn babies now are treated as non-persons. One of the blackest days in human history—certainly in American history—was January 22, 1973, in the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Nine Supreme Court justices in black robes, self-appointed high priests of secular humanism, declared that little pre-born babies are not persons. Do you know who the founder of Planned Parenthood was? Her name: Margaret Sanger. Have you ever heard that name? Let me give you a direct quote from Margaret Sanger—quote: “The most merciful thing the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it”—“The most merciful thing the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.” And the tragic thing is that much of this killing is done with—not most, but much—with

state tax money.

4. Easy Divorce Laws

I'll tell you another thing that we're up against—and that is the easy divorce laws in America today. God have mercy upon our throwaway marriages and the devastation that is brought to the lives of little children.

5. A Moral Free-fall

And then, on top of all of that, there is a moral freefall in America today. There's a subterranean river of slime—pornographic slime—that runs under every home in America today and is available through the Internet. And our former President was a poster boy for immorality; and now we're seeing others who are following in his train.

6. Humanistic Education

And then, there's humanistic education. The kids are going to school today; they can't learn about God. They say, "Well, we're going to give them a secular education. We're going to tell them that they just happened." Our Founding Fathers said that "all men...are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," but we can't say they were created today. Why is that illegal: to say there's a creation? If there's a creation, there has to be a Creator. But you can't even say that; you can't even teach creation. Bill Gothard has rightly said—and I love this—"When we tell a child that a frog turns into a prince, we call it a fairytale. But when that child grows up, we call it evolution." Humanistic education.

7. The Ignorance of Evangelical Christians

And all of that is compounded by the ignorance of many who sit in our pews on Sunday morning and call themselves evangelical Christians.

Well, I want to give you five principles for leaving a legacy—five principles.

And, by the way, I want you to imagine, sir, there is a funeral, and it's quiet. The organ is playing, and the people are there. And finally the time comes for the viewing of the body. And you watch the people pass by the coffin one at a time. Then you see your family come and stand there. There's your wife; there's your children. And it dawns upon you: this is your funeral; they're looking down at you. Now the minister may know you well, or he may not know you. He may just give some generic thing, some platitudes, read a few verses, read the twenty-third Psalm, the fourteenth chapter of John. But your family is there. I want you to imagine this now. It is your funeral. Your funeral is going to come one of these days. What is your wife going to say about you? What is your family going to say about you? Beyond the shadow of any doubt or peradventure, you, sir, are leaving a legacy. You are passing the baton on to another generation.

Now Joyce and I are celebrating fifty years of marriage next Sunday, and we have our children, our grandchildren. It's been impressed upon me more and more: I am leaving to my children a legacy. I'm handing off the baton; I'm passing the torch. What does the Bible say about that? The Bible says, "*A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children*" (Proverbs 13:22). That's in Proverbs 13, verse 22. Proverbs 19, verse 14: "*House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD*" (Proverbs 19:14). But not just money, not just a house—Proverbs 20, verse 7: "*The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him*" (Proverbs 20:7). What is your wife going to say about you, sir? What are your children going to remember about you?

I. The Principle of Priority

There must be, number one: The first principle is the principle of priority—the principle of priority. What are your priorities? When you leave this legacy, what are your priorities going to be? What is the most meaningful thing to you? May I ask you two questions? What are your core values? What are you willing to die for? Do your children know what your core values are? Do your children, your grandchildren, believe there are certain things that you would die for? Please listen to this next statement. *The* greatest testimony *that you can possess is to have those who* know *you the best* respect *you the most*. Is that true in your life? *The best* testimony *you can have is for those who* know *you best* respect *you the most*. And so there has to be a principle of priority. People have to know what things are your core values. What do you really, really care about?

Look at our text now—verse 29—chapter 5, verse 29: "*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*" (Deuteronomy 5:29). I want that to be true about me. I want that to be my heart. I want that to be my core value. I want that to be that for which I would be willing to lay down my life. That's not always in the big and the noble things; sometimes the small things are more important.

We had a little grandson, Andrew, over to the house a few days ago. It's always a joy when Andrew comes over. He's like all of our grandchildren: exceptionally wonderful. And Andrew, this time—four years of age—and he was staying, and I was up in my study—I mean, busy-and-a-half. He walked in there and looked me in the face; he said, "You know, Papa, I'm going to have to go home in a little while." Of course, it was about five hours, but he said, "I'm gonna have to go home in a little while." And he said to me—he said, "Now, Papa, if we're going to do any playing, we don't have a lot of time." I looked at that little guy. I looked at my desk. I laid down my pencil and shoved all that stuff aside, and went outside and played. And we came back in, and we watched

Pinocchio.

Listen, folks. There must be a principle of priority. What are your core values? What things are you willing to die for?

II. The Principle of Purpose

Now hooked to the principle of priority is the second principle, if you're going to leave a legacy—and that is the principle of purpose—of purpose. You see, if you have a priority, and you don't bring your life behind it purposefully, your priority, really, is just not going to count. Chapter 6 now, verses 1 and 2: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it:”*—now at this particular passage, in this particular time in Scripture, the children of Israel had just come into the land of Canaan. They are headed toward the land of Canaan, and this is God's Word for them. Notice verse 2—*“that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged”* (Deuteronomy 6:1–2).

Question—let's talk about your purpose: Do you have some goals in life for your self? Do you have some desires for your children? What are the desires that you have for your children? You say, “I pray for my children.” But what are you praying for your children? Are you praying for their health? Are you praying for their wealth? Are you praying that they might be famous, that they might have a life of ease? What are you really praying for your children? You know, the Bible says, in James chapter 4, *“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts”* (James 4:3). Even the pagans want healthy children, successful children, children who are going to be free from care and from worry.

Is that what you're concerned about your children: that they be popular? How many of you would say, “Dear God, what a blessing if you were to call my son into the ministry, or to call my son, my daughter, to be a missionary?” Some people think that would be a colossal waste. But the Bible says that “children are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man” (Psalm 127:4), and arrows are to be shot at the enemy. What is your ambition for your children? I want to join the Apostle John, who said, in 3 John chapter 1, verse 4, *“I have no greater joy than to hear [that] my children walk in truth”* (3 John 1:4). I've told God many times, “I don't care whether my children are wealthy, successful: I want them to know and love you.”

Now Joyce and I have goals for ourselves. We have desires for our children. Never set goals for your children—never. Never set a goal for anybody, because you can't

control them. That's a good way to get frustrated. You set goals for yourself and have desires for other people. I desire godly children. I will be a godly dad—I can do that; I don't have to depend upon anybody else. By God's grace, I can be a godly father. I have goals for myself. I have desires for my children. And there is a principle of purpose. "Oh, God, that my children might know and love you": that is my desire. "Yes, if they can be wealthy, fine. Yes, if they can be healthy, fine. Yes, if they can be happy, fine. Yes, if they can be famous, fine. But, oh, God, I want them to know and love you. I do, with all of my heart."

III. The Principle of Persuasion

Now, here's the third principle—we're talking about leaving a legacy—and it's the principle of persuasion—the principle of persuasion, because you must persuade these kids if you're going to leave a legacy. Look now in verse 6: "*And these words, which I command*"—chapter 6, verse 6—"*thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates*" (Deuteronomy 6:6–9). You see, you begin to teach children even before they are born. You give them to the Lord and say, "Oh, God, I want you to use my children." It's persuasion.

Now you have to do this depending upon the Holy Spirit. Let me read something that one parent wrote. I copied it down for you. Forgive me for reading it to you, but I don't want to miss a word of it. We're talking about persuasion, and why you need to pray, and why you need the Holy Spirit. Here's what one parent wrote: "I gave you life, but I cannot live it for you. I can teach you things, but I cannot make you learn. I can give you directions, but I cannot be there to lead you. I can allow you freedom, but I cannot account for it. I can take you to church, but I cannot make you believe. I can teach you right from wrong, but I cannot always decide for you. I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you beautiful inside. I can offer you advice, but I cannot accept it for you. I can give you love, but I cannot force it upon you. I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish. I can teach you respect, but I cannot force you to show honor. I can advise you about your friends, but I cannot choose them for you. I can advise you about sex, but I cannot keep you pure. I can tell you the facts of life, but I cannot build your reputation. I can tell you about beverage alcohol, but I cannot say *no* for you. I can warn you about drugs, but I cannot prevent your using them. I can tell you about lofty goals, but I cannot achieve them for you. I can teach you about kindness, but I cannot force

you to be gracious. I can warn you about sin, but I cannot make you moral. I can love you as a child, but I cannot place you in God's family. I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God. I can teach you about Jesus, but I cannot make Jesus your Lord. I can tell you how to live, but I cannot give you eternal life. All of the above are your choice."

That's the reason I say you have desires for your children; you have goals for yourself. Your goals are to do all those things that that parent said they wanted to do. But there is a principle of persuasion. It's the same thing that's true in preaching. Before I come out here to preach, I remind myself and tell the Lord, "Oh, God, I am so dependent upon you, because what I say may be true, but, oh, God, you have to teach the people, Lord. You have to open their hearts." That is so true to any message you hear. If the message is from God, you're not dealing with me; you're dealing with God. If the message is not from God, what am I doing standing up here?

IV. The Principle of Persistence

Now, here's the next thing—and we must hurry: There's the principle of persistence. Look again in chapter 6 and verse 7: "*And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*" (Deuteronomy 6:7)—day after day after day; day in, day out; week in, week out; year in, year out; in season and out of season; line upon line; here a little, there a little.

Sometimes you'll think you've failed. Sometimes you'll say, "Dear God, what has gone wrong? Why—tell me *why*—teenagers—why did God put middle age and teenage together?" I sometimes say *the reason that* grandchildren love *the* grandparents *so much is they both have the same* enemy. Sometimes you think you've failed. Sometimes you say, "Oh, God, what has gone wrong?" I want to tell you what an older man told me one time. He said, "Adrian, sometimes you think you've failed. Just stay there—just stay there. Keep being faithful, and never, never, no never, give up. Your Heavenly Father does not give up on you, and don't you give up on that special child."

V. The Principle of Possession

Now I've got to leave that point and get to the last one, lest we miss it, and the last principle is the principle of possession. Now I want you to notice here—look in chapter 6, beginning now in verse 18—just skip on down to verse 18: "*And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land...*"—underscore that—"possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers. To cast out all thine enemies from before

thee, as the LORD hath spoken. And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in,"—oh, underscore that: "He brought us out, that He might bring us in"—"to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers" (Deuteronomy 6:18–23).

Now we'll slow down here for a moment. This is perhaps the most important part of this message, talking about leaving a legacy. We're talking about the principle of possession. God says, "I'm going to give you a land. When you go into that land, your son's going to say, 'Father, why are we keeping these laws? Why are we keeping these ordinances?'" What He was talking about primarily was the Passover, because, you see, you can read in Exodus 12 and 13—go back and read that—God brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, which represents the world, the flesh, and the devil. He brought them through the wilderness into the land of Canaan. Now the Bible says, "*All these things happened unto them for examples [to us]*" (1 Corinthians 10:11). This is history; it is literal, actual history. But it is more than just history; it is one of the deepest spiritual lessons that we'll ever learn.

For example, that Passover lamb pictures what? Jesus Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us. So when they put the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts of their house, when they ate that roasted lamb, when they stepped out of Egypt, a bunch of slaves were becoming free; they were being liberated. This was a picture of redemption—blood redemption—but they went through the wilderness. They stayed forty years in the wilderness: should have been only a few days' journey, but forty years wandering around in the wilderness. They were supposed to go into Canaan. Canaan was a land of corn and wine and oil and figs and grapes and pomegranates. It was a land of fullness, and rocks and hills and rivers and trees and forests in abundance. It pictures the Spirit-filled life. Now that's true. You can read, in the Book of Hebrews, that the land of Canaan is an analogy, a picture, of the Spirit-filled life.

Now I want to ask you a question—and you're going to see this happen many times: I've seen it happen too many times, as a pastor. How does the devil get the kids from our best families? Don't say, "It doesn't happen." It happens. I'm talking about people who are truly saved. I'm talking about people who sing in the choir. I'm talking about people who serve as deacons. I'm talking about Sunday School teachers. I'm talking about people who tithe, people who live moderately good lives, who are here when the church doors open. The devil gets their kids. How does the kidnapper take the kids from

the best families, many times, in our church? How does that happen?

Well, the key is right here in the passage that we're talking about. God says here, "There's a principle of possession." Look at it again now—look in verse 20: "*And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand*" (Deuteronomy 6:20–21). And notice verse 23: "*And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in*" (Deuteronomy 6:23). May I tell you what's wrong with many of our families? They've come out of Egypt, but they haven't gone into Canaan. That's it. They're saved; they're going to heaven. But God said—and if you'll read Exodus chapter 13—God forbade the children of Israel to celebrate the Passover in the wilderness. They were to celebrate the Passover in the land of Canaan. They did celebrate it one time in the wilderness, because they had some corn with them, and they could make unleavened bread; but most of the time, in the wilderness, what did they eat? Who knows? Manna. Now manna was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they weren't supposed to dwell forever with manna.

I mean, can you imagine a thirteen-year-old boy? He's born in the wilderness. They'd been there forty years—had plenty of time for kids to be born. This kid, born in the wilderness, he never asked, "Mama, what's for breakfast?" It's manna. He never asked, "Mama, what's for lunch?" It's manna. He never says, "Mama, what's for supper?" It's manna. Manna in the morning, manna in the evening, manna at supertime. It's manna, manna, manna. Now manna for one time, two times, three times, four times—can you imagine?—365 days a year; manna, manna, manna, manna? Week after week after week after week after week after week.

Now he hears people talk about Egypt, what it used to be. He hears sermons about Canaan, what it ought to be. There he is in the desert. Now his folks have come out of Egypt, but God brought them out, that He might bring them in; and there they are, going around in circles. Now, suppose that father had the audacity to say, "Son, we're going to celebrate." "Oh?" Son's sitting on a hot rock; his dad's sitting on a cactus. Rattlesnake goes by out there in the broiling, blistering sun. "We're going to celebrate." "But, Dad, what are we going to celebrate?" "Oh, son, we're going to celebrate what the Lord has done for us." And this kid looks around, "Uh-huh, what the Lord has done for us. Look at this. I am so sick of this manna, I could scream." He's heard all the tales about Egypt—the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions, and the melons, the wild things in Egypt; and all he's heard: sermons about Canaan. He's never seen Canaan. His mom and his dad are not living in Canaan. They're not living in victory. They're not possessing their possessions. God brought them out: not that they might stay in the wilderness, but that

He might bring them in.

I'm convinced that the reason the devil gets most of the kids out of good Baptist families and other kind of good families is they've come out but they've never gone in. They're dumped in the desert, and they're going around in circles; and he never sees in them victory. Do your children see in you victory? Do they see reality? Is there the principle of possession? Have they seen the corn and oil and grapes and wine and figs and pomegranates and rivers that Canaan represents—the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or do they just hear sermons about it on Sunday?

I believe—I believe—that that kid, when he hears his daddy try to celebrate in the wilderness, he might say, “Well, you know, Dad, if this is all we have to celebrate, don't you think it's time we got back to Egypt?” They've come out, but he goes back. You're going to leave a legacy; you're going to leave a legacy, and there had better be a priority: you had better see that the most important thing, other than your relationship with God, is your family. And there had better be some purpose, and there had better be some persuasion, and there had better be some persistence. And listen to me, precious friend. There had better be some possession. God brought you out of your bondage, sorrow, and night, that He might bring you into His land of glorious fruitfulness and light. And I think the best thing most of us could do who are saved, as fathers and mothers, is to say, “Oh, God, teach me how to walk in victory. Lord, get me out of this wilderness. I want to be a Spirit-filled Christian living in victory.”

Conclusion

One of these days, my kids are going to stand at my casket. I don't think they really care how many we average in Sunday School. I don't think they really care about the size of our budget. I don't think they even care about how many books I've written. I doubt they've read any of them; they might have thumbed them. I'd hate to give them a test on any book I've written. I want them to say, “Daddy loved God, and he loved us.” We are leaving a legacy.

You wouldn't know it now, but I used to run track. One of the things you do when you're running track is to hand a baton off. That wasn't my race, but I did it sometimes. There was a time when you're running by yourself. Then there's a time you come along somebody else, and the two of you run side by side; and he tries to get up to your speed, and you're running side by side. Then you place that baton in his hand, and you trail off and watch him run. Some of you don't have children: you're running by yourself. But there are a few precious years when you're running side by side. Don't lose those years.

It Takes God to Make a Home

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: April 23, 1995

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 5:6–21; 6:1–12

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Introduction

"I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Neither shalt thou commit adultery. Neither shalt thou steal. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's." (Deuteronomy 5:6–21)

Now, that's one listing of the Ten Commandments. You can find them again, in slightly different wording, the same meaning, in Exodus chapter 20. And if you are an informed individual, you know that there is a culture war going on in America. It is the battle for the soul of America. The battleground is the home, and the issue is truth. And Satan has aimed all of the artillery of hell at the homes of America, and every shell in that artillery is a lie. Satan's chief weapon is deception. Now, Satan *had rather peddle a lie than peddle* dope. *Satan had rather get you to believe a wrong thing than to do a wrong thing.* A lie is the most dangerous thing on the face of this earth. It is antithetical to God, who is the Truth, whose Word is truth. And so Satan is a pusher of lies, because it is the thought that is the father of the deed. And if he can get a nation to move away from its truth, if the foundation is destroyed, then what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3)

Now, Charles Colson quoted statistics recently that said that the majority of Americans today no longer believe in absolute truth. And here's the frightening thing: Evangelicals, so-called Bible believers, were surveyed, and sixty-two percent of those who call themselves evangelicals and Bible-believers said there was no such thing as absolute truth. Now, we live in a generation that has lost its fixed standards. It's lost its moorings. It's lost its compass. It's lost its anchor. We now have morality by majority, and the result is chaos in society.

I'm sick and tired of hearing about the left and the right—the religious right and the religious left. Ladies and gentlemen, *it is not an issue of left or right; it is an issue of*

right or wrong There is a God. There is a God, and that God has given us His Ten Commandments. Now our young people today, many of them, could not recite the Ten Commandments—many of them who are members of churches. But most of their parents could not give you, by memory, the Ten Commandments. And these kids have those blue-faced computers and televisions in their room, but they're becoming roadkill on the information highway. They do not understand the Word of God and the truth of God. Put this down big and plain and straight: There is no goodness without God. There is no goodness without God.

The title of our message today, as we deal with the First Commandment, is, "It Takes God To Make A Home"—"It Takes God to Make a Home." Something horrible is happening in America.

As a matter of fact, I was in the Washington airport a few weeks ago, and I looked up there, and there was a *Newsweek* magazine—and in the early part of this year. And there was the title of the lead story on the front of that magazine. I went up and bought it. It said this: "Shame: How Do We Bring Back a Sense of Right or Wrong?" Now, that's the secular press asking that question. And then here's what that article said: "Our country is about shamelessness. Here, we have TV shows where people tell the world about bestiality inside their bedroom, and the world yawns. O. J. Simpson's attorneys brazenly bend the rules to make their case. Their client gets a million dollars for his 'candid' book." And this article goes on to quote Bob Woodward, who said, "Ninety percent of Americans say they believe in God, yet the urgent sense of personal sin has all but disappeared in the current, upbeat style in America's religion. In early eras, ministers regularly exhorted congregations to humbly confess our sins. But the aging baby-boomers who are rushing back to church do not want to hear sermons that might rattle their self-esteem. And many clergy, who are competing in a buyer's market, feel they cannot afford to alienate."

May God help us! And I want to say to any preacher who may be listening, be grateful if people come to hear you preach *But it is not your job to fill the auditorium It's your job to fill the pulpit, whether they will hear it or whether they will not.* And I'm sick and tired of marketing religion, and pandering to people's desires.

We have a nation today that needs to hear, "Thus saith the Lord." We need a sure word from God. William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, and drug czar, says this: "There is a clear sense from the American people that this is a problem that has deep roots. It is a problem of social disintegration. It is a problem about values." I feel sorry for today's young people.

I was in an airport in Orlando. I saw a young man. I suppose he was about eighteen years of age. He had an earring in one ear. He had a lot of facial hair, and he was wearing a T-shirt. And on this T-shirt—I picked out my pen and wrote down what it said

on the back—here's what it said on the back of his T-shirt. It said: "I am not scared. I am not afraid. I am an animal. I will eat you alive if I have to. No Fear." That's what it said on the back of his T-shirt.

Now, indeed, we are raising a generation of youngsters who feel like animals. And why shouldn't they feel like animals? They've been taught they've come from animals. They've been taught that they were not created in the image of God but they are an accident of nature. This young man wearing a T-shirt that says he's not afraid, I think he was very much afraid.

We used to have a cat. When a dog would come, she'd puff up like that. You ever seen a cat do that? Just puff up real big? That's what he was doing. He was just puffing up, because he was so afraid. And I think one of the reasons that he was so afraid that he had to advertise that he was not afraid was that he did not know what we are trying to teach our young people today when we're teaching them God's Ten Commandments, beginning with the first one, which says, "*I am the LORD thy God... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" (Deuteronomy 5:6–7)

Now, the commandments are found in Deuteronomy chapter 5, but I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 6 and understand that God is telling us how we are to keep these commandments and to teach these commandments. Look, if you will, in chapter 6 and verse 1: "*Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.*" (Deuteronomy 6:1–2) God says, "If you want your home and your nation to last, then take these commandments and hand them down from father to son."

Ted Turner, the television mogul who has proclaimed himself "news king," has said that the Ten Commandments are obsolete. As a matter of fact, he—you know the TNN, Turner News Network—he told the National Newspaper Association members, in Atlanta, that the Ten Commandments don't relate today with today's problems. And I want to quote him, lest you think I'm being unfair to him. Here's what he said—here's a quotation: "We are living with outmoded rules. The rules we are living under are the Ten Commandments, and I bet nobody here even pays much attention to them, because they are too old. When Moses went upon the mountain, there were no nuclear weapons. There was no poverty. Today's commandments wouldn't go over. Nobody around likes to be commanded. Commandments are out." Well, if that were some yo-yo from the backwoods, that would be one thing, but this is a very powerful man. What he is doing is he is disseminating information—not only here, but around the world. He says that the Ten Commandments need to have a substitute—what he would call "ten

voluntary initiatives.” That’s Ted Turner for you.

Well, I want to say, dear friend, they are not obsolete; they are absolute. And America cannot survive apart from a moral base. Now, read with me, if you will, what God says that fathers are to do and mothers are to do in their home. I’m going to Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 4: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4) Now he’s restating again the commandment that I just gave to you: *“I am the LORD thy God... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”* (Deuteronomy 5:6–7) *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have bought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then...”*—then Israel, listen; then America, listen—*“then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which bought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4–12)

Now, this passage I’ve read to you, the Jews consider to be the most important passage in the book of Deuteronomy, if not in the entire Bible. It’s called the *Shema*. Orthodox Jews would repeat this at least twice a day. They would repeat it in the congregation. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”*—“and teach this, fathers, to your children.”

Now we complain that the Ten Commandments are not posted in public places today. But the question is, how many parents here today know the Ten Commandments? The question is, how many of us have the Ten Commandments posted in our home? God told Moses, “Moses, tell them to put these laws upon the doorposts of their houses.” (Deuteronomy 11:20) And God said, “Fathers, it is your responsibility—not the government’s, nor the schoolteacher’s—to teach these commandments to your children. That’s a good place for an *amen*. Fathers, it is your responsibility. It is not the responsibility of the school. It is not the responsibility of the government. It is the responsibility of dads to see that these commandments are handed down. This is God’s priority plan. God says that the home is to be so supercharged with spiritual truth and godliness these things will go from one generation

to another. For the most part, a juvenile delinquent is a child trying to act like his parent. And the great problem today is not dropout kids, but dropout dads and misguided mothers who have failed to hand down these truths from one generation to another.

I. The Great Revelation: One Lord

Now, before time gets away, I want us to look very carefully—very carefully—at verses 4 and following. Listen—this is Deuteronomy chapter 6: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4) Now, that I call the great revelation: one Lord. Now, not just one God: one Jehovah, one Lord. You know, everybody’s going to believe in something, and in some kind of a god; but we’re not just talking about the god of your choice.

Somebody gave me this a while back. It’s called “The Mush God.” Did you ever eat mush for breakfast? “The Mush God”: “The mush god has been known to appear to millionaires on golf courses. He appears to politicians at ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and to clergymen speaking the invocation on national television at either Democratic or Republican conventions. The mush god has no theology to speak of, being a cream-of-wheat divinity. The mush god has no particular credo, no tenets of faith, nothing that would make it difficult for believer and nonbeliever alike to lower one’s head when the temporary chairman tells us that reverend, rabbi, father, mufti, or so-and-so will lead us in an innocuous, harmless prayer. For this god of public occasions is not a jealous god. You can even invoke him to start a hooker’s convention, and he/she, or it, won’t be offended. Protector of the buddy system, the mush god is the lord of secular ritual of the necessary but hypocritical forms and formalities that hush the divisive and the derisive. The mush god is a serviceable god whose laws are chiseled—not on tablets, but written on sand, open to amendment, qualification, and erasure. This is a god that will compromise with you, make allowances, and declare all wars holy and all peaces hallowed.” “The mush god”: you ever met him? He’s all around. That’s the god that Americans want to believe in: “the mush god.”

But we’re not talking about “the mush god”; we’re talking about Jehovah God. We’re talking about the One who made it all, who said, *“I am the LORD thy God... Thou shalt have none other gods before me.”* (Deuteronomy 5:6–7)

The great revelation is one Lord. “How do you know, Pastor Rogers?”

A. Scripture Declares the Fact of God

Well, number one: Scripture declares the fact of God. You might think the First Commandment would say, “Thou shalt not be an atheist, and thou shalt not believe in atheism,” but it doesn’t do that. The Bible never even argues the fact of atheism. The Bible just begins, Genesis 1:1, *“In the beginning God...”* Sweetly, sublimely, surely: *“In*

the beginning God...” God only gives one half of one verse to atheism. Psalm 14, verse 1: *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”* (Psalm 14:1) I’m not here to try to prove God to you. I’m not here to argue with you about it. I’ve learned to never argue with a fool in public. Somebody standing around won’t be able to tell who’s who. The Bible says, *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”* The Bible simply states God. A man who denies facts is a fool, and a man who denies the supreme fact is the supreme fool. The Scriptures declare the fact of God.

Have you ever noticed, when you try to teach a little child about God, how simple it is; and when you try to teach a child there is no God, how convoluted the arguments become? One atheistic father was trying to teach his child there is no God. And after he had gotten finished with his long drawn-out explanation of how everything just happened, the little child looked at the daddy and said, “Daddy, do you think God knows we don’t believe in Him? Do you think God knows that we don’t believe in Him?” You see, that is innate in the human heart.

B. Creation Displays the Hand of God

The Scriptures declare the fact of God, and creation displays the hand of God. We talk about the laws of science: they’re not the laws of science. You look at creation. These are laws of God that science has discovered, and the scientists are no more capable of creating those laws than Columbus was capable of creating North America. He simply discovered what was already there. But yet your children are taught in school that they evolved, that they came out of primordial ooze—and you cannot teach creation. And yet the Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men...are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights.” Something is wrong here, folks, when our nation was built on the fact that God, who made us, gave us those rights, and now we cannot teach that in public schools. You know what they’re taught? They’re taught that billions and billions of years of time plus chance will bring life out of inorganic matter, which they can’t explain where it came from—that inorganic matter—and then, given billions more of years, time will turn frogs into princes. Now if you tell that in the nursery school, it’s called a fairy tale. If you tell it in the classroom, it’s called science—when frogs become princes—but that’s monkey mythology. And we have a generation that’s being taught that.

C. Faith Discovers the Fact of God

Now, how do we know that there is one Lord? Scripture declares it, friend. Creation displays it. And faith discovers it—faith discovers it. Nobody’s ever argued into believing in God. You see, people accuse us of being believers. “Oh, oh,” they say, “you’re a believer.” Friend, everybody is a believer. The atheist is a believer. He says to me, “Prove there’s a God.” I say, “I can’t.” He just laughs. I say, “Prove there is no God.” He

can't either. He says, "Well, I don't believe there's a God." I say, "That makes you a believer. You believe there is no God; and you believe, by faith, there is no God. I believe there is a God. I believe, by faith, there is a God, but I believe with evidence. I have the external evidence. I have the internal evidence. I have the creation, and I have the witness of God in my heart. And if you want to believe in God, you can believe in God. The matter is not in your head; it is in your heart." *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."* (Psalm 14:1) He doesn't have intellectual problems; he has moral problems, because he does not want this God to rule over him.

You see, friend, God so wired you, God so made you, God so created you, that when your heart is right, your heart will respond to the fact of God, like my eye responds to light when my eye is right; like my ear responds to sound when my ear is right. Your heart will respond to God when your heart is right. The great revelation—the great revelation—is this: *"Hear, O Israel:"*—there is one God—*"The LORD our God is one LORD."* (Deuteronomy 6:4)

II. The Great Response: One Love

Now, here's the second thing I want you to see: not only the great revelation, but the great response. What is the response to that revelation? *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."* (Deuteronomy 6:4) Now, here is the great response—verse 5: *"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* (Deuteronomy 6:5) That, my friend, is the great response. The great revelation: one Lord. The great response: one love—one love. You are to love Him supremely. Now you're to love Him with a sincere love: with all of your heart. Jesus spoke of people who honored the Lord with their words, but, He said, *"Their heart is far from me."* (Matthew 5:8)

A. Kids Need to See You Love God

Do you know what your children need to see in your home?

1. A Sincere Love

They need to see a sincere love. They need to see in you a burning, passionate emotional sincerity when it comes to the things of God. Kids can spot a phony a mile away, and they know whether or not you love God with all of your heart. And it is the phoniness of parents, by and large, that turns kids off to the things of God.

There was a young Jewish boy—he and his father lived in Germany. His father was a successful merchant. They were practicing their Jewish faith, and they moved from Germany to England. And the boy was surprised to see that his father joined a Lutheran church. That boy said, "Dad, why did you join a Lutheran church?" And the father said something like this: "Well, son, we live in a different place now, and there are so many

Lutherans in this particular place and this particular town. It would be good for business”—“be good for business.” That boy, who had a deep interest in religion, lost it all. His name was Karl Marx, who wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, in which he said, “Religion is the opiate of the people.” Kids can spot a phony.

You’re to love God with a sincere love.

2. A Selfless Love

I’ll tell you something else. Not only are you to love Him with a sincere love, but, folks, you’re to love Him with a selfless love, because the next word says, “with all of your soul”—“with all of your soul.” (Deuteronomy 6:5) Your soul is yourself. Now, what’s he saying? The whole self, the total self, needs to be given over to God. There needs to be no area in your life that’s off-limits to God. How are you going to teach your children there is one Lord? They are to see in you that one love. They are to see in you a sincere love and a selfless love for our Lord. Do you know how I can measure any man, woman, boy, or girl in this church pretty well? Just look at two books that are in your home. And I’m not talking about *this* book. I’m talking about your checkbook and your datebook—your calendar and bank account. Where are you putting your time? Where are you putting your money? You’re to love God selflessly.

3. A Strong Love

There is to be a sincere love, a selfless love, and there is to be a strong love, because you are to love God with all of your might: every inch, every ounce, every nerve, every sinew. He’s not just talking here about physical strength; he’s talking about whatever strength you have: emotional strength, financial strength, intellectual strength.

III. The Great Responsibility: One Law

Now, there is one Lord, and one love. Now, here’s the third thing—watch it very carefully—because there is one Lord—that’s the great revelation; one love—that’s the great response; then, friend, there is the great responsibility—one law. Now, follow: one Lord, one love, and one law. Look now, if you will, in verse 6: “*And these words, which I command thee this day...*”—these are not ten suggestions or voluntary initiatives—“*these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7) One law.

A. Your Home Is to Be a Law School

Now your home is to be a law school. You’re to teach the law of God.

1. The Professor Is the Father

The professors in that home are to be mom and dad, but primarily dad. Go back up

to verse 2. He says, “*That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son.*” (Deuteronomy 6:2) The emphasis is upon the father. The great problem today, frankly, is fathers have abandoned their role—dropout dads. A leading psychiatrist said—and I quote: “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” The father is God’s person to lend stability and character and strength to the home. We have dads today that are interested in sports and business and sex. They’ve forgotten their God-given assignments to teach the Ten Commandments.

The National Fatherhood Initiative has come out with a statement called “Father Facts”—I’ve been studying that—showing the effect of the absentee father in America. In juvenile delinquency an absent father is the common denominator when kids are involved in rape, school dropout, child abuse, welfare dependency, and all these other things. “Fatherlessness is the engine that is driving our social problem,” said David Blankenhorn, NFI Chairman, and author of a book, *Fatherless America*, which book I bought. The sum conclusion is this—and I quote: “The data shows, beyond any doubt, that fatherlessness is the crisis of our day.” The number of children living with only their mother grew from 5.1 million in 1960 to 15.6 million in 1993. Folks, about forty percent of children who live in fatherless homes see their father less than once a year. This book points out that adolescent girls reared without fathers are much more likely to be sexually active than girls reared in two-parent families. Eighty percent of adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from broken homes.

You say, “Well, it’s really just a problem of low income.” It is not a problem of low income. Children from low-income, two-parent families outperform students from high-income, single-parent homes. From 1982 to 1991, the arrest rates for juveniles increased ninety-three percent for murder. Hello! Listen. From ’82 to ’91, the arrest rates for juveniles increased ninety-three percent; seventy-two percent for aggravated assault; twenty-four percent for forcible rape; and ninety-seven percent for car theft. Of all adolescent murderers, seventy-two percent grew up without fathers.

Now, if you are from a broken home, and if you are a precious, precious single woman trying to raise your children, I am not here to discourage you, because in this series of messages we are going to show you what you are to do to make up for, and to help, and to undergird; and we’re here as a church to help you. But I’m telling you that something has to be done. There are powerful forces today that are trying to shape and mold the mentality of today’s youth. Many of them come home, shut the door, go to the bedroom, and turn on a moral sewer called *MTV*. They watch it. Somebody says, “Well, what they see does not affect them.” If you believe what they see doesn’t affect them, you’ve got rooms to rent upstairs unfurnished. Let me ask you a question. Why would any company pay one million dollars for thirty seconds of time at the Super Bowl if what

people see doesn't affect them? I mean, smell the coffee, folks! They cannot sit there and watch that without it affecting them. And our children are being systematically seduced.

2. The Students Are the Children

I'm telling you that the professors in this law school are the dads; the students are the children. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children."* (Deuteronomy 6:7) And the children need to be enrolled early. Francis Xavier, a Roman Catholic leader, said this: "Give me the children until they're seven, and anyone can have them afterward." Begin early. Isaiah 28, verses 9 and 10: *"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."* (Isaiah 28:9–10)

3. The Curriculum Is God's Ten Commandments

Now, the professor is the father; the students: the children. The curriculum is God's Ten Commandments. Verse 6: *"And these words, which I command thee this day..."* (Deuteronomy 6:6) He's talking about the Ten Commandments: that is the curriculum in the school.

B. How Do You Teach the Ten Commandments?

Now, how do you teach the Ten Commandments? Why are we having this series? To teach dads to teach the Ten Commandments—not that Adrian is going to do it from the pulpit. Oh, would to God that I can show you your responsibility! How do you teach the commandments in the home?

1. Convincingly

Number one: convincingly. Look, if you will, in verse 6: *"[They] shall be in thine heart."* (Deuteronomy 6:6) Folks, if you don't believe it, if you don't practice it, just hang it up: you'll never teach it. Don't send them down here to Sunday School; don't send them to the public school; don't send them to the Christian school, and think you have done your duty. It must be in your heart. You teach it convincingly, because you're convinced.

2. Creatively

Teach it creatively. Verse 7 says, *"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way."* (Deuteronomy 6:7) We have four grown children. All of them love God. They're teaching their children to love God. How did Joyce teach these children? How did we teach them? How did I teach them? Bible reading, Bible stories, Bible games, Bible memory, Christian books.

Charlie Jones, the great motivator, had a boy who was fourteen, going to be sixteen

before long. He said, “Son, when you get to sixteen, you’re going to want a car, and I am going to help you buy a car. And,” he said, “there are some books that I want you to read and give me a report on. I’ll select the books; you read the books. Write me a report. And for every book you read that I assign to you, you’ll get ten dollars for your car fund.” Then, he said, “If you read in style, you’ll drive in style; if you read like a bum, you’re going to drive like a bum.” That’s good. Put some put some incentive in this thing.

You say, “I don’t believe in bribing kids.” It’s not a bribe; it’s a reward. Do you know the difference between a bribe and a reward? A bribe is an inducement to do evil; a reward is recognition for doing good. God rewards. Parents should reward. Christian magazines, Christian music, albums, and tapes: out goes the filth; in comes the Word of God.

3. Consistently

It should be taught convincingly. It should be taught creatively. It should be taught consistently, or diligently. Look, if you will, in verse 7: “*Thou shalt teach them diligently,*” (Deuteronomy 6:7) “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little,” (Isaiah 28:10) over and over and over again. Don’t think, “Well, I told them that. Now, what’s next?”

4. Conversationally

It should be taught conversationally. Look, if you will, in verse 7: “*Thou...shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*” (Deuteronomy 6:7) Look in verse 20: “*And when thy son asketh thee from time to time, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say...*” (Deuteronomy 6:20–21) Listen. When the curiosity factor is high, answer. It doesn’t have to be dull. It’s caught as well as taught.

5. Conspicuously

Now, here’s the final thing—and I must close. Not only should to be taught conversationally, but it needs to be taught conspicuously. Look, if you will, in verse 8: “*And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*” (Deuteronomy 6:8) What does that mean? Well, the Jews took this so literally that they built little boxes they called *phylacteries*, and put the Scripture in, and would take a ribbon, a piece of leather, and with the Scripture in that little box they would tie it around their head.

I was on an airplane the other day and I watched a Jewish Orthodox man. I was blessed watching him. It was time for him to have his quiet time with God. He got out his Scripture and he began to read and to bow his head. But before he had done that, he took out of his little box—his phylactery—put it around his head, and tied it on. Then he

took the rest of the Scripture and wrapped his forearm there on his right hand. And then he was not caring what I thought, or anybody else thought; and, frankly, I was very blessed—very blessed—as I watched that man. He didn't care what anybody thought. There was the Word of God. There was the Word of God.

Now, did God mean to do it that way literally? Perhaps He did. But what I think He meant was, “between your eyes,” to show that all that you think is controlled by the Word of God; “on your right hand,” to show all that you do is controlled by the Word of God. And then He said, “You take this Scripture, and you put it on the doorpost of your house”—they call that a *mezuzah*—“and put that phylactery there, and that Scripture there, on the doorpost.” (Deuteronomy 11:20) What is He saying? He is saying, ladies and gentlemen, teach the Word of God; not only conversationally, but teach conspicuously. That's why we're giving to every one of you a copy of the Ten Commandments. I want those of you who are business people to take it and put it in your office. Those of you who have social clubs, if they'll allow you, say, “Look what we've got for our club.” Put these in your living room. Put these in your children's bedroom.

6. Compellingly

Friend, how are we to teach the Word of God? We are to teach the Word of God conspicuously. We're to teach the Word of God consistently. We're to teach the Word of God creatively. We're to teach the Word of God compellingly. We're to teach the Word of God so that our boys and girls will know that we believe what we believe.

Conclusion

Let's bow our heads together in prayer. Heads are bowed; eyes are closed—no one moving. God says, *“I am the LORD thy God... Thou shalt have none other gods.”* (Deuteronomy 5:6–7) That means there is no rival. That means there is no refusal. Did you hear that? No rival. No other god. No argument. No refusal. Whatever He says, I'll do. Now, friend, don't say it won't work if you haven't tried. These are God's laws for living, and God's laws are not for our punishment but for our welfare. He loves us, and *every time God says, “Thou shalt,” He's saying, “Help yourself to happiness.” And every time He says, “Thou shalt not,” He's saying, “Don't harm yourself.”*

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Successful Parenthood

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:1–9

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

Outline

- I. The Responsibility of Parents
 - A. A Mother Who Had a Wrong Set of Values
 - 1. Eve Wanted Physical Gratification
 - 2. Eve Wanted Aesthetic Stimulation
 - 3. Eve Wanted Intellectual Investigation
 - B. A Father Who Had No Backbone
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 - A. The Word Should Be Taught Creatively
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 - 3. By Visual Manifestation
 - B. The Word Should Be Taught Consistently
 - C. The Word Should Be Taught Compellingly
 - 4. By Bible Reading
 - 5. By Bible Games
 - 6. By Christian Albums and Tapes

Conclusion

Introduction

Would you turn, please, to Deuteronomy—Deuteronomy chapter 6. And, tonight, our study is “Successful Parenthood.” Today is Mother’s Day. Actually, this morning, I didn’t necessarily preach on motherhood, except I preached on worry, and I guess you couldn’t say much more about motherhood than just to preach on worry and anxiety. I know I must have given my mother many a wrinkle and a gray hair as she worried over me, so I’m sure that was appropriate. But, tonight, I want us really to get right down to the crux of the matter as we speak on “Successful Parenthood.” Deuteronomy chapter 6, beginning in verse 1: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them*

in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:1–9)

May we pray one more time? Heavenly Father, we pray, dear Lord, that thou shalt anoint us as we preach thy Word, and, Father, that the truth of it may impregnate our hearts that we might be the parents that thou wouldst have us to be. In Jesus's dear name. Amen.

I want to say that Moses here is speaking to the nation, and Moses is telling them how to long exist as a nation. For it is the truth that needs to be said over and over again: that no nation is any stronger than her families. And so, in the same paragraph, while Moses speaks of the national life, he speaks of the family life.

Plato said long ago that “the life of the nation is only the life of the family writ large.” Men have always known that as the family goes, the nation will go. And they know that if they want to pervert the nation, they must first of all destroy the family. And so Hitler threw away the structure of the family life. Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* said—and I quote: “We replace home education with social education.” That's one of the things that frightens me about the demands of the feminist today that there be childcare centers provided by the government for the children. It is a socialistic aim to replace the home education with social education. The communists look to a time where the family as we know it will vanish. God's plan is for the home.

Now I want to speak about three things tonight: first of all, the responsibility of parents; secondly, the responsiveness of children; and, thirdly, the reliability of the Word of God to get the job done.

I. The Responsibility of Parents

Now, first of all, I want you to think with me about the responsibility of parents. Notice again, beginning in verse 6: “*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.*” (Deuteronomy

6:6–7) Now, this is the responsibility of parents. You see, these words are addressed to parents. Now, ladies and gentlemen, we speak much of the problem of juvenile delinquency; but do you know what a juvenile delinquent is, for the most part? He's a child trying to act like his parents. And the real problem is not so much with juvenile delinquency as it is with parents who have dropped out.

I want to read to you what Max Rafferty had to say. You know, parents are handy scapegoats, I'm certain. And we try to lay the blame at parents, often. But, really, I think we need to. I think we must agree with Dr. Max Rafferty, the California educator. He was asked the question, "Are parents to blame?" and he said, "Yes." He said, "Many of today's parents are society's dropouts. And now," he says, "you're blaming everyone you can find for the mess we're in. You, as parents, want to blame the teachers; you want to blame the legislators; you want to blame the Supreme Court Justices; you want to blame the movie producers and the magazine publishers. You use the term *drug abuse*: just one more symptom of a nation's unraveling moral fiber." But this is what he said to parents—I want you parents to listen now. He said, "Ride hard on your kids. Know what they keep in their rooms. Know where they go when they're not home. Know who their friends are. Know what they're doing when you're not around. Don't be ashamed of interfering in your children's private lives: that's one of the things parents are for. The penitentiaries are full of people whose parents didn't interfere when they were kids."

And so, you see, God has given us a responsibility as parents, and the failure of parents is just as old as society itself. Go back in the Garden of Eden, and see what happened to Mother Eve, since it's Mother's Day. Turn in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 6, and let's look together for a moment: "*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*" (Genesis 3:6)

Now, what happened here in the Garden of Eden?

A. A Mother Who Had a Wrong Set of Values

Number one: Here was a mother with a wrong set of values. And I'm certain that I'm preaching to some mothers who are very much like her. What were Mother Eve's set of values?

1. Eve Wanted Physical Gratification

First of all: physical gratification. She looked at that tree—that forbidden fruit—and she "*saw that [it] was good for food.*" (Genesis 3:6) That is, she wanted to pamper the body. Now, there is nothing wrong with feeding the body—really, there's nothing wrong with pampering the body—but there is much if we do it at the expense of the soul. You

see, dear friends, there are some of you parents who are listening who will see to it that your children have a balanced diet and you will serve to them sanitary food, and yet at the same time, there will be moral filth in the magazine rack in your home and garbage that is being shown through your television set, and you don't have the moral fortitude to cut it off. And I want to ask you a question: What difference does it make that your child is born in a sanitary hospital, that he's educated in a progressive school, that he rides in an air-conditioned car, that he sleeps in synthetic clothing on a firm mattress, that he eats vitamin-enriched food, that he dies without pain by the aid of high-powered drugs, that he is buried in a memorial cemetery as beautiful as any garden—what difference would it make if he must rise in the Judgment and face a God whom he knows not and knows him not? Is he any better off than a pagan child? Some of you parents are providing everything physically for your children. That was Mother Eve. Mother Eve said, "Here is something good to eat."

2. Eve Wanted Aesthetic Stimulation

But not only was Mother Eve interested in physical gratification; she was also interested in aesthetic stimulation. She wanted to be stimulated. She said, "Not only is that good to eat; why, that's pleasant to look at." (Genesis 3:6) Now, you see, she didn't need anything pretty to look at. There is nothing wrong with having pretty things to look at, but the point of the matter is this: that she sold her soul for luxury—something that she really did not need. I said this morning and I believe it: There are people who would give up coming to church before they would give up getting a new refrigerator or getting a color television set. They are just simply enmeshed and immersed in the things of this world. And so Mother Eve said, "Here's something good to taste: I want that. Here's something pretty to see: I want that."

You see, there are parents today who are so concerned that the children know about art. There are parents that are so concerned that they have a beautiful lawn in front of the home. They are so concerned that the children dress in the latest styles and fashions. They are so concerned that they have beautiful furniture and decorations in the home. But the child still doesn't know God, for the parents have a wrong set of values.

I say there's nothing wrong with these things. But I heard about a little socialite girl who was dying, and she looked into the face of her giddy mother and said, "Mother, you've taught me many things: You taught me how to dance. You taught me how to be charming. You taught me how to dress, how to make up my face. You taught me how to walk. You taught me how to be popular. But, Mother, you didn't teach me how to die. And now I've got to die."

3. Eve Wanted Intellectual Investigation

But not only was Mother Eve interested in physical gratification; not only was she

interested in aesthetic stimulation; but she was also interested in intellectual investigation. She saw that the tree was “*desired to make one wise,*” (Genesis 3:6) and she said, “Well, that must be where the action is.”

And I’m talking again to some mothers who are worldly wise, but they’re spiritual ignoramuses. Do you know I know mothers who had rather have their children home studying than have them in church on Sunday night? They say, “Well, after all, they’ve got to make good grades.” No, they don’t. Grades are not God. I’d rather have my children in the house of God if they don’t make straight A’s. And you educators can come up here and argue with me after it’s over. I believe with all of my heart that children ought to study, but by proper planning they can do their study and be in the house of God also. But *if I had my choice, I’d rather have my children in heaven saying their ABC’s than in hell spouting philosophy any day.* But here was Mother Eve, a mother who had a wrong set of values: something to eat, something to see, something to know.

B. A Father Who Had No Backbone

But not only was there a mother with the wrong set of values; there was also a father who had no backbone. “She gave to her husband, and he did eat also.” (Genesis 3:6) Here was a man who left his rightful place. He was to be the head of the house; he was to be the leader. Eve was to be his helpmeet. But Adam was led rather than leading. And I want to say this clearly and plainly, without equivocation: *Mister, if your home is wrong, you’re wrong.* God holds you responsible. It is up to you to say, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

So many times children get that way because Dad is not what he ought to be. I heard of a girl who came home one night at a late hour—she’d been out with a drinking crowd, and the father was infuriated. He met her at the door. He said, “Hello, daughter of the devil.” She said, “Hello, father.”

C. Children Who Were Left to Chance

A father with no backbone. A mother with a wrong set of values. And children who were left to chance. Cain and Abel: one turned out good; one turned out bad. You see, Adam and Eve were not all that bad; they just weren’t all that good. They were inconsistent, and inconsistent living brings inconsistent results. I know some parents today who haven’t lived right, who haven’t taught their children right, who haven’t done right, and the kids love God. But they can’t take the credit for it: it’s by the grace of God that they do. Some do, and some don’t. But, dear friend, a Christian ought to say that “all of my children shall know the Lord, and not one of them shall be lost.” There is the responsibility of parents—the responsibility of parents. We cannot—we cannot, we cannot—get out of it.

II. The Responsiveness of Children

But now I want us to go back to our text in Deuteronomy 6, and I want us to notice not only the responsibility of parents, but I want us to notice also the responsiveness of children, because the Lord has given us these children, and they are to respond to us and to our teaching. Look again here in Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 7: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) Friend, if we have our children, and God gives them to us when they’re young, we clearly, plainly, have the promise of the Lord: *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* (Proverbs 22:6)

But, you see, so often we don’t do it when they’re young, when they’re responsive, when the hearts are plastic and pliable, and when the hearts are open. Do you know what Francis Xavier, the famous Catholic leader, had to say? He said, “Give me the children until they are seven, and anyone can have them afterward”—“Just give me a child until he’s seven, when he’s responsive, and let me put something into his heart, and I’ll put something there that no one can take out.”

One woman asked a pastor, “How soon should I start the spiritual training of my child?” And the pastor said, “Well, how old is he?” She said, “He’s five.” The pastor said, “You’re five years too late”—“five years too late.”

Oh, listen, dear friend. There is the responsiveness of children—the responsiveness of children—when they’re young. We can blame everybody else; but, folks, they’re in our hands. We can do with them as we will by the aid of the Holy Spirit. You see, a child has about 108,000 waking hours between infancy and maturity. Now we say everybody else influences the child. But if he’s an average child who is a Sunday School goer in an average Bible Belt community, he will spend about one thousand hours in Sunday School and in church. He will spend seven thousand hours in the public schools, and he will spend 100,000 hours under the supervision of his parents. And there’s no one to pass the blame off to. There’s the responsiveness of children, and they will respond to the right stimuli.

III. The Reliability of the Word of God

But now, let’s go on, thirdly, and speak not only of the responsibility of parents, and the responsiveness of children, but let’s speak of the reliability of the Word of God to get the job done. Notice what God says that we’re to do as parents. Again, in verse 6: *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou*

risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)

Now, let me tell you how the Word of God is to be taught.

A. The Word Should Be Taught Creatively

First of all, the Word of God is to be taught creatively—the Word of God is to be taught creatively. Look in verse 7: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) Now, so many parents don’t know how to teach the Bible to the children. They don’t know how to do it creatively. They have the idea that all of the sudden everything stops and we say, “Now it’s time for our Bible lesson.” Friend, you are giving a Bible lesson twenty-four hours a day: when you rise up, when you sit down, when you lie down, when you go out, when you come in. You are to be looking for opportunities to teach the Bible.

How do you do it? May I tell you how to do it creatively? Three ways: number one, by vital conversation; number two, by victorious demonstration; number three, by visual manifestation. Now, let me go back, and let’s study those together.

1. By Vital Conversation

First of all, by vital conversation. You see, the Bible is as much caught as it is taught, as they listen to your conversation. Do you want me to tell you why some of the children who live in this city are going to hell and their parents go to church every Sunday? Because on Sunday afternoon after the sermon is over, do you know what they have for dinner? They have roast beef and roast preacher. That’s right. Now I’m not just talking about me. I’m not sensitive about it. I’ve got enough sense to know there are some who go home and say they enjoyed it, and I’ve got enough sense to know there are some who didn’t enjoy it. And I know the preacher who pleases everybody pleases the devil most of all—I know that. I don’t expect to please everybody. But I know this: I know that there are parents who sit in the choir, and they sing in the choir, and they walk up and down the aisles, and they take up the offering, and they teach in the Sunday School, and then they go home and they criticize, and they carp, and they find fault, and they gripe on their way to church and on their way back to church. And the children are listening. And I want you to know that you’re teaching, but you’re not going to like the lesson that you’re teaching: the way you talk—the way you talk.

There is to be a vital conversation. There are opportunities every day—so many ways to teach the Bible. When something happens—you see a little sparrow outside your window—you can say, “You know, sweetheart, the Bible says that not a sparrow falls, but what God knows it.” (Matthew 10:29) You see a flower in bloom, and you can

say, “Look at that flower. What made it grow?” And you can talk about growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. (2 Peter 3:18) When there comes a time when someone wants to go and pay child’s fare when they’re too old for child’s fare—maybe they just turned twelve, and they say, “Well, no one will know”—you say, “But God knows, and the Bible says to be honest.” You see the little ways just in your conversation you can be teaching the Bible—teaching the Bible.

Look at it in verse 7. The Bible says, *“And thou shalt teach them...unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) It’s not that we say all of a sudden, “We’re going to have Bible study.” Do you know what most people think family worship is? They think family worship is a period of time where you sit down and take it like a dose of cod liver oil: “A dose a day keeps the devil away. And then, now that we’ve got that out of the way, we’ll go do something else.”

2. By Victorious Demonstration

No, dear friend, you are to teach the Bible in vital conversation—but not only in vital conversation, but in victorious demonstration. Look in verse 8: *“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”* (Deuteronomy 6:8) Now, what does that mean? It means that “these words that I have given you are to be in your mind as frontlets between thine eyes. They’re to be upon your hand—bound upon your hand.”

Now, the Jews thought that God meant this literally—and He may have meant it literally—but it was only to teach a greater lesson. The Jews got little boxes and they put a portion of the Scripture in the box, and they just tied it around their forehead, and they just tied it on their right hand. They called that a *phylactery*, and they just wear it with a scripture in it. But I don’t think that’s primarily what the Lord is saying here. He is saying that the Word of God is to be in your mind—down between the frontlets of your eyes. The Word of God is to be in your action—upon your right hand, the hand of power, representing what you do. That is, not only are you to teach the Word of God; you are to live the Word of God. Not only should there be a vital conversation; there ought to be a victorious demonstration.

Do you understand that? You see, we will teach by our lives. They ought to see in us the gospel that we preach. Every thought, every act, every atmosphere of the house is to be conformed to the Word of God.

3. By Visual Manifestation

But not only should there be a vital conversation, and a victorious demonstration; there needs to be a visual manifestation. Look in verse 9: *“And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”* (Deuteronomy 6:9) Now I think, certainly, this is literal, and perhaps the other was also. But God is saying, “Get the

Word of God out.”

When you would walk into a Hebrew home in this day, there on the doorpost would be the Word of God. You walk into that house, you'd say, “This is a Christian home—in the Old Testament sense of the word. This is God's place.” Say, what is there about your home in the very atmosphere, in the very decoration of your home, that makes it a Christian home? Joyce and I are careful to have on the very doorpost of our house—as you come into our house, you'll see the Word of God on either side, just to let people know that they're not walking up to a pagan home. And it's amazing how many times some of these false cults have come and knocked on the door and they're looking at both sides. They know they're in trouble when they get there, because there's somebody who believes the Word of God, who loves the Word of God in there. And there ought to be Scripture mottos on the house and in the house. There ought not to be some fat Buddha sitting around.

I tell you, I go into the homes of Christians—it makes me sick. They've been overseas to the Far East; and they've bought a Buddha, and they bring him home. It gives me the creeps! Get that junk out of your house! And get that horoscope out of your house and put the Word of God there. That's the way to teach the Bible.

B. The Word Should Be Taught Consistently

Parents have a responsibility. There is the reliability of the Word of God. It is to be taught creatively by vital conversation, victorious demonstration, visual manifestation. Now, not only should it be taught creatively; it also ought to be taught consistently. Look again at verse 7: “*And thou shalt teach them diligently*” (Deuteronomy 6:7)—not on-again, off-again, but diligently we're to teach the Word of God. Day in and day out, line upon line, precept upon precept, we're to be doing it. When we rise up, when we sit down, when we go out, when we come in, we're to be teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching the Word of God. We're to do it consistently, line upon line, day by day, year after year.

C. The Word Should Be Taught Compellingly

And then, we're to do it not only creatively, and consistently; we're to do it compellingly—compellingly. You see, there's something about the way that we teach that it ought to be so winsome. It ought not to be crammed down the kids' throats. Some kids are sick and tired of *churchianity*. They're sick and tired of people just cramming something down their throats. But you ought to do it in such a way as to cause them to desire it themselves.

In the first place, you ought to be so excited. Look in verse 5: “*Thou*”—the parents—“*shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*” (Deuteronomy 6:5) They ought to say, “Boy, this means something to Daddy.

This means something to Mama.” And they’re going to get so excited. Skip on down to verse 20: *“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies...?”* (Deuteronomy 6:20)—he’s going to ask. Friend, there is such a way that you can live that you will compel them to learn. “Daddy, what makes you different? Mama, what makes you different?” They want to know. They will ask. They will see the Lord Jesus Christ in you.

Oh, friend, we are to teach the Word of God clearly and plainly. Are you teaching it? Are you teaching it compellingly? God has given us so many aids—so many ways—to teach the Bible. Let me tell you some ways that you can do it.

4. By Bible Reading

You can do it, number one, compellingly—by Bible reading. Now, don’t have a chapter a day or two chapters a day with your kids. My soul, friend! Do that by yourself. You can drown a cat in cream. But have some Bible study. Have some Bible stories if they’re children. Get Hurlbut’s Bible storybook or some of these others. Oh, there are so many fine ones!

5. By Bible Games

Have you ever played Bible games? When our kids were little, we used to play Bible baseball. Do you ever play Bible baseball? And you advance a base when you get a question right. We tried that for a long time, but we had more arguments over Bible baseball. We lost our religion, so we moved on to another one. Try Bible memory and rewards, Christian books.

You know, Charlie Jones wanted his son to learn. He had a son, and he wanted his son to learn. And so this is what Charlie Jones said to his big old high school boy. He said, “Son, in two years,”—the boy was fourteen—“you’re going to want me to help you to buy a car. And I want to help you. But I’m not going to give you the money. Here is my proposal. I’m going to pay you ten dollars for every book you read. And I’ll pick the book, and you give me a written report, and I’ll put ten dollars in a car fund. And so, if you read in style, you’ll drive in style. But if you read like a bum, you’ll drive like a bum.” Now, that’s what I call teaching compellingly, you see?

6. By Christian Albums and Tapes

Oh, you know, we need to be creative when we teach the Word of God. Why, listen. There are Christian albums and tapes. Where do you invest your money? You’d be amazed at how much money is being spent in the average Christian home on satanic music, devilish music, demon-inspired music. There are so many fine Christian music albums. There’s so much beautiful music. There are so many fine Bible tapes.

You are to teach the Word of God. You are to teach the Word of God, dear friend, creatively. You’re to teach the Word of God consistently. You’re to teach the Word of

God compellingly.

Conclusion

Our time has gone, and there's so much more that we could say—but may I say with Howard Hendricks, “Heaven help the home!”

The Secret of Blessing for the Family

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: October 24, 1982

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:1–9

Main Scripture Verse: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

Sermon Number: 0884

Outline

Introduction

- I. The Fact of God
 - A. The Outward Objective Evidence of Creation
 - B. The Inward Subjective Evidence of God’s Witness in My Heart
- II. Fellowship with God
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- III. The Family for God
 - A. Vital Conversation
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Conclusion

Introduction

“The Secret of Blessing for the Family.” I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 6. And as Joyce prepared her music for these young couples, I have prepared the message tonight for their hearts. And I pray not only for their hearts, but all of our hearts—but especially for their hearts. Deuteronomy chapter 6, one of the more familiar passages in the Old Testament—and I want to read the first nine verses: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and*

honey.” And then especially these verses: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”* (Deuteronomy 6:1–9)

And what an instruction God has given to us here! Someone has well said that a juvenile delinquent is a child trying to act like his parents. Now, there’s a little humor there, but there’s a lot of truth there—that so many times juvenile delinquents are raised by parental delinquents. And today’s dropouts are not the children. I have observed that today’s dropouts are the parents who have jettisoned the responsibility that God has given to them. And a nation can be no stronger than its families and its homes.

And so here in this scripture Moses is giving his farewell address. And he’s telling them how to have a strong nation. He’s really talking nationally. But, very quickly, as he tells them how to have a strong nation, he goes on to tell them how to have strong families.

Plato himself said, “The life of the nation is only the life of the family written large.” Hitler knew this. And Hitler wanted to tear down the family, because he wanted to change the nation. And so he set about to destroy the family. Marx, the father of communism, and Engels, and *The Communist Manifesto*, said, “We will replace home education with social education.” The communists do not like home education, because, again, they want to change society. And they know if they can alter the home, they can change the society. And our families today are under attack as never before. And Satan is leveling his fiery darts at the home.

Having said that, I want you to look especially again at verse 4. In verse 4, we have the fact of God: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”* And in verse 5, we have fellowship with God: *“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”* And then, in verse 6, we have the family for God: *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”* And here God has given it to us so clearly and so plainly. The fact of God: how important that is! How foundational that is! But it’s not enough for us to know the fact of God. We’re to have fellowship with God. And it’s not enough for us to have fellowship with God. We are to have the family for God. And that’s the way God says for a nation to be great.

I. The Fact of God

Now, first of all, he speaks of the fact of God. And we're not going to spend a whole lot of time talking about the fact of God, because it's so obvious.

A. The Outward, Objective Evidence of Creation

Creation demands that there is a God. There can be no creation without a Creator. We all know that. And science talks about the laws of science. But they're not the laws of science. They're the laws of God that science has discovered. And scientists are no more capable of creating those laws than Columbus was capable of creating North America. But so many times they think that they are. They remind me of the rooster who thinks his crowing causes the sun to come up just because they happen coincidentally. Creation demands that there is a God. Scripture declares that there is a God. The Scripture never really argues the fact of God. It starts out, sweetly and sublimely, *"In the beginning God..."* (Genesis 1:1) And all the Bible gives to atheism is one half of one verse: *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."* (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1)

Now *a man who denies facts is a fool. God is the supreme fact. And the man who denies the supreme fact, in my estimation, is the supreme fool.* I say that creation demands there is a God. Scripture declares there is a God. And faith discovers there is a God. You can know in your heart by trusting Him. So many times we as Christians are ridiculed for believing God by faith. And they say, "You Christians, you just live by faith—and how unscientific that is!" Somebody says to me, "Prove there's a God." I say to him, "Friend, prove there is no God." You see, the burden of proof is not upon me. The burden of proof is upon him, because the evidence is on my side.

B. The Inward, Subjective Evidence of God's Witness in My Heart

There's the outward, objective of evidence of a creation. There's the inward, subjective evidence of God's witness in my heart. When God made me, and when God made you, God created you so you would respond to the fact of God. Like your eye responds to light when your eye is right, and like your ear responds to sound when your ear is right, your heart responds to God when your heart is right. And people say, "Well, you just accept that by blind faith." It's by faith, but it's not blind faith, because the eyes of the spirit can see God and know God. And, dear friend, the atheists accept by faith there is no God. You ask him to prove there is no God, he says, "Well, I don't believe there is one." I say, "Well, that makes you a believer, too. You see, I believe there is a God, and you believe there is no God. I, by faith, receive God. You, by faith, reject God. But the problem, sir, is not in your head; it's in your heart. *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."*

II. Fellowship with God

And so, verse 4 speaks of the fact of God. And then, verse 5 speaks of that fellowship with God, and it tells us how we're to love the Lord. And we're to love Him three ways.

A. Love Him Sincerely

"Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart": (Deuteronomy 6:5) that means there should be a sincere love for God—with all of our heart; a pure-hearted love for God; a burning, passionate, emotional love for God. Jesus remonstrated with some, and He said, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:8; Mark 7:6) And, tonight, I don't want you just to sing about it, and just to talk about it; I want you to love Him sincerely with all of your heart—a sincere love.

B. Love Him Selflessly

And then he says, "with all of your soul." (Deuteronomy 6:5) Now that means a selfless love—a selfless love—because the soul is the life—and that is that God is to mean more to you than your very own life. And there should be no area in your life that is marked "private" that God cannot have a part of.

C. Love Him Strongly

But not only are you to love Him sincerely, and not only are you to love Him selflessly; you're to love Him strongly. And the Bible goes on to say you're to love Him "with all of your might"—"with all of your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5) A sincere love, a selfless love, a strong love is the fellowship that we're to have with this great God.

And what is your might? What is your strength? It may be physical strength—and love Him with your physical strength. It may be emotional strength: love Him with that emotional strength. It may be intellectual strength: love Him with that intellectual strength. It may be financial strength: love Him with that financial strength. With all of your might, as much as in you is, love the Lord your God.

III. The Family for God

But now, let's go to the main thing that we're talking about. Not only the fact of God, and not only fellowship with God, but notice the family for God, beginning in verses 6 and 7: *"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."* (Deuteronomy 6:6–7)

What is our Lord saying here? He is talking about parental responsibility. And I want

to say, fathers, that He is addressing this not primarily to the mother, but He is addressing this primarily to the father. Proof of that is verse 2: *“That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.”* (Deuteronomy 6:2)

The problem in the average home is the father—or the lack of a father. A leading psychologist at the Menninger Clinic said this: “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” Now I don’t agree with that statement all the way. I believe that a woman who is cast upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and who can compensate by turning to Christ in a very special way, can keep her home from being a chaos. But it can never be what it ought to be without that godly father that God wants there to be. And it is not without significance that this urbane, secular psychologist said it again. Let me read to you what he said: “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” The father is to be God’s person to provide stability, to provide leadership, to provide character, and to provide strength for the family. And yet most fathers in America today are preoccupied by their business, by television, by sports, by sex, and they have forgotten, or never knew, their God-given assignment.

I was reading an article in the *Los Angeles Times*. It says this: “Everything testifies that the world of fathers is dead. It has been abandoned by the son, and is now beyond the grasp of the grandson.” That’s a sad statement—a sad statement indeed. And on top of that, the mothers now are being rushed out from their God-given assignment in the home as the mother into the workplace. And this leaves millions and millions of unattended children to roam the streets or to be put out in daycare centers.

I was looking at some statistics. I found that by 1990 almost fifty percent of the workforce—forty-five percent of the entire workforce in the United States—will be women. And already there are six million children under the age of six that have working mothers in the United States. And nearly half of all of the children under eighteen have working mothers. And the sadness of this is that there are such powerful forces and such sinister forces that in America today are taking advantage of the placid mentality of the mind of this child while the fathers have abandoned their responsibility and the mothers have abandoned their responsibility and have gone out into the workplace.

And so, what happens to these children? Well, they’re instructed by others. And do you know who their chief instructor is? The television. The television becomes the babysitter for so many children, as they come into the house after school and lock the doors behind them, and turn on the tube and watch television. What do you think they’re watching? Let me tell you something. According to a statistic that I read, sixty-five percent of Americans use the television as the central source of their information—sixty-

five percent. And thirty-six percent use it as their only source of information—that is, not books, not the Bible, not journals, not newspapers, but the television. For one third of our population, it is the only source of information. And this is especially true of children, because children today have not learned how to read. And, again, Dr. Menninger of the Menninger Clinic said we are rearing a generation of violently aggressive women.

Now we used to talk about aggressive men. But he says, because of the influence of television now, we are raising a generation of violently aggressive women. And the reason for this is the children's exposure to television fantasy females, super heroes like the Bionic Woman, Wonder Woman, Police Woman, Charlie's Angels. And this has a kind of a brutalizing affect on the minds of children. And they watch and they watch.

Now I've not seen the movie "E.T." I don't go to that kind of movie. Not that I know that it's all that bad or all that good—I don't know that much about it. But somebody told me something—and I don't have the statistics, but it was an amazing thing that this somebody told me last week. He said—and some of you may have seen this film—that this extra-terrestrial creature that somehow has come down was led along a certain way by someone holding out before him a little Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, a little candy bar. Is that right? Look intelligent. I'm not going to hold it against you, if that's true, okay? And so this creature from outer space is led along by this little Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. And, according to the information, the name of that particular candy was not given on the screen, but the children who saw this movie had been enamored by the movie in such a way that their little minds are working so that almost overnight the sale of that particular piece of candy went up four hundred percent, this little Peanut Butter Cup, as they saw this monster—excuse me, children, whatever he was—this creature from outer space. Now that's an amazing thing to me, but it shows something of the plastic mentality of these children.

Now, listen. When you think of children wanting a Peanut Butter Cup because some creature from outer space wanted a Peanut Butter Cup, and then you consider this: that alcohol is served ten to one over the next beverage on all television productions. The next beverage is coffee. But if a beverage is served, ten to one, it will be beverage alcohol. And little children are watching this, day in and day out. And the National Federation for Decency has gathered this statistic: that eighty-eight percent of all sex that is depicted on the tube is outside the bond of holy matrimony—eighty-eight percent. Now, you think of those little children buying that Peanut Butter Cup. And then, you think of what they see in the realm of liquor. And you think of what they see in the realm of sex. And then, you think of these fathers who have jettisoned their responsibility, and you think of these mothers who have gone out into the workforce.

"Oh," you say, "well, we want to provide for our little children, and we want to provide physically." And Americans do a pretty good job of providing physically—that is, if a

child can ever get born. We provide for them. You know how much we'll spend this year on toys in America? You ready for this? Four billion dollars on toys—on toys! That's more than the Gross National Product of sixty-three nations in the world we will spend—on toys! And we'll see to it that they will have vitamin-enriched food, and that they will go to the best of schools, and that they will be dressed nicely, and that they will be kept warm in their homes. But let me tell you what is happening to America's children. They are not being provided for emotionally, and they're not being provided for spiritually, and they're being bent out of shape.

Did you know that 100,000 children in America are in prison—100,000 children in prison? Did you know that four out of every ten children in America live in a broken home? Did you know that there are seven to fourteen million children who are living in America now, if the statistics hold true, who will become alcoholics? Seven to fourteen million of these little children will become alcoholics. Did you know that sixty-five out of every one thousand children between seven and eleven have received psychiatric help already? Between seven and eleven years of age! Did you know that the average age of beginning smokers, those who smoke cigarettes, has dropped from the age of fourteen to ten? That's the average age now of a beginning smoker: at the age of ten. They've seen it all. They have tried it all.

One million girls from twelve to seventeen will get pregnant this year—one million of them! And that does not count those who will have an abortion. A million of them will get pregnant and come to term. One out of five children in America use drugs twice a week. We are raising a generation of young people that are going to hell in a hand basket. Ten million minors are infected with VD. There are five thousand new cases every day—every day! We have educated these children, we think; but we have educated them, not in morals, and not spiritually. We've left that to someone else. Juvenile delinquency is increasing seven times faster than the population.

I want to tell you that God made children to be dependent upon their parents, and nobody else can take that responsibility from you or for you. You say, "Well, I pay that person in that daycare center." Do you think that person is going to do for money what you will not do for love? They will not do it. That child needs you. But you say, "But what about the need of a mother to work?" Friend, my heart is out to, and my hat is off to, the woman who must work to put food on the table, for the woman who must work to put clothes on the backs of her children, to pay for the rent, and to meet what we consider to be the basic necessities of life. But I want to tell you that, if you are working only for the niceties and not the necessities, then you'd better ask God to show you the difference. You are making a poor bargain. You are making a poor bargain. Those children will be out and grown before you know it. And, mothers, they need you. And, daddies, they need you. And you're not making that much money anyway.

A leading financial authority and expert said on network television that, by the time a woman pays for increased income taxes, transportation, meals outside the home, her wardrobe, child care, and the other expenses, the actual increase would not exceed ten percent in the average working mother. She is not actually gaining ten percent. Would you sell your child's future for ten percent? I tell you, that's selling out mighty cheaply.

And I'm going to tell you something else. These families that have two incomes, these families where both mother and father working, according to the statistics that I have looked at, have the largest unpaid debt—or in families where both mates are working. It's not the financial bonanza that so many people tell us that it is.

Now we have a strong, strong movement in America, the feminist movement. Not feminine movement: never, never confuse *feminine* with *feminist*—two different words altogether. And never confuse *humanitarian* with *humanist*. Those words sound so much alike. But I am talking about *feminist*, not *feminine*. I'm talking about *humanists*, not *humanitarian* philosophies that are being taught in America today. I want to read for you some statements that I have gleaned from some of the leaders in the feminist movement and some of the leaders in the humanistic movement. And you can understand why America's children are the way that they are. And it makes you fearful of what may happen. Listen.

Here is what one has said: "To free the child, we must do away with parenthood and marriage. We must settle for nothing less than the total elimination of the family." Here's what another said: "A woman who stays at home, caring for children and the house, leads an extremely sterile existence. This kind of woman leads a parasitic existence that can aptly be described as legalized prostitution." Here's what another said: "The family is a decadent, energy-absorbing, destructive, wasteful institution." Another feminist leaflet said: "We can't destroy the inequities between men and women until we destroy marriage. We must free ourselves. And marriage is the place to begin."

They want to liberate the children. What do they want to liberate the children for? And what do they want to liberate the children from? Let me read again—and I'm quoting: "The real solution requires a fundamental change in the value commitment and the actions of persons who control the public and private sector of our common lives: parents." Now, listen to that again: "The real solution"—that is, to change in society—"requires a fundamental change in the value commitment and the actions of the persons who control the public and private sector of our common lives: parents." Now they don't want parents today to have the influence that parents used to have. And then they go on to say—and I want you to listen to this—"The daycare is a powerful institution. The daycare program that ministers to a child from six months to six years has over eight thousand hours to teach them values, fears, beliefs, and behavior." They know that, if they can get your child away from you, and get your child raised by a daycare center—

and I'm talking now about a government-funded daycare center that cannot have and must not by law teach religious values—that they can change those values that you hold, and put different values in the hearts and lives of your children. And whose values and whose beliefs do you think they're going to put into the heart and mind of your child?

Gloria Steinem, former Playboy bunny, and one of the leaders of the feminist movement, said this: “By the year 2000, we will, I hope, rear our children to believe in human potential, not God”—“By the year 2000, we will, I hope, rear our children to believe in human potential and not God.” They believe that children need to be freed from parental authority. “We recommend,” they say, “that the laws dealing with the rights of parents be examined and changed when they interfere with the rights of children.”

It's amazing that this same crowd doesn't believe in the right of a child to be born. But once the child is born, then they don't believe in the right of the parent to hold responsibility over that child. You say, “Well, it will never work. It will never happen—not in America.” Listen, friend. Did you know already in Sweden a law has been passed by the Swedish Parliament that has made it illegal for a parent to strike a child anywhere, anytime, for any reason? And parents may not read the child's mail, or even prohibit him from reading pornography. If you sent him to bed without supper, if you restricted his television rights, or if you did anything else humiliating to that child, you have violated that child's rights, according to a Swedish law. You say, “In a civilized society?” That's right. You dare not spank the child. You dare not punish the child. You dare not do what they call “humiliating” the child.

And they want to give to the children total sexual freedom. They want to free children from physical punishment. They want to free them to vote—giving a vote to a child. They want to give them total sexual freedom. They want freedom for perversion. They want a classless society. They want a sexless society. They want a Christless society. They want a Godless society.

And they want to liberate your children from patriotism. They do not want your children to love this country. They do not want them to be good old-fashioned, flag-waving, God-fearing, patriotic Americans. I want again to quote from this humanist and feminist literature. Listen to it: “As long a child breathes the poisoned air of nationalism, education and world-mindedness can produce only rather precarious results. As we pointed out, it is frequently the family that inflicts the child with extreme nationalism. The schools should therefore use the means described earlier to combat family attitudes that favor this.” That is, “They pick up this nationalism, this love for country, in the home. Now in the school we ought to use the methods,” they say, “that we've already outlined to take away this patriotism and to take away this nationalism.” They do not want your

child to believe in your God, to trust in your Bible, or to love the country that you love—this great country.

What's happening to America? Do you want to see what's happening to America? Just put your bookmark there in Deuteronomy chapter 6, because we're coming back to it, and turn to Isaiah chapter 3—Isaiah chapter 3. The prophet Isaiah gives us three marks of a society on its last legs, three marks of a society that has been ruined and wrecked. Isaiah chapter 3, beginning in verse 8: *“For Jerusalem is ruined...”*—all right, let's see what did it—Isaiah 3, verse 8—*“For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen.”* (Isaiah 3:8) Well, what did it? Well, look in verse 9: *“The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.”* (Isaiah 3:9) Skip down to verse 12: *“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.”* (Isaiah 3:12)

There you have it. Those are the three marks of a society on its last legs. This is what ruined Jerusalem, and this is what will ruin any society. What? Number one: depraved men. *“They show their sin as Sodom, and they hide it not.”* Number two: disrespectful children. *“Children are their oppressors.”* Number three: domineering women. *“And women rule over them.”* When you have depraved men, when you have disobedient and disrespectful children, and when you have domineering women, in a society, according to God's Word, that, dear friend, telegraphs the end of that society. Look around and see what we have in America.

Now, go back, if you will, therefore, to our scripture in Deuteronomy chapter 6—and what does God say? Well, remember now, he speaks, first of all, of the fact of God: that *“the Lord our God is one God.”* Then, after the fact of God, he speaks of fellowship with God. And then, after he speaks of fellowship with God, he speaks of the family for God. Now, what can these moms and dads do? What can we as grandparents do? What can we determine to do, those of us who've not yet married and had children? What can we do to save the children for Christ?

Well, here God tells three things that parents are to do to communicate to their child from generation to generation and pass down the truths of God's Word.

A. Vital Conversation

Number one: We communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to our children—number one—by vital conversation—by vital conversation. Look in verse 7: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7)

Now, what is he saying? He's saying that we are to communicate our faith in our everyday life: when we go in, and when we go out; when we get up in the morning;

when we go to bed at night; when we sit around the table. Our conversation is to be about Christ. So many of us make the mistake of trying to teach Christ to our children and teach the Bible to our children by making them sit down, and we take the Bible in front of them, and we open up the Bible to them, and we say, “You sit still while I instill.” And the poor little ol’ child gets bored, and he gets a negative idea concerning the Bible. We beat him over the head with a Bible club. No, that’s not the way. Friend, Christ is just to permeate our conversation. The Bible is to permeate our conversation. We’re to speak so normally, so naturally, so gladly, about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of you have been guilty of criticizing deacons in the church, criticizing the President, criticizing the pastor, criticizing this thing, criticizing that thing, in the eyes and ears of the children. And the children grow up with a negative attitude and a disrespectful attitude. Some families in some churches—of course it never happens here, but in other churches—they have roast preacher for dinner every Sunday. And they talk about what the preacher did, and what the preacher said, or what the preacher shouldn’t have said, or what he should not have done. And then they wonder why those children in that home have no respect for God, for God’s Word, for God’s man, and for God’s authority.

Listen. If you’re a smart mom, if you’re a smart dad, you’re going to teach those children in your everyday conversation how to apply the Bible in daily life. Do you remember that scripture in Proverbs that says, “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*”? (Proverbs 22:6) What does that word *train up* mean, anyway? It really means “to put something in the mouth to be tasted,” or it literally means “to touch the palate.” Mothers have known that if you want a little baby to swallow, you just touch the palate. Do you know what the palate is? The roof of the mouth. Sometimes when your hands are just freshly washed, put them in your mouth and touch the palate, and you’ll see what will happen. You’ll want to swallow. That triggers the swallowing instinct. And if a mother wants her little baby to swallow something, she can put that ABC food—already-been-chewed food—in the mouth, and then touch the palate—the old-fashioned mamas used to do this—and the baby will swallow—the baby will swallow.

Now, you check this out with the pediatrician. I don’t want you to strangle any baby. I’m not an expert in this area. But I’m going to tell you this. I’m going to tell you this, dear friend: that when the Bible says, “Train up a child in the way that the child shall go,” it has the idea of touching the palate, causing the child to want to understand. It’s not like a dose of cod-liver oil: “A dose a day keeps the devil away.”

B. Victorious Demonstration

It means that you teach the Bible in such an attractive way that the child really

desires to learn and to hear, number one, by vital conversation; number two, by victorious demonstration. Look, if you will, in verse 8: *“And thou shalt bind them”*—that is, God’s words—*“for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”* (Deuteronomy 6:8) Now the Jews, I believe, misinterpreted this scripture—the Orthodox Jews—and they made little boxes—they call them phylacteries—and they put this little box around their hand here on their wrists, and in that little box is the scripture, and another little box between their forehead there with a scripture in it, because they were trying to obey this passage of Scripture. I admire their willingness to obey, but I don’t think that’s exactly what God is talking about here when it says, *“Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”* What God is saying is that the Word of God is to control your life. Your hand represents what you do. “Between your eyes” speaks of your mind and what you think. And what He is saying is that you are to have the Word of God; every thought, every act is to be permeate the house with the atmosphere of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Visual Manifestations

And then, last of all, there ought to be visual manifestations. Notice in verse 9: *“And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”* (Deuteronomy 6:9) Upon the posts of your house and upon your gates display the Word of God. Is there anything about your home that makes your home look different than a pagan’s home? Do you have Bible verses on the wall? Do you have mottos? Do you have symbols? What is in your family room: a fat Buddha that somebody brought back from Vietnam? Is that what you have? Or do have some gracious, glorious manifestations that this home belongs to Jesus Christ? *“We want you to see something:”*—Word of God, mottos, open Bibles, spiritual pictures, Christian records, recordings, magazines—*“that our home is not a pagan home; it belongs to Jesus Christ.”*

Conclusion

Oh, friends, let me tell you something. It’s not easy. And there will be times when you think you’ve failed. Now I tell you there have been times when I’ve thought I’ve failed—and there still may be some in the future. And it’s an awful risky business for a man who has four children to be up preaching on child rearing—I’ll guarantee you that! And I do not stand before you as the supreme expert, but I know that there are certain principles that are in the Word of God that are so true—and would to God that we could get them down into our lives!

Let me just tell you this story, and I’ll be finished. Out in Texas years ago, Dr. Hyman Appleman told this story: *“There was a Texas family. They were sheep people: they had a big sheep ranch, but they also had oilfields. They were wealthy. The husband’s name*

was Charles. The wife's name was Doris. They already had six children: they had a large family. The seventh came. It was a boy, and they were very, very happy.

"But complications set in, and for some reason or another, Doris was not able to come home from the hospital. They ministered to her every way they knew how: medicine, diet, exercise. But she grew weaker and weaker. Finally, they saw that it was not doing any good to be at the hospital, and that her lungs were so bad they brought her home. They did everything they could do; but one day the doctor came to Charles and said, 'Charles, I must tell you this as your physician and as your friend. Doris cannot live. It does not seem to be the will of God. She cannot live.' And Charles said, 'Have you told her yet?' And the doctor said, 'No. Who should tell her?' And Charles said, 'Doctor, I want you to be with me, but I think I'd better tell her.' And Charles went into the bedroom where his precious and lovely wife lay there upon her bed of sickness, and said, 'Sweetheart, I've got some bad news and some sad news. You are not going to live; the doctor says you're going to die.'

"And when this husband said that, she started to weep violent, convulsive sobs. She was just completely broken up, and she buried her face in her hands, and then she said, 'Charles, forgive me for crying.' She said, 'I'm not crying for myself. I'm not afraid to die. I'm not ashamed to die. I'm a Christian: I'm going to heaven. But,' she said, 'oh, Charlie, what will become of you? What will become of our children? Who will take care of them?' And then she said, 'Charlie, will you do me a favor?' And he said, 'Darling, anything.' She said, 'Will you bring our children by one at a time? Don't tell them anything: just bring them by.'

"And so, one at a time these precious children were brought by. One at a time she talked to them as only a mother could talk in a situation like that, and tried to put things in their hearts that could never be taken away. Finally, they brought that little five-month-old boy, and she took that little boy in her arms and held it and caressed it and loved it, and held it and caressed it and loved it, and held it so tightly that the baby even got frightened and started to cry. Finally, the nurse had to come and just literally grasp the child from her arms as she continued to cry.

And the husband came and put his arms around his wife and drew her up close to him, and she looked at him and said, 'Charlie, I want you to know I love you. And I want you to know that you've always been a good husband to me. You've been a good provider; you've been a sweet lover. And I want you to know that I love you very much.' And then she grabbed his wrist and pulled him down until their bodies almost touched. And she said, 'Charlie, do you love me?' And he said, 'Honey, what kind of a question is that? I love you more than my own life. I would gladly take your place and die for you.' She asked, 'Honey, do you believe I love you?' He said, 'Sweetheart, no man could ask for a better wife than you've been to me. What kind of question is that? I know you love

me.' And then she drew him even closer, and looked into his eyes, and said this:
'Charlie, by your love for me, and by my love for you, I charge you in the sight of God
that you bring every one of these children to meet me in heaven.'"

My friend, that is what God is saying to every parent in this place. May we bow our
heads in prayer. Our Father, we pray in Jesus' name that you'd help us to have families
that love, trust, and follow you. O God, I pray this morning that you'd save the lost and
bless the saved, and even as the quartet sang, God, give us Christian homes. For
Jesus' sake. Amen.

The Home: The University of Life

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: June 16, 1995

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:1–9

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Conclusion

Introduction

Would you take God's holy Word, please, and let's open to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 6. It's not hard to find—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and then Deuteronomy. We're going to begin reading in verse 1 and read right on through verse 9—Deuteronomy chapter 6: *“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it; that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou...”*—now, watch it, fathers—*“thou, and thy son, and thy son's son,”*—that is, your grandson—*“all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore,*

O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:1–9)

Now this is the beginning of our missions conference, and, dear friend, it is also Father’s Day. And, really, today, I want to speak to our fathers, and I want to show our fathers how they can become missionaries, and how can become the fathers of missionaries—whether missionaries in their neighborhood, or missionaries around the world. What a thrill and what a privilege it is to look together into this passage of Scripture, which is really Moses’ farewell address. And Moses is telling them, “You’re about to go into Canaan. You’re about to inherit the land,” and Moses said, “I’m going to tell you how to prosper in that land. I’m going to tell you how to live in that land so that you might be there a long time. I’m going to show you how to have longevity—not necessarily longevity as a person, but longevity as a nation.” And then he begins to speak to fathers, and he begins to tell fathers how those fathers should instruct their sons, and how those sons will instruct their grandsons.

And God says, “This is the plan that I have, that your nation might endure. Now, why did God do that? Because there is a principle, and that principle is that no nation can survive if the families do not survive. And the families will not survive unless the fathers are men of God. Now, pay attention. A nation is no stronger than its families. Plato said, “The life of a nation is but the life of the family written large.” Hitler knew this, and so Hitler, when he wanted to take over with his Nazi regime, what did he do? He got his youth corps, and he took those children away from the home, and he put those children in special retreats and camps and conferences and assemblies, and he taught those children his Nazi doctrine, and he had a nation. Marx and Engels, the architects of communism, knew this, and so they wrote in the Communist Manifesto, “We will take the children away from family education, and we will give them social education. And through that, we will spread communism.” The devil knows that. And the devil has leveled his most fiery darts at the home, because the devil knows that, if he can destroy the lives of the children, if he can do that, he can destroy righteousness, and he can dominate the world.

But God also knows that, and that's the reason that God inspired Moses to say to the fathers, "Fathers, there are certain things that you need to teach to your children. The title of the message today is this, "Home: The University of Life," because God has intended that the first school, the first seminary, the first university is to indeed be the home.

I. The Professor: the Father

And the prime professor and president in that seminary and university is to be the father. Look again, if you will, in verse 2: *"That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged."*

Now I want to say, dear friend, that in the university of life, the professor is the father. And the tragedy is that we have today not dropouts, so far as the children are concerned; the great tragedy in America is dropout dads, dads who refuse to shoulder the responsibility that God has given to them. A leading psychiatrist at the Menninger Clinic said, "If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos"—"if the husband and the father is not the head of the family." That corresponds exactly to what Jesus Christ said when He said the husband is the head of the wife. And I want to remind you that God has ordained and commanded that there be men in places of leadership, and the husband is to be the head. I've said before, anything without a head is dead, and anything with two heads is a freak. And most of our men have abdicated their responsibility and their leadership. It is the husband and the father who are to give stability and leadership and character and strength to the family.

But today's fathers are failing. They're more interested in business. They are more interested in sports. They are more interested in sex. They are more interested in pleasure and television than they are in being the fathers that God has commanded them to be. And we reap the bitter results. And it's not just the preachers saying this. The Los Angeles Times had an article in which they said, "Everything around us testifies that the world of the fathers is dead. It has been abandoned by the sons, and is now beyond the grasp of the grandsons"—that is, the world where the father used to be head of the family. The Los Angeles Times says, "That world is gone, and it cannot be regained." I differ with that strongly. I am telling you, sirs, that we must, and by God's grace we shall, raise a generation of dads who will be dads of distinction.

But on top of the fact that we have dropout dads, we have so many misdirected mothers today. Mothers today—part of it, and most of it, is the failure of the fathers—mothers today who are being pushed out of the home, and shoved out of the home. And

millions of children are left to themselves, or put in daycare centers, and they do not have the leadership and the nurture that God intended for them to have. I read a startling statistic. By 1990, forty-five percent of the workforce in the United States of America will be female. 1990 is just around the corner, and almost half of the people in all of the workforce will be female.

You say, “Well, pastor, what’s wrong with that?” Already today—listen to me—we have six million children under the age of six whose mothers are working, and more than half of all of the children under eighteen have working mothers. “Well,” you say, so what?” I want to ask you a question. When you have the dropout dad, and when you have the misdirected mother, pray, tell me, who is controlling the minds of the children? Do you know where the dominant influence is coming from? It is coming from the television—from the television set! Sixty-five percent of Americans get most of their information from television. According to a survey, sixty-five percent of these people are getting their information from the television set! And, dear friend, thirty-six percent don’t have the television just as the central form of information, but as the only form of information.

You say, “What’s wrong with that?” Have you turned on television lately? Have you watched it? Did you know that when a drink is served on television, ten to one, it will be alcohol? Ten to one! The next most prevalent beverage served will be coffee. But ten to one, if anything is served on television, it will be beverage alcohol. When sex is portrayed—I’m talking about what we used to call the act of marriage, or sexual intercourse—or when it is alluded to, eighty-eight percent, according to the National Federation of Decency—eighty-eight percent—will be sex outside of the bonds of matrimony.

Now, think of that. You have these dropout dads, you have these misdirected mothers, and then the devil has a pipeline right into the home—sixty-five percent getting most of their information, thirty-six percent getting the total information—I’m talking about what is happening in the world—from the television. They don’t read the newspapers. They don’t listen to other things. Now, what has been the bitter fruit that we’re reaping here in America? One hundred thousand of America’s children are in prison. Four out of ten live in broken homes. Seven to fourteen million of America’s children will become alcoholics. Eighty-five out of every thousand have received, or will receive, psychiatric help. One million girls between twelve and seventeen will have a baby out of wedlock; and this does not include those—God help us—who will have abortions. One in five use drugs twice a week. Ten million are infected with venereal diseases, and they’re being infected at the rate of five thousand a day. It’s tragic what is happening to America’s children. The abortion rate in New York City is greater than the

live birthrate. And suicide now among children is taking on immense proportions. Between ten and fifteen percent of all children try or contemplate suicide—some of them as young as six or seven. We think we're doing such a good job in America. Juvenile delinquency is increasing seven times faster than the population. And a juvenile delinquent is nothing but a child trying to act like his parents.

Now, sirs, God has given you a responsibility. I want to say to the dads who are here today, if your home is wrong, and if your children are wrong most of the time, it, sir, is your fault. The professors in the university of life are to be the fathers.

II. The Students: the Children

Now, let's talk about the students. Who are the students? Well, look, if you will here, in verse 7: *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children."* (Deuteronomy 6:7) The students in the university of life are the children. And when should they be enrolled? At a very early age. Francis Xavier, the great theologian from a Catholic point of view, an educator from a Roman Catholic point of view, said, "You get the children until they are seven, and then," he said, "anyone can have them afterward." Now he didn't mean that he did not want to keep on educating them, but what he meant was this: You let me take a child when he is seven, and let me put into that child the things that will really matter, and he'll get a lock on them that will last him for life.

Now, why should we start when they are children? Why should little children—not youths, and not adults, but children—be enrolled in the university of life? I'll tell you why. For three reasons—and you listen to me.

A. It Is the Age for Correction

First of all, because a child can be so easily corrected. The Bible says, *"Chasten thy son while there is hope."* (Proverbs 19:18) *"He that loveth [his son] chasteneth him [early],"* (Proverbs 13:24) the Scripture says.

Why? Because you take a little stream, you can turn that stream and direct that stream wherever you want; but you try to turn the mighty Mississippi, and you'll find out you've got a different job on your hand. You can take a little twig, a little branch, and you can bend it, and form it, and shape it however you want; but you try to bend the trunk of a mighty oak, you're going to find that you have a different task on your hands. You can take a little child and at that time you can begin to train up that child in the way that he should go, and like directing a little stream of water, like bending a twig, you can direct the life of that child. That child can then be corrected.

I remember a while back when I spoke to you on child discipline, and I said, the problem with some of you is that you started sixteen years too late. Begin with that

child, as the Scripture says, “*while there is hope.*” When is a child old enough to be disciplined? When he is old enough to knowingly and willingly disobey, at that time that discipline, in kindness and love and firmness, needs to begin.

B. It Is the Age for Communication

I am trying to tell you that you enroll those children, because that is the time of correction. But not only is that the time of correction; dear friend, that’s the time of communication. It is amazing how these little children can learn. It is just absolutely amazing the ability that a child has to learn. Listen. They’re learning to speak a language. And in two or three years a little baby can learn to speak a language. Think of it. Don’t say they can’t learn. Why, they’re little learning machines. Why is that? Well, I’ll tell you: for several reasons.

1. The Curiosity Factor

In the first place, God has given a child a curiosity factor, isn’t that true? What is the favorite thing that a little child will say, or the thing that they’ll say most often to you? Why? Why, daddy? Why, mother? Now, listen. When they say “why” to you, don’t say, “Would you stop saying why? Just do it.” Don’t tell them that. Friend, listen. When they ask you why, what a wonderful opportunity, then, to teach why, because God has given that child a curiosity factor.

2. The Memory Factor

And not only has God given that child a curiosity factor; God has given that child a memory factor. It’s amazing what they can remember. Some of us, it’s amazing what we can forget. Isn’t that true? It’s amazing. We have a good *forgettery*. They have a good memory. I played my little granddaughter in a game. It’s one of these games where there are little squares, and you pick up a cardboard and put it back it down—you’re supposed to remember what’s under it. The rascal beat me. At first, I was just laying back, taking it easy. Then I got really desperate, and she still beat me. The memory that those children have, it’s an amazing thing.

3. The Humility Factor

Not only do they have a curiosity factor, and not only do they have a memory factor, but, dear friend, they have a humility factor. Have you seen people come to church, sit down and fold their arms, and look at the preacher like this: “You ain’t going to talk me into anything, bud”? I mean, I see people come to church—you can almost see the war going on. You know, they’re here, but they’re not going to be taught. They have been lied to, conned, gypped, manipulated so many times that they’re not about to open themselves up to anything true. We have that defense built in. Not a little child. A little child is hungry. That’s the reason Jesus said we have become like a little child. There’s

that humility factor.

4. The Trust Factor

And then there's the trust factor. Is there anything more trusting than a little child? A little child will believe what is told to him. That is the way it ought to be. There's nothing wrong with that trust factor. That is a given instinct for a child to trust. And as a matter of fact, Jesus uses the trust of a child as an illustration of the faith that we're to have. And, for that reason—listen to me, moms and dads—you be very careful what you tell those children about Santa Claus, and about the Easter Bunny, and all of these things, because then later on you're going to tell them about Jesus, and then they're going to get Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny and Jesus and all of this all wrapped up. For a certain stage in his life, he's going to believe they're all true. And then, at another stage, he's going to believe they're all false. Now, if you want to play the Santa Claus game, that's all right. Let them know it's a game. If you want to play the Easter Bunny game, perhaps that's all right; but you let them know it's a game. But when you say your *yea* let it be *yea*, and when you say your *nay*, let it be *nay*. And when you talk to them about Jesus Christ, they will trust you, and they will believe you. There's a trust factor.

Now, when you put it all together, when you put that curiosity factor, and when you put that memory factor, and when you put that humility factor, and when you put that trust factor all together, you can understand why you have a very wonderful, wonderful student in the university of life.

C. It Is the Age for Conversion

And I'm trying to tell you that childhood is the time for correction, and childhood is the time for communication, and childhood is the time for conversion. You need to aim for the conversion of your children.

There's something very terrible that's gotten out in the world today, and that is almost an antipathy against winning children to Jesus Christ. I know people who will even get upset, incensed, if you try to lead a little child to Jesus Christ. Oh, my dear friend, we ought not to think it's strange or unusual that a little child comes to Jesus Christ. We ought to think it absolutely unusual, rare, if a child is raised in a Christian home, and that child does not come to know Jesus Christ at an early age. Never get the idea that a little child has to have a PhD in sin before that child can be saved. It ought to be normal and natural, and beautiful and wonderful, as these little children come to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Statistics tell us that seventy-five percent of all people that are saved are saved before the age of fourteen.

Matthew Henry's commentary on the Bible—if you're a Sunday School teacher, you ought to have Matthew Henry's commentary on the Bible. Matthew Henry—the

bookstore will do a good business now. Matthew Henry was saved at the age of eleven. Jonathan Edwards, who, in the early years of our nation, preached perhaps one of the most famous sermons ever preached, “Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God,” was saved at the age of eight. Polycarp, one of the church fathers, was saved at the age of nine. You say, did it last? Well, he was burned at the stake at ninety, because he refused to turn his back on the Lord Jesus Christ. Charles Haddon Spurgeon—many believe, the greatest preacher that ever lived other than the Apostle Paul—Charles Haddon Spurgeon was saved at the age of twelve. And he himself testified, “I would have been saved at a much earlier age, had somebody shown me how to trust in Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.”

We’re beginning today a World Missions Conference. Did you know that ninety percent of all Southern Baptist missionaries home and abroad presently serving on the field, according to a survey, were saved before the age of eleven? Ninety percent of all Southern Baptists missionaries now at home and abroad, serving on the field, were saved before the age of eleven. These children are to be enrolled in the university of life. It is the age for correction. It is the age, my dear friend, for communication. It is the age for conversion and how we ought to bring the precious children to Jesus Christ. They are the students in this university.

III. The Curriculum: the Bible

Now, let’s talk for a moment about the curriculum in this university. Notice, if you will, in verse 6: *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”* (Deuteronomy 6:6–7) Now the curriculum is the Word of God. That, father; that, daddy, is what you are to be the professor of. You are to teach your son, and your son’s son; and he is to teach his son, and his son’s son, the Word of God. And you cannot teach it unless it is first in your heart. God’s Word says here this Word shall be in your heart, and then you shall teach it diligently to your children.

How should you teach the Bible? How should a dad, when he becomes a professor, teach the Bible?

A. Teach the Bible Creatively

First of all, you need to teach the Bible creatively. And it needs to be in your heart. It needs to be such a part of your life that God will give you, create, a way to teach the Bible. There are all kinds of ways to teach the Bible. You can teach the Bible by reading the Bible, obviously. You can teach the Bible by the normal method of just sitting down and saying, “Son, let me show you what this says.” But you can teach the Bible through

songs. You can teach the Bible through games. You know how to play Bible baseball? You can teach the Bible through Bible memory. Do you give your children awards for memorizing scripture? You can teach the Bible through Bible storybooks. Do you have a good Bible storybook for your children and your grandchildren? You can teach the Bible through tapes, and through Christian music, and by magazines, and by inviting friends over to the house to share in these things. Do it creatively.

B. Teach the Bible Consistently

But not only should you teach the Bible creatively; you need to teach the Bible consistently. Look, if you will, in verse 7: *“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) It’s not just once in a while, but diligently you teach this to your children. Let me show you something interesting. Turn with me, please, to Isaiah chapter 28 for just a moment, and look with me in verses 9 and 10. Here are some amazing verses: *“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?”*—that is, who is capable of being taught?—*“them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”* Who is that? Babies, when they’re weaned, when they’re drawn from their mother’s breast. Now, listen to what he says in verse 10: *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”* (Isaiah 28:9–10) That, my friend, is the best teaching in the world. You take a little lisping baby being weaned from its mother’s breast, and you begin to teach the Bible line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept; here a little, there a little; you keep on preaching the Word of God, teaching the Word of God, and that child will learn that Word, because you teach it.

C. Teach the Bible Compellingly

Dear friend, you teach it creatively, and you teach it consistently, and teach it compellingly. That is, don’t try to cram it down his throat. Don’t have family worship where you just say, “Now, you sit still and I instill,” and you have family worship like cod liver oil: “A dose a day keeps the devil away,” and you’re just cramming this down his throat. That’s not the way to do it. Create an interest in that child. Make it a blessing. Look in verse 20, if you will here—not Isaiah, but go back, if you will, to Deuteronomy chapter 6, and look in verse 20. Look at it: *“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.”* (Deuteronomy 6:20–21)

Now, you see what that teaching does? When you teach the Bible creatively, and

when you teach the Bible consistently, do you know what's going to happen? Well, you say, he won't understand it at all, to begin with. Of course he won't! You say, a little child can't understand theology. Of course he cannot! But you keep on teaching it. You keep on laying it down, line upon line, precept upon precept, truth upon truth. And one of these days he's going to ask that question, and you're going to be able to say, "Son, God delivered us; we were slaves, and God set us free; we were redeemed by the blood," and you will have the joy and the privilege of leading your son to the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a privilege! Every father, every mother, ought to be able to have that wonderful privilege.

IV. The Laboratory: the Home

Now, there's one other thing. Not only do I want you to notice the curriculum, but I want you to notice the laboratory. Where is the laboratory where you teach these things? Notice in verses 7 through 9: *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."* (Deuteronomy 6:7–9)

Now, how should you teach the Word of God? You do it in the home. The home is to be the laboratory.

A. A Vital Conversation

And you do it, first of all, by what I want to call vital conversation. You talk of these things when you rise up, when you lie down, when you sit down, when you walk around. The Word of God is to be a part of your conversation. Do you want me to tell you why some children are going to die and go to hell? I'll tell you why. Listen. Some people, when they come home from church, do you know what they have for Sunday dinner? Roast preacher! That's right. And they see you sit in church, and you're saying how you love Jesus, and they see you serve the Lord's Supper, and put your offering in; and then you go home on Sunday afternoon, and rather than praising God, and rather than having the right talk, you say *wa-wa-wa-wa-wa*. And that little child listens to that grouching and griping and grumbling, and you tear the guts out of his salvation by the way you talk. You talk the Word of God, and let your speech be that which is used to edify, to bring that child to the Lord Jesus Christ, by what I want to call a vital conversation. The Bible says, talk of it. This thing called Christianity is as much caught as it is taught. It is in the air. It is in the way you talk.

B. A Victorious Demonstration

But not only by a vital conversation, but by a victorious demonstration. God says, “You bind this Word upon your hand; let this Word be like frontlets between your eyes.” Now, what does that mean? It means everything you do is controlled by the Word of God; everything you think is controlled by the Word of God. And that child is to see a victorious demonstration. Most children need to see Jesus Christ in their parents. Joyce and I have failed in many ways. But I’ll tell you one thing I know: that none of our children will ever say, “My mom and dad are hypocrites.” They know that we believe what we believe. And we may fail, but they know we’re real. They know what we do, and what we think, under God, as we are able, is controlled by the Word of God.

C. A Visual Manifestation

There needs to be a vital conversation. There needs to be a victorious demonstration. And there needs to be a visual manifestation. God says, “You put these things upon the gates of your house; put them there upon the doorposts.” What does he mean by that? He means that, when people come into your house, they ought to be able to tell visually that your house is a Christian home. If you were to walk to our house, on one side you’d see a Scripture motto—that this is a Christian home. On the other side of the door you’d see a Scripture verse. So, if a person stands there on the doorstep for a long time, he’s going to understand this is a Christian home. When he walks into the home, he’s going to see an open Bible. And when he looks on the wall, he’s going to see some Scripture mottos. And when he looks in the magazine rack, he’s going to find Christian magazines. And when he goes through the record rack, he’s going to find Christian records.

What is there in your home that demonstrates that you belong to Jesus Christ? I’m so heartsick at so many Baptists and Christians you’d never know their home was a Christian home when you walk into it. They’ve been overseas somewhere and bought a souvenir, and they bring it home. You know what it is? A fat Buddha, some bronze Buddha sitting there with his big belly hanging out. They say, “Oh, we bought that over in Hong Kong.” Well, send it back to Hong Kong. Get rid of it. It’s an idol. Get it out of your house. You don’t need an idol for a souvenir. Get that horoscope out of your house. And get all of those things out of your house that don’t belong there. And when people come into your house, let the very atmosphere of your home be Jesus Christ, and let people be able to see that your home is a Christian home by a vital conversation, by a victorious demonstration, by a visual manifestation.

That’s the laboratory. And in that kind of a laboratory, you can take what you’ve taught that child, and your child will come to know Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Do you know where missions begins? Parents who have the Word of God in their heart, and they raise missionaries. The Bible says, “As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of one’s youth.” (Psalm 127:4) And what are arrows for? To shoot at the enemy. *“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.”* I want to tell you something, sir. An arrow can go where you cannot go. And you can send your children around this world for Jesus Christ. Missions begins at home. And it begins with dads who will teach these things to their son, and their son’s son. And every dad who is a dad needs to pray, “O God, make me the daddy of a missionary.”

Survival of the Family

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: May 7, 1989

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:1–9

Outline

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Conclusion

Introduction

Now would you take God's Word and turn to one of the most significant passages in all of the Bible: Deuteronomy chapter 6. Deuteronomy chapter 6—it's easy to find. Just start, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and then you come to Deuteronomy. All right, the fifth book of the Bible—Deuteronomy chapter 6.

May I tell you that the passage that I'm going to read to you is without contradiction one of the most significant passages in all of the Word of God. Now it's Moses' farewell address to the nation. So therefore, you would expect it, this sixth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, to be the most important text in all of Deuteronomy. And the Lord Jesus, when He referred to this passage in Matthew chapter 22, said it was "*the first and great commandment.*" (Matthew 22:37–38) So it's important. It is vitally important, because it

deals with the survival of the nation. Moses wanted the Jewish nation to survive. And so he's telling them how to live long in the land that God has given them. But he goes quickly from the nation to the family, because Moses knew, as you must know, that a nation is no stronger than her families. And so, when Moses spoke of national survival, he spoke of family survival.

It's so very important. If America's families go, you can mark it, America is gone. And, therefore, the war today is against the family. The devil knows this. And he has leveled all of the artillery of hell against our families. Are you feeling it? Do you recognize that? Can you see where the war is? Can you see the war is against the family?

Do you know what Plato, the philosopher, said? He said, the life of the nation is but the life of the family written large. Do you know what Hitler did? When Hitler wanted to subjugate a people, and hoped to subjugate the world, what he did was to take the children and put them in youth camps, to try to disturb that family orientation, to take the young people and somehow control them. Do you know what Marx and Engels, the leaders of the communist revolution said? They said, "We will replace family education with social education." Everybody knows that, as the family goes, the nation goes—as the family goes, the nation goes. And may I say, if the family goes, the nation goes.

Now, keep that in mind. Therefore you're going to understand why this passage of Scripture is such a key passage. The title of our message today is "Survival for the Family." *"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and money."* And then here's the part our Jewish friends call the *Shema*: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."* (Deuteronomy 6:1–9) My dear friend, if there were ever a word for America, that is the word for America today.

Now in the passage that I've read there are three great themes, and I want you to pick them up. First is what I'm going to call a great revelation. You'll find that in verse 4. And then, a great response. You'll find that in verse 5. And then, a great responsibility. You'll find that in the following verses.

I. The Great Revelation

Now, what is the great revelation? Look at it in verse 4: "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.*" (Deuteronomy 6:4) There is but one true God. And we need to remember that. And, my dear friend, that is the great revelation. May I tell you what the question of all questions is? If you don't get this right, you won't get anything else right. It's like buttoning your vest. You button the first button wrong, it matter what you do, all the rest of them are going to be wrong. All right now, listen. Dear friend, here is the biggest question ever asked. Did God make man, or did man make God? That is, is man in the image of God, or is God in the imagination of man? That's the question.

And it is a watershed. Now, if you feel as the communists and the atheists and the humanists do, that the idea of God is just some psychological aberration, some fond wish, then you're going to end over here in this ocean. But if you believe that God created man in his image, you're going to end over here in this ocean. It is the continental divide, the great question: Did God make man, or did man make God?

Now, here's the answer to that, in verse 4: "*The LORD our God is one LORD.*" You see, how do we know that God exists? Very simply.

A. Scripture Declares It

First of all, Scripture declares it. The Bible begins, in Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" The Bible never philosophizes the fact of God, never argues the fact of God, never defends the fact of God. There's only one half of one verse given over to atheism in the entire Bible—and it just simply says, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1) You see, a fool is a man who denies facts. And if a man denies the supreme fact, he is a supreme fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Scripture declares it.

B. Creation Demands It

"Well," you say, "so what? That's not enough." But wait a minute. Not only does Scripture declare it; creation demands it. The Bible says, "*The heavens declare the glory of God.*" (Psalm 19:1) The heavens, everything that is made, speaks of the existence of God. For everybody knows that you can't have a creation without having a Creator. Out of nothing, nothing comes. How does the atheist explain everything? "It just happened." Oh no, my dear friend, everything that you see bears this mark: "Made

by God”—“Made by God.”

During the French Revolution, they were destroying the churches, and one man said, who was pulling down a steeple with a cross on it, “We are going to remove everything that reminds you of God.” And that peasant pointed to the stars, and said, “Then, soldier, pull those down”—“pull those down.” *“The heavens declare the glory of God.”*

C. Faith Discovers It

Oh, Scripture declares it. Creation demands it. But, oh, my friend, faith discovers it—faith discovers it. How do I know? I know because I know. I believe because I believe. *“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”* (Psalm 34:8) If I’m eating apple pie, and you tell me apple pie doesn’t exist, I feel sorry for you. It makes no difference to me, when I’m feasting on apple pie. *“Taste and see that the LORD is good.”* You see, he that hath the Lord *“hath the witness in himself.”* (1 John 5:10) You see, faith—faith—my dear friend, discovers it.

II. The Great Response

Thank God for the revelation that He gives us in our hearts that He exists. That is the great revelation. Now, let me move on to the second thing, and let me talk to you about the great response. Is it just enough to bow your head and say, “Yep, I believe that God exists”? May I tell you, dear friend, if that’s as far as you go, you don’t have any more faith than the devil. *“Thou believest that there is one God...the devils also believe, and tremble.”* (James 2:19) Maybe they’ve got more than you’ve got. At least they shudder; they tremble.

What is the response to that revelation? Look at it—verse 5: *“Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”* (Deuteronomy 6:5) *“This is the first and great commandment.”* (Matthew 22:38) That’s it, folks. By the way, others may be able to sing better than you, or give better than you, but nobody can love God better than you. Isn’t that wonderful? I mean, you can have it, friend. If this is the most important thing, no one can do it better than you.

How are we to love the Lord our God?

A. A Sincere Love

First of all, we’re to love him with all our heart. That is, we’re to have a sincere love for God: with all of our heart. You see, dear friend, a divided heart is an abomination to God. And if you’re going to raise your family for Jesus, you’re going to have to love Him with all of your heart. You see, if you don’t love Him with all of your heart, you’re a phony. Jesus said, *“This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from*

me.” (Mark 7:6) There is to be a sincere love. There’s one thing above all other things that will destroy your relationship with your children, and your ability to lead them spiritually—and that is if they see that you’re a phony—if you’re halfhearted in your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

About 150 years ago, there was a Jewish man whose family worshiped devoutly in a synagogue in Germany. This family moved to another part of Germany, and the father came home and he said to them, “We’re no longer going to the synagogue. We’re going to go the Lutheran church.” And the son in that family asked, “Why are we not going to the synagogue anymore? Why are we going to the Lutheran church?” You know what the father said? He said, “I can make better business contacts there.” He said, “We will prosper better if I will go to the Lutheran church.” That young man looked at his father and knew that his father was a phony. Later on, he went to England, and he began to write. Do you know what his name was? Karl Marx. And do you know what Karl Marx wrote, the father of communism? He said, “Religion is the opiate of the people.”

B. A Selfless Love

My dear friend, listen. Children want to see in their parents, whatever it is, you love God with all of your heart. There is to be, dear friend, a sincere love. But not only is there to be a sincere love; dear friend, there is to be a selfless love. Look at verse 5. You’re to love Him with all of your soul—your soul. What is the soul? Another word for “soul” is *self*. And all of that self is to be given to God. It’s a selfless love. Our children need to see in us a burning, passionate, devotional, selfless love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And they need to see that there is no part of our life that is marked “Private: God, you stay out of this life.” They need to understand that Mom and Dad are willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Jesus Christ.

Years ago, when Dwight L. Moody was being so mightily used in America—he was the Billy Graham of his day, a remarkable man—he was holding great crusades. And in a particular city, they wanted to have a crusade, and so some of the brethren said, “Let’s invite Dwight Moody to come and preach.” They wanted Dwight Moody. But there were two or three ministers who didn’t want Dwight Moody to come. But most of them said, “No, we need Dwight L. Moody to come and preach.” One of those who did not want him to come said, “Why is it that we just hear ‘Moody, Moody, Moody’? Does Dwight L. Moody have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?” And one of those preachers said, “No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Dwight L. Moody.”

C. A Strong Love

My friend, listen. That’s the selfless love: with all your soul. Does God have a monopoly on you? Not only are you to love Him with a sincere love, and a selfless love,

but you're to love Him with a strong love, because verse 5 says you love "with all of your might"—"with all of your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5) It doesn't take much of a man to be a Christian; it just takes all there is of him.

You say, "I don't have any might." Oh, yes you do. You say, "Well, I'm not strong." Everybody is strong somehow. Physical strength? Love Him with that. Emotional strength? Love Him with that. Financial strength? Love Him with that. Dear friend, what kind of a strength do you have? Intellectual strength? Love Him with that. What has God given you? If God has given you strength, then be poured out to God, and let your children see it.

That's the great response to the great revelation. Anything less is unworthy of the great God, the one true God.

III. The Great Responsibility

Now, thirdly, I want you to see the great responsibility. When you get that revelation, that's not enough. When you love God with all of your being, that is not enough. There is one more thing that God wants. God demands that your whole family life be so super-charged with the power and the presence of Jesus Christ that this goes from generation to generation, from father to son, to grandson to great-grandson. Listen, my dear friend. Where is Jesus Christ to be taught? Where is our faith to be communicated? Not in the church primarily, and not in the Sunday School, much less the public school. We get people all bent out of shape because we can't pray in public schools, and they don't even pray with their children at home. It's ridiculous.

My dear friend, God has given a responsibility to parents, and primarily to dads. Your home is to be like a university.

A. The Professor: The Father

And let's see who the professor in that university is to be. Look, if you will, please, in verse 2. God says, "*That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.*" (Deuteronomy 6:2)

Now God is speaking primarily to fathers. The father is to be the teacher of the Bible in the home primarily. The problem in America is dropout dads. We have dads who have failed. If your home is a failure, mister, it is probably because you're a failure. Don't get the idea that God has given the wife and the mother the responsibility of the spiritual leadership in the home. Any father who does not lead his family spiritually is a slacker, a shirker, and a failure. We have dads today who are interested in everything except leading their children. They're interested in sex. They're interested in television.

They're interested in sports. They're interested in business. They have forgotten their God-given assignment to train their kids for Jesus Christ, to be a father that gives leadership, a father that gives strength, a father that gives stability, a father that gives character. A leading psychiatrist in the Menninger Clinic said this: "If the husband or father is not the head of the home, there will be nothing but chaos." Boys and girls need today more than anything else a father figure who loves God with all of his heart and soul and strength. Everybody needs a dad like that.

But, oh, if you take the problem of dropout dads and then combine it and compound it with misdirected moms. It's bad enough that we've got dropout dads, but now we've got moms who have forsaken the home for the workplace. By 1990, next year, forty-five percent of all of the work force will be female in America. Well, there's nothing wrong with that, unless they're mothers who are leaving little children at home unattended, uncared for, or leaving them in a daycare center while they go off to work. Six million of America's children who are under six have working moms. One half of all kids under eighteen have working moms.

"Well," you say, "so?" I'll tell you why I'm so concerned. Because at that time, dear friend, your children have a plastic mentality. They're learning more than at any other time. And may I tell you there are powerful forces that are seeking the minds of America's children. Do you know what America's babysitter is? That one-eyed god called television that kids are watching. Well, what's wrong with television? Well there has never been a more seductive tool to take the minds of your children than television. Did you know that of the drinks that are served anytime a beverage is served on television, ten to one—ten to one—it will be liquor or alcohol of some kind. The next beverage is coffee. But ten to one it will be alcohol. And your child sits there and sees anybody, whoever they may be, drinking a cocktail—they're going to be drinking this, they're going to be drinking, they're going to be drinking a beer, they're going to be drinking that. He sees that.

According to the National Federation for Decency, eighty-eight percent—are you listening?—eighty-eight percent of all sexual activity is depicted as outside the bonds of matrimony. And that's what the kids are seeing constantly. And constantly we take care of our children by buying them things. We buy four billion dollars worth of toys every year. That's more than the Gross National Product of sixty-three nations. But emotionally and spiritually, the kids are bent out of shape. Let me tell you what's happening in America. And this is why America won't last, and America won't hold up, unless dads and moms come back to their responsibility. One hundred thousand of America's children are in prison—in prison. Four out of ten live in a broken home. Seven to fourteen million of them will become alcoholics. Eighty-five out of every thousand

children have had psychiatric help. One million girls between the ages of twelve and seventeen will bear a child out of wedlock. That's not even counting those who are aborted. Just look at these wonderful kids that you see on the streets, and know that one out of five uses drugs twice a week—one out of five. Ten million minors—ten million, I say—are infected with venereal diseases. And the rate is growing at five thousand a day.

Why? What is the problem? If you think Washington can solve it, you've got rooms to rent upstairs unfurnished. My dear friend, this is what God said: that it's the moms, and primarily the dads, who are to be responsible. No wonder that juvenile delinquency is increasing seven times faster than population. You say, "Now, pastor, you're being mighty hard on working moms. You don't have any compassion. Don't you know that mothers have to work in this day and this age? Yes, I do. My heart goes out to them. I don't have any criticism for you. I just have love and compassion. If you have to work to put bread on the table, if you have to work to put a roof over your head and the heads of your children, if you have to work to put clothes on those kids, my heart goes out to you. But I'm going to tell you something. If you're working for personal ambition, fulfillment; if you're working for a bigger house, a nicer car, a finer vacation; if you're working because everybody else does, hey, you've made a bad bargain—you've made a bad bargain. You say, "Well, I'm paying somebody else." Dear friend, you can never pay somebody to do for your children what you should be doing. That will never take your place.

God says that these need a mom and a dad to take care of them. There are about 108,000 waking hours between infancy and maturity. Of that 108,000 hours, dear friend, 7,000 of those hours will be spent in public schools. One thousand of those hours, if you're churchgoers, will be spent in church. That leaves 100,000 of those hours to Mom and Dad.

B. The Students: The Children

Now, dear friend, I want to tell you that the professors in the university of life are the parents. Who are the students? Look, if you will, in verse 7. He says here, "*Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.*" (Deuteronomy 6:7) Now he starts with the word *children*. You see, you've got to start young enough. Do you know what Francis Xavier, the great Catholic educator, said? He said, "Give me the children until they're seven, and then I don't care who has them." Now he was speaking in hyperbole. He didn't mean that he didn't really care, after that. What he meant is those are the formative years.

A woman came to her pastor and she said to her pastor, "When shall I start the

spiritual education of my child?” The pastor said, “How old is your child?” She said, “Five.” He said, “You’re five years too late.” Oh, friend, when they’re held to mother’s bosom, and she rocks them and sings, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so,” that’s when the education begins.

C. The Curriculum: The Bible

What is the curriculum in this university? What are you to teach? Oh, my friend, the Word of God. Listen. Verses 6 and 7: *“These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:”—and, by the way, you can’t teach what you don’t know. “It shall be in thine heart”—“and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”* (Deuteronomy 6:6–7)

Now, how are you to teach the Word of God? May I tell you three ways you’re to teach it?

1. Teach the Word of God Creatively

First of all, teach it creatively—creatively. The Bible says, *“And thou...shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) Do you know who the best teacher was? The Lord Jesus Christ. And everywhere Jesus Christ went, He was so creative. He would be out in the field—He’d say, “Consider the lilies, how they grow,” and then He’d make a lesson out of that. He’d see a sower, and he’d say, “A sower went forth to sow.” When you take those kids, everywhere you go, you can be making application to the Word of God. Teach the Word of God creatively.

Oh, it’s such a challenge! Mister, it ought to be a bigger challenge to you than running your business. I’m talking to some moguls. I’m talking to some surgeons this morning. I am talking today to some lawyers. I’m talking to people with great minds, but those minds have been given to lesser concerns. All of your creativity ought to be distilled in teaching the Word of God. What if those great minds were brought to that—the minds of these dads? So many ways you can do it. Bible reading, Bible stories, Bible games, Bible memory, Christian books, Christian albums and tapes, magazines: there’s so much.

2. Teach the Word of God Consistently

But not only should you teach it—listen—creatively, but, oh, you need to teach it consistently. Look again in verse 7: *“Thou shalt teach them diligently.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7) Do you know what that means? Consistently—line upon line, day upon day, year upon year, year in and year out. You can do it one way, or you can do it another way, but, oh, my dear friends, parents, may I ask you to be consistent in whatever you do?

You know, consistency pays off. Put in the margin of your Bible Isaiah 28, verses 9

and 10. Listen to it: *“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”* Little babies enrolled in seminary, little weaned babies—he says, “Teach them doctrine—teach them doctrine.” Little babies. Listen. He says, *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”* (Isaiah 28:9–10) You see, consistently. You can’t give it all in one dose. You can’t just make them sit down. Everything they do is to just to be permeated with the Word of God.

3. Teach the Word of God Compellingly

And then it’s to be taught, not only creatively, and consistently, but compellingly. That is, you create a thirst and an interest in the child to know. Did you know, if you live the right way, you won’t have to be cramming it down his throat? He’ll be asking you questions. Look, if you will, in chapter 6 and verse 20: *“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?”* (Deuteronomy 6:20) You begin to live the life; you begin to let victory show in your life; you love God; you love Him with a sincere love, with a selfless love, with a strong love; you love God that way, my dear friend, your children are going to come to you, and they’re going to say, “Hey, Dad, what about this? and what about that?” Don’t say, “Go away. You’re bothering me.” Thank God for the questions. And, you see, they are going to ask you. They’re going to ask you.

When the Bible says, “Train up a child,” it literally means, “Put something in the mouth to be tasted.” Create an appetite. So much of our family worship in our family when we first started was war. Was it in your family? “Shut up! I want to tell you about the Bible!” Now we never used the word *shut up*, but “Be quiet!” And, boy, they’d get mad and rebellious. And, boy, I’d lose my religion. Terrible! Do you know what I’d start out to do? It was like cod liver oil. “Take it. A dose a day will keep the devil away.” No, that isn’t the way to do it. I learned you ought to do it compellingly, where they’ll come to you. And, friend, the greatest discussions we have in our family, the greatest times of learning, are not when I say, “You sit still while I instill,” but they come and say, “Dad, what does this mean? What is that? What do you think this verse is all about?” You teach it, dear friend, creatively. You teach it consistently. And you teach it compellingly. It is the Bible that is the curriculum in this university.

D. The Laboratory: The Home

Now there’s something else I want to say. Not only has God given you a university with professors, and students, and a curriculum. But here’s the wonderful thing. God

has given you a laboratory—a laboratory to work it out. Here’s the laboratory in this university. Look at it in verses 8 and 9. God says, concerning the Word of God, *“And thou shalt bind them...”*—that is, my words—*“thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates.”* (Deuteronomy 6:8–9)

Now that’s the laboratory. What is God saying? God is saying that everything in your home is to be super-charged with the presence of Jesus Christ. Now he says you’ll bind these words upon your hand. Now the orthodox Jews have taken this so literally that they have taken a little box, put the Scripture in it, and wrapped it around their arms. They call that a phylactery. It’s got the Word of God in it. And they take the Word of God, and put it in a little box, and tie it around their head right between their forehead—a phylactery with the Word of God in it. And then they take the Word of God, and they put it on the doorpost of their house. They call that a mezuzah. And so they’ve just taken this literally. There’s nothing wrong with that, but I think it goes beyond that.

What is God saying when He says this? I’ll tell you what He’s saying. He’s saying, dear friend, that all of life is to be so permeated with the Word of God. When He says that you’ll bind it upon your right hand, what is your right hand? That’s the hand you work with. And what God is saying is that your actions are to be dictated by the Word of God. When he says, *“Put it between the frontlets of your eyes,”* that’s where your mind is—not only your actions, but your attitude—the Word of God. Then He says, *“Put it on the doorposts of your house.”* Not only your actions, and your attitude, but the atmosphere: the Word of God—the Word of God—in all that do, in all that you think. And the place that you live is to be permeated, saturated, with the Word of God.

Get a child in that kind of an atmosphere. That’s what we need. Jesus said, *“This is the first, the great commandment.”* Moses said, *“I want this nation to last. And that’s what it’s going to take.”*

1. Vital Conversation

You see, my dear friend, it’s to be there. It’s to be there in our conversation. He says, *“You’ll speak when you rise up, when you lie down.”* Everywhere you go, just in vital conversation.

2. Victorious Demonstration

It’s to be there in demonstration: all that you say, think, and do.

3. Visual Manifestation

But not only is it there in vital conversation, victorious demonstration, but, my dear friend, it’s there in visual manifestation. God says, just put the Word of God upon the posts of your house and on your gates.

Let me ask you a question. If I got the key to your house one afternoon while you

were out for a picnic, and went into your house today, just walked through, and snooped, and looked into every corner, just walked right through your house, would I know that I was in a Christian home? When I walked up to it, I mean, would I be able to tell it's a Christian home? I'd look in your refrigerator. I'd look in your magazine rack. I'd look on your walls. Hey, folks, I've been in a lot of homes, you can't tell they're Christian homes. About the only thing religious is a fat Buddha they brought back from the Far East. There ought to be Scripture mottos, Christian tapes, Christian hymns, Christian books, Christian magazines. Put it on the doorposts of your house.

Listen. Vital conversation. Victorious demonstration. Visual manifestation. That's the laboratory. What you do, what you think, where you live, speaks of the Word of God.

Conclusion

I'm telling you, folks, you listen to me. There are forces out there that are pulling at your kids, and they are powerful: the music they listen to, the films they see, the kids they go to school with. And you'd better get set to counterattack. And, dads, I'm going to tell you, it's your responsibility. You say, "Well, pastor, this sermon is twenty years too late for me." Well then, teach somebody else's kids to do it. Or teach your kids to teach your grandkids, if you can reestablish a communication. But let's start somewhere. Before long, it will be too late for America.

Help for Fractured Families

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:4–9

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

Outline

- I. The Great Revelation
 - A. I Believe in God Because Creation Demands It
 - B. I Believe in God Because Scripture Declares It
 - C. I Believe in God Because Faith Discovers It
 - II. The Great Response
 - A. There Is to Be a Sincere Love
 - B. There Is to Be a Selfless Love
 - C. There Is to Be a Strong Love
 - III. The Great Responsibility
- Conclusion
- A. There Should Be a Vital Conversation
 - B. There Should be a Victorious Demonstration
 - C. There Should Be a Visual Manifestation

Introduction

Take your Bibles now and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 6, Deuteronomy chapter 6. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. All right, Deuteronomy chapter 6 and I want us to begin reading in verse 4. The title of our message this morning is “Help for Fractured Families.” And here’s God’s Word in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.”

Now a decade ago, we were spending a lot of time talking about dropout teenagers, teenagers who had dropped out, turned on, and tuned in under the influence of a Mr. Timothy Leary and others. That was the psychedelic generation and it was kind of the

“in” thing to do for teenagers to drop out.

But I’m afraid that America is facing a worse danger than teenagers who’ve dropped out and it is parents who are dropping out of the responsibility that God has given them. And I believe that the coming decade is going to be a decade of parents who have dropped out of their God-given responsibility. And somebody has well said, “A juvenile delinquent, many times, is merely a child who is trying to act like his parents.” The devil is waging a war against the home because the devil is waging a war against society as a whole. In the scripture that I just read to you, God is giving instructions for the national welfare of his people Israel, and right in the heart of those instructions, He deals with the home because the nation, as you well know, is no stronger than the home.

Plato said, “The life of the nation is the life of the home written large.” And when Hitler tried to turn Germany into his Nazi system, he threw away the structure of family life. And Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto said this in order to take over the world: “In order to do the things that we need to do,” they said quote, “We replace home education with social education.” That is, we don’t want fathers and mothers telling children what to do; we want society to tell children what they must think, what they must do, how they must live, and what they must be like. The family is under attack as never before and in the scripture that I just read to you, you can see why.

There are three factors that are in the scripture that I’ve just read to you. Factor number one is what I call in verse 4—a great revelation. Here’s the great revelation: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” Oh, the great truth—that Jehovah God is the great One and only true God of the universe and so just write that down—a great revelation.

Then in verse 5, you’re going to see the great response to that great revelation. Look at it: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” That is, with everything in you, you are to love God. That is to be your response to that revelation.

But not only is there a revelation and a response, there’s also a great responsibility that comes with that response. I want you to look in verse 7: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children” and that is a great responsibility.

The revelation—God is the one true God—the response: you are to love that God; and the responsibility—you are to teach your children to do so. Now you can understand therefore why Satan is aiming his fiery darts at the family. Because the chief means, the major means, the best means of communicating the faith is from parent to child—from parent to child. Evangelism should be done in the home; Scripture teaching should be done in the home; spiritual education should be done in the home. And the home is to be the basic unit of the communication of the truth of Almighty God and now you can understand Satan’s nefarious plan to fracture the family.

I. The Great Revelation

So let's look at these three things. First of all, more briefly, look at the great revelation in verse 4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." The great question of the ages is this: did God create man or did man create God?

I heard of a monkey coming out of a library with two books under his arm. One was Darwin's Origin of the Species, the other was the Bible. Somebody asked him what he was doing. He said he was trying to find out whether he was his keeper's brother or his brother's keeper. And that is the question. Did God create man or did man create God? Is the idea of God just a figment of man's imagination?

A. I Believe in God Because Creation Demands It

Now I believe in God for three reasons: number one: creation demands it. If you have a creation and we do, we must have a Creator. Anyone knows that out of nothing, nothing comes. Science merely discovers God's laws. Science is no more capable of creating those laws than Columbus was capable of creating North America. We know that everything runs by laws and sometimes we think, because the scientists know the laws, that somehow the scientists must have created the laws. They only enter into the laws that God himself built into the universe. Evolutionists foolishly believe given enough time, billions of years, that somehow frogs will turn into princes. But it's not so.

B. I Believe in God Because Scripture Declares It

And I want to tell you friends, first of all, I believe in God because creation demands it. Secondly, I believe in God because the Scripture declares it. The Bible simply, plainly, sublimely says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Bible never argues the fact of atheism; the Bible never gives a rationale for the existence of God; the Bible declares it. And all that the Bible does to deal with atheism is one-half of one verse found in Psalm 53, verse 1 that simply says, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." You see, that's what the Bible thinks of a man who says there's no God. I'll tell you why. The supreme fact of the universe is God, and a man who denies facts is a fool, and the man who denies the supreme fact is a supreme fool.

C. I Believe in God Because Faith Discovers It

Now look, I believe in God, number one: creation demands it. Number two: Scripture declares it. Number three: faith discovers it, faith discovers it. You see, I believe in God because I believe in God. You say, "That's silly." No, that's not silly. Listen friend, I know God by faith and right away I can hear the old atheist, the unbeliever, say, "Aha! See, it's by faith he believes in God. There's nothing rationalistic about it: there's no rationalism there. He just believes in God by faith." And he comes to me and says, "Lay

aside your faith and prove there's a God." I say to him, "Mister, prove there is no God." He says, "Well I don't believe there's a God." Well that makes him a believer too, doesn't it? He's a believer. You see, I have faith there is God; he has faith there is no God. I believe there is a God; he believes there is no God. I believe there's a God because I choose to believe there's a God and why do I choose to believe there is a God? Because there's something within me that tells me it is so. You see, when God created me, God created me with an appetite for God and God created me to respond to him like my eye responds to light and like my ear response to sound and it is a natural and normal thing to believe in God.

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to teach children about God? But when you have to teach children there is no God, you have to get a convoluted, heavy-weighted argument. Why? Because it is normal, it is natural to believe in God. And actually, the man who doesn't believe in God has to work at not believing in God. He doesn't have intellectual problems; he has moral problems. "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God."

II. The Great Response

And so there is the great revelation. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one Lord." Now secondly, the great response—look in verse 5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." To love God with all of your heart means you're to love Him sincerely; to love Him with all of your soul means you're to love Him selflessly; and with all of your might, it means that you're to love Him strongly. That's the way you're to love the Lord thy God.

A. There Is to Be a Sincere Love

You're to love Him with all of your heart, that is, sincerely. You're not to have a half heart about it—with all of your heart. Jesus said of His generation, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." They were double-minded about it.

Do you have a sincere love for the Lord? I'm not just asking you, do you love Him, but do you love Him with all of your heart? Do you know what the need is in America? It is for a burning, passionate, blazing, emotional, on-fire love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to love Him with all of our heart—with every inch, every ounce, every nerve, every fiber—as much as in us is—with all of our heart, we're to love God. G. Campbell Morgan said that lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy. We're to love Him with all of our heart. If He's worth anything, He's worth everything. To me, the biggest fool is not the man who says there is no God; the biggest fool is the man who says there is a God and then doesn't live like it. We're to love Him with all of our heart.

B. There Is to Be a Selfless Love

With that—that means there’s to be a sincere love, and then there’s to be a selfless love with all of our soul. The soul is another word in the Bible for self and that means that all of our self is to be given over to the Lord—a selfless love. No area of my life, no part of my life that is not committed to the Lord—every key to every room, to every closet. And I am to say, deny myself and take up my cross and follow Him.

C. There Is to Be a Strong Love

But, thirdly, I’m to love Him with a strong love with all of my might. You say, “Well, Brother Rogers, I’m not very strong. I don’t have mountains of muscles and bulging biceps.” Well friend, all of us have strength. I don’t know what your strength is. Your strength may be intellectual strength, your strength may be financial strength, your strength may be emotional strength, your strength may be spiritual strength. But God has given you a strength and you’re to take that strength, whatever it is, and you’re to pour it into service for the Lord. That is your response to the fact that God exists. You are to love Him with all of your strength: your love is to be a strong love. Somebody said, “It doesn’t take much of a man to be a Christian; it just takes all there is of him.”

III. The Great Responsibility

Now, the third thing I want us to get to is—and I want us to spend some more time—not only the great revelation and the great response, but I want you to notice: the great responsibility. You see, God’s plan to get the faith out is for parents to teach their children. Notice what God says in verse 7 as to this responsibility: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”

Now I want to say that the scripture is addressed here primarily to fathers—to fathers. And you fathers, pay attention: look in verse 2: “That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all of the days of thy life; that thy days may be prolonged.” Here it’s obvious that God is speaking to the fathers. A leading psychiatrist in the Menninger Clinic said this: “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” Did you hear that, fathers? “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” God meant for homes to have dads and fathers—real fathers. I saw a shirt the other day—a T-shirt that had the slogan on it: “Anybody can be a father, but it takes somebody special to be a daddy”—to be a daddy. We need some homes today with dads, not just people who have biologically reproduced themselves. The father is to provide stability and leadership and character and strength for the family. But fathers today have dropped out. They are more occupied by television, by sports, by business, by sex, and they have forgotten

and abdicated their God-given responsibility. And the Los Angeles Times recently said, “Everything around us testifies that the world of fathers is dead. It has been abandoned by the sons and is now beyond the grasp of the grandsons.” That is, fatherhood, as we used to know it in America, is dead and gone.

Now that is compounded, ladies and gentlemen, by the fact that wives now, by militant feminism are being pushed out of the homes. And the idea of being a mother and a homemaker and a wife is thought about as being old-fashioned, passé, and a waste of time. And so wives by the millions are forsaking the home, abandoning their children, putting them in day-care centers, and going out to work. And did you know by 1990, forty-five percent of the entire workforce in the United States of America will be women. And as a result there are even now six million children under the age of six that have working mothers. I said six million; and nearly half of all of the children under eighteen have mothers that are working. And while these mothers have many times, who have abandoned the children and left them, there are sinister forces that are working night and day, day and night on the plastic mentality of these children to bring them into a certain viewpoint that is anything but the viewpoint of the Bible that God wants us to have.

Many of them are learning primarily through the television because the television has become today’s babysitter. Did you know that sixty-five percent of Americans get most of their information—mediated information from the television? The television is the central source of that information and statistics tell us for thirty-six percent of Americans, it is the sole source of mediated information—the sole source. In other words, they know, they learn, they gain, they get their values—the mediated information that they get, they don’t get from magazines, books, or from the classroom, but they get it from the television. I mean—and children, they’re the ones who read the least many times because sometimes they haven’t even been taught how to read in school. But they sit there and they absorb: they suck in from the television. And Dr. Menninger recently said that we are raising, as a result of our television-bred young people, a generation of violently aggressive women. Now we used to think that men were too aggressive, men were too violent, but he said now, “We are raising a generation of violently aggressive women, who are being formed through children’s exposure to television’s fantasy female.” Now what does he mean by television’s fantasy female? The superheroes: he’s talking about *The Bionic Woman*, he’s talking about *Wonder Woman*, he’s talking about *Police Woman*; he’s talking about *Charlie’s Angels*. I’m glad my mama wasn’t one of Charlie’s Angels. But these are the values. This is—this is the system that they’re looked at; this is what they’re bred on; and this is what they think; this is what they see. And this is pumped into them even in the cartoons on Sunday morning and on Saturday morning—just pumped in.

And it's not happening by chance. A new book has been written: it's called *The View from Sunset Boulevard*, written by Mr. Ben Stein. And he interviews and examines the forces and the policymakers behind today's television and this is what he says—that they are systematically attempting to overthrow the traditional values and listen to this: their number one tool is the situation comedy—the situation comedy. Why? It is because once you laugh at it, it causes you to gloss over the real issues. Once you laugh at drunkenness, once you laugh at divorce, once you laugh at abortion, once you laugh at perversion, then it no longer seems serious. And they can take these situations and put them into a situational comedy where you laugh at these things and America now is laughing her way to hell. And our children—our children are being warped and twisted.

Did you know what the number one drink that is served on television is? It's not milk, it's not grape juice, it's not water: it is alcohol and it is ten to one to the next beverage which is coffee—ten to one to the next beverage. Over and over and over and over again these plastic minds—these minds of these children are seeing that when you are in trouble, drink alcohol. When you come into our house, drink alcohol; when you go into a restaurant, drink alcohol; drink, drink, drink, drink, drink. Everybody's told to drink. And I went in a restaurant the other night and looked around and I saw all the teenagers there—drinking their cocktails. I passed by a liquor store and I looked in and I could not believe: it looked like merely children in there: selling liquor, buying liquor. They've been told to drink it and they're doing a good job.

Did you know, according to the National Federation of Decency, eighty-eight percent of all sex depicted on television is outside of monogamous marriage? I said, eighty-eight percent of all sex depicted on television is outside monogamous marriage. That is, it is either homosexuality, it is perversion, it is fornication, it is adultery, but it is not marriage as God intended where one man is married to one woman 'til death do them part.

Some people say, "Well, my kids are doing all right." It may be that you don't know what your kids are doing—may be that you've just got an idea of what you're doing for your children. You see, you're providing for them physically. We take care of them physically: we see to it that they're fed pretty well, they're clothed pretty well, they're housed pretty well, they're driven around pretty well. Oh, we provide for them physically, that is, if we ever let them be born. Since we've liberalized abortion laws, over six million of them have been slaughtered. Don't tell me about what Hitler used to do. Six million, I said, six million. But if Junior can get born and if he can get into this world, he has a pretty good chance of existing. We have pushed back the mortality rate, and we have pampered him, and we've coddled him, and we've bathed him, and we've vitamin enriched him. As a matter of fact, I was interested to note that we spend more than four billion dollars a year on toys. That's more than the national product—the gross national

product of sixty-three nations—on toys. But I tell you, our children are being warped out of shape spiritually, emotionally, and socially.

Did you know, ladies and gentlemen, that one hundred thousand of America's children are in prison? Did you know that four out of ten children in America live in a broken home? Did you know that seven to fourteen million of these children will become alcoholics? I said—seven to fourteen million. Now don't let these figures just run past you: think of fourteen million alcoholic children. Sixty-five out of every one thousand children between seven and eleven have received some psychiatric help and the average age of beginning smokers now has dropped from fourteen to ten. That's the average age when people begin to smoke cigarettes—ten years of age. One million girls between twelve and seventeen will get pregnant this year, and that's only counting those who will come to full term, that is not counting those who will be aborted. One in five use drugs at least twice a week. Ten million minors are infected with venereal disease, and there are five thousand new cases every day. In New York City, the abortion rate is now higher than the birth rate. More babies are aborted in New York City than are born. And suicide among children is becoming an alarmingly increasing problem: between ten and fifteen percent of children try or contemplate suicide, some of them as young as six or seven. And juvenile delinquency is increasing seven times faster than population.

We have sown the wind and we have reaped the whirlwind. And we've gotten away from God's plan and God's order for the family. We think that we're smarter than God, but we're not smarter than God.

When somebody says, "I have to work, Mr. Rogers. I have to be outside the family; I have to leave my children in the day-care center." Well God bless you if you do: May God give you strength somehow to overcompensate and to spend even more time with those children, and to pray harder, and to do more. And my hat is off and my heart is out to any woman who has to work to put bread on the table—to any woman who has to work to put clothes on the back or to educate the children. God bless you; God help you; I'm for you. But oh, I'll tell you, ladies and gentlemen, my heart also goes out and my heart bleeds for mothers and dads who are making such a poor choice. And they're working for more creature goods, they're working for a bigger home, they're working for wall-to-wall carpet, they're working for a color television, they're working for a swimming pool, they're working for trips and excitement and these sort of things and the things that are unnecessary. And they are sacrificing upon the altar of their pleasure and their self-aggrandizement, the souls and the welfare of their little children. And in my estimation, they're making a mighty poor bargain.

And I realize this kind of preaching is not very popular and I realize some people won't like it. And I'm sorry, and I love you, but I'm telling you, God created little babies to

have mamas and daddies, and someone who knows that God exists, and someone who loves God with all of their heart, and someone who realizes their prime—their prime—their prime responsibility is to communicate that faith right to their children.

“Well,” you say, “economically, we just think that it’s good for both of us to work.” I was interested to note that according to a leading financial expert who spoke on a network television program that he came to some conclusions and this is what he discovered: after the working mother, the working mate, pays for her transportation, after she pays for her increased wardrobe, after she pays for the meals that she eats out, after she pays the increased income tax, after she pays for the babysitting and the daycare and the other expenses that are engendered and inculcated in her making that extra money, that at the best she can make ten percent more—ten percent more—after all these expenses are paid. You see, there is a false economy; there is something that people are not seeing. And I also was interested to learn this statistic—that the highest number of people with unpaid debts and the largest debts are those where both husband and wife are working. You see, somehow we outsmart ourselves.

And all of this situation with fathers who have abandoned their responsibility, and mothers who have abandoned their responsibility—dumped on top of this—is a philosophy that is so real and so sinister. It is a godless, atheistic, humanistic, socialistic philosophy that is being pumped and pumped and pumped and pumped and pumped into the American psyche. The American Association of Humanists and the World Association of Humanists have taken over the educational system. They’re trying to take over the governmental system. In many ways they’ve taken over the educational system, not altogether, but they’re trying to take it over. And what are they trying to do? And we’re not just talking about a few people; and we’re not just talking about a few ninnies out on the lunatic fringe of society. We’re talking about committed, intelligent, well-heeled, well financed, well organized people. Let me give you some of their quotes. I quote: “To free the child, we must do away with parenthood and marriage. We must settle for nothing less than the total elimination of the family” end of quote. Again, another quote: “A woman, who stays at home caring for children and the house, leads an extremely sterile existence. This kind of woman leads a parasitic existence that can aptly be described as legalized prostitution.” This is a feminist pamphlet called “Sisterhood is Powerful.” Roxanne Dunbar, a leading feminist, said and I quote: “The family is a decadent, energy-absorbing, destructive, wasteful institution” end of quote. Another feminist leaflet said, quote: “If we can’t destroy the inequities between men and women until we destroyed marriage, we must free ourselves and marriage is the place to begin.”

There is a move today called International Year of the Child. And it sounds so good. You’re going to be talked to about it; you’re going to be bombarded by the media about

the International Year of the Child. You're going to be asked to give money to it. But you better investigate and you'd better look behind it because there are many people who believe that there are socialistic, communistic, and humanistic values that are being pumped into America under the guise of the IYC, the International Year of the Child. Now they're saying, and these along with humanists and others are saying now that our children need to be liberated.

Now what do they want to be liberated from? Well, I'll tell you what they're going to liberate them from: number one: they want to liberate your child, my child, our children from traditional morals and values. Let me give you a quote from one of these humanists: "The real solution requires a fundamental change in the value commitment."

Now notice they're dealing with values. Where do you get your values? There's only one place that you can get your values and that's the Word of God and be correct. All right, now listen: "The real solution requires a fundamental change in the value commitment and the actions of persons who control the public and private sector of our common lives: parents." So they are saying that the fly in the ointment is parents. These parents are handing down values to the children and they want that stopped. And so they go on to say and I quote: "the day care is a powerful institution. The day-care program that ministers to a child from six months to six years has over eight thousand hours to teach him values, fears, beliefs, and behaviors." Whose values? Whose beliefs? Whose behaviors? Not God's. But they want to take children from the home, put them into some government-controlled institution, and give them a new set of values, a new set of beliefs, a new set of mores, a new set of values. Gloria Steinem said this: "By the year 2000 we will, I hope, rear our children to believe in human potential, not God" end of quote. That's the aim; that's the goal of so many of these.

But not only are they wanting to free your children from traditional values, they also want to free your children from parental authority. Let me give you another quote: "We recommend that the laws dealing with the rights of parents be examined and changed when they infringe on the rights of children."

Now what does that mean? Well let me just tell you what it means in another country: already in Sweden as of July 1, a law has been passed that no parent may spank his child any time, any place, anywhere for any reason. Now you say, "I don't believe it." Well, it's true. You may not spank your child any time, any place, anywhere for any reason: it absolutely prohibits striking a child. And parents may not read the child's mail; they may not prohibit him from reading pornography; they can't send him to bed without supper; they can't restrict his television rights; or any other quote: "humiliating experience" end of quote. How humiliating to be sent to bed and not be allowed to watch television.

Now you say, "Well, that can't happen in America." Well friend, you just hold your

horses. You see, what forces, well-heeled, well organized—you laughed at the idea of women’s liberation; you laughed at the idea of the hippies and all of that. You say, “Well, that’s just a few people.” Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, there are forces that are bent on destroying belief. You see who’s behind it? The devil is behind it because God’s plan is for parents to give to their children certain values and to pass them down.

They want to give them total sexual freedom: they’re to be freed sexually. Let me give you another quote: “We have to free children from physical punishment, free them to vote, and give them total sexual freedom.” Now, that means the perverts are behind a lot of this. They want the children, if they want to be perverted, then let them be perverted. If they want to practice prostitution, let them practice prostitution. If they want to read pornography, let them read pornography. If they want to commit fornication, let them commit fornication. If they want to have relations with animals, let them. If they want to commit incest, let them. Total sexual freedom! You say, “I don’t believe it. It’s hard to believe.” What they want, ladies and gentlemen, is a permissive society that is a classless, sexless, Christ-less, godless, familyless society—the humanists.

I’ll tell you what else they want. They want your children to be freed from religious indoctrination. The UN declaration on the rights of children principle 10 says and I quote: “The child shall be protected from racial and religious discrimination.” And notice how the racial and the religious is interwoven. Of course, we all know that it is wrong to racially discriminate. But notice—notice racial and religious discrimination. What does that mean? That means, as it is spelled out in their minds, that a child cannot be forced to go to Sunday school; a child cannot be forced to go to a church of your choice. If the child wants to be a Buddhist and you happen to be a Christian, you have no right to discriminate between this faith and that faith, or to tell your child this or that.

I’ll tell you something else they want to liberate your child from: they want to liberate your child from nationalism and patriotism. Let me give you another quote: “As long as a child breathes the poisoned air of nationalism, education and world-mindedness can produce only rather precarious results. As we pointed out, it is frequently the family that inflicts the child with extreme nationalism. The school should therefore use the means described earlier to combat family attitudes that favor this.” That is, when you get them out of the home and get them away from the breakfast table and get them at the desk, then you take their minds that have been poisoned with nationalism, that is, love our country, and you destroy that. And you take that patriotism and that Americanism and that belief in our way of life, and you obliterate that because these people believe in a one-world government. That is the stage for Antichrist.

Now God says that the central core of society is to be a family. God created the family before He created the church, or the government, or the schools. And God says

that His plan for any nation, any people is: number one: there is a great revelation. God is one God. And then there is to be a great response: we're to love that God with all of our being. And then there's to be a great responsibility: we are to teach our children.

Let me tell you what the marks of a decadent society are in the last days of any nation. Turn to Isaiah chapter 3 for a moment. God help me. In Isaiah chapter 3, I want you to begin reading with me in verse 8: "For Jerusalem is ruined" You want to know what ruined Jerusalem? All right, pay attention: "and Judah is fallen" Do you want to find out what drug Judah down? "Because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord." What was against the Lord? "To provoke the eyes of his glory." What provoked God? All right, read on: number one: "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths."

Now what are the marks of the times that ruined Jerusalem and that pulled Judah down? Three things: depraved men, disrespectful children, and domineering women. Look at it—look at it: depraved men: verse 9: "The show of their countenance doth witness against them. They declared their sin as Sodom and they hide it not." Sodomites came out of their closets: moral perverts went on parade. As we've said, sin that used to slink down back alleys now struts down Main Street. They show their sin as Sodom and they hide it not. That's one mark.

The other mark, look at it again: "As for my people, children are their oppressors"—liberated children, kiddy rights, children taking parents to law. The third mark: "And women rule over them."—domineering women, frightening isn't it?—frightening.

Jerusalem is ruined! Judah is fallen! We're not smarter than God. We don't know more than God. Why do you think God gave us a Bible for us to flaunt it, for us to ignore it?

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a great revelation: there is one God, one true God. There is a great response: we're to love Him with all of our heart and all of our soul; and there is a great responsibility. We—we are to teach these things diligently to our children and there's nobody else that we can pay to do it for us. Children are smart: they're not going to believe what you pay somebody to teach when you don't love them enough to teach it. Children are smarter than that.

Conclusion

Now how are we going to do it? Go back please, to our scripture in Deuteronomy chapter 6 and I want us to see God's plan for communicating the faith, and very quickly, and then we'll be finished. God gives us three great means by which we're to hand our faith down from parent to child, from parent to child, from parent to child. All right? Number one is found in verse 7. I'm reading Deuteronomy 6, verse 7: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them"—now underscore that—"and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

A. There Should Be a Vital Conversation

I call this vital conversation—vital conversation, not inane conversation. But in your home, conversationally, naturally, and consistently, you're to be talking about the things of God. When you rise up, when you go to bed, when you go out, when you come in, you're to be talking about God. Now I believe there is certainly a place for what we call family worship, where we stop and we have a Bible lesson. But, ladies and gentlemen, the lesson is to be going on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, over and over and over again. It is to be seen in the conversation; it is to be in the very air that we breathe. They're to hear the things of God that are to be brought into the normal part of life. Don't get the idea that Bible teaching is somehow like taking a dose of cod liver oil: you sit still while I instill, and a dose a day keeps the devil away. That's not the idea. The idea is that as they see in your life, in your lifestyle, in your conversation; as you take the things of God and relate them to the things of this world and the things of this world and relate them to the things of God—that's the way to teach. Oh, my friends, every day in your conversation you're to talk of these things: when you rise up, when you sit down, when you go out, when you come in. What a—what a tool—if you're spending time with your children; and of course, in order to do that you have to spend time with them—by vital conversation.

It's amazing how much children pick up. Some children will go home today and do you know what they'll have for dinner? Fried chicken and roast preacher. [sigh] "What did you think?" "Well, I didn't think blah blah blah... I didn't like what he said." "Oh? Daddy didn't like the preacher." "Blah blah blah blah..." "Oh, Mama doesn't think so-in-so is..." They're listening; they're listening. Your home is bugged. Two microphones in every kid and they're listening, they're listening, they're listening, they're listening! And then you say, "What's wrong? He doesn't love the church?" Friend, the devil's crowd is going to say enough bad about the church: you better say something good about it and especially when your kids are listening. They're going to get it from every other area; they're going to watch in the situation comedies, where any preacher is made to look

like some hellfire damnation nincompoop, who's dishonest and lecherous. You'd better let them hear something good come out of your mouth—by vital conversation.

B. There Should be a Victorious Demonstration

Number two: by victorious demonstration. Look in verse 8: “And thou shalt bind them”—what? these words—“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” Now the Jews have little boxes that they call phylacteries and in these boxes there's scriptures. And sometimes they tie that scripture to the right hand and sometimes they put it in a little box between the forehead. And that may be all right but I don't think that is what God is primarily teaching here. I think when God says, “you bind them upon your right hand,” He means that everything that you do should be in keeping with the Word of God. And when God says, “you put it as a frontlet between your eyes,” God says that everything that you think should be in keeping with this Book. And what you think and what you do is to give confirmation to what you say because not only shall it be vital conversation, it will be a victorious demonstration. Your children will see you live what Brother Rogers preaches. And that's going to make what Brother Rogers preaches a lot more effective, when they see it in Mom and in Dad. It doesn't matter how pious you look around the Lord's table, if you've just been arguing around the breakfast table. We are to live with a victorious demonstration.

C. There Should Be a Visual Manifestation

And thirdly and finally, there is to be a visual manifestation. Look if you will, in verse 9: “And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” That is, everything in the child's atmosphere is to speak of God. The Scripture is to be on the doorpost, on the gates. That is, your house is to visually manifest your faith in God.

When a person walks into your house, does he know it's a Christian home? Can he tell by the paintings on the walls? Can he tell by the mottos? Can he tell by the posters? Can he tell by the magazines? Can he tell by the library? Can he tell by the appointments? Can he listen to the music and can he tell that this home belongs to Jesus Christ? He ought to. Your child ought to live in that kind of home. I'm amazed at what's in the magazine racks of some of our so-called Christian homes. What's on the walls, some of the posters, the albums and the lack of Christian albums, and so forth.

Ladies and gentlemen, the very atmosphere of your home is to be permeated with Jesus Christ and your faith is as much caught as it is taught. And by vital conversation, victorious demonstration, and visual manifestation your precious child needs to learn about Jesus Christ. God help our fractured families!

Saving the Children for Jesus

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 6:4–9

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

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Introduction

Tonight I want to speak on the subject “Saving the Children for Jesus.” And I want you to turn please to Deuteronomy, the book of Deuteronomy chapter 6. This is a verse that we come to frequently when we talk about our children for Christ—Deuteronomy chapter 6—and I want us to begin reading with verse 4. Well let’s just—well, I guess we’d better just start with verse 4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Someone has said that a juvenile delinquent is merely a child who is trying to act like his parents. Many of today’s youth are called dropouts. But the more I look at the scene, the more I understand what’s happening in America, I don’t believe it’s primarily the children that are the dropouts. I believe it is primarily the parents who have dropped out

of their responsibility. And this bothers me very greatly because a home, a church, a nation is no stronger than its parents and our nation is no stronger than its homes. What a fearful and awful responsibility God has laid upon those of us who have children.

Plato said that the life of a nation is only the life of a family written large. Hitler, who wanted to dominate the world, threw away the structure of family life. The communists in a very real way are trying to do the same thing. Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto said, "We will replace home education with social education." Everyone who wants to destroy the world, to dominate the world, at the same time wants to destroy the nuclear family as we know it. And so therefore the family is under attack today as never before.

I. A Great Revelation

And there are three great truths that are taught in this passage that I just showed you. I call them the three r's. Number one: there is a great revelation. That's in verse 4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" or one God. Then there's a great response in verse 5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And then there is a great responsibility: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Now God's primary plan and God's priority plan is that the faith that was once for all delivered shall go from parent to child, not necessarily from schoolteacher to child, not necessarily from pulpit to child, but from parent to child. God wants us to pass on this faith and God wants us to communicate it to our children. And in our homes and in our lives, we are to create an atmosphere so that all that we do and all that we say will infuse this child with godliness. And so since this is God's plan, you can understand that it will be the devil's plan to do all that he can do to change God's plan.

Now look at these three r's again. First of all, this great revelation: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." Now I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this because I know you believe as I believe that there is a God: one true God. Creation demands it: you cannot have creation without a Creator. The Scripture declares it: the Bible does not argue the fact of God. The Bible only gives one-half of one verse to atheism: "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." A man who denies facts is a fool. God is the supreme fact. The man who denies the supreme fact, therefore, is the supreme fool.

I know there's a God because creation demands it, the Scriptures declare it, and faith discovers it. Somebody says to me, "Prove there's a God." I can't prove to you there's a God. But if you ask me to prove to you there's a God, I'm going to ask you to prove to me there is no God. You can no more prove there is no God than I can prove that there is a God. But I choose to believe there's a God because there's something in me called faith. There is something in me that God built into me that causes me to

respond to Him.

You see, faith is just a response to God with the characteristics that God has put into us. God made an eye and God made that eye to respond to light; and God made ears and God made ears to respond to sound; and God made the human spirit and God made the human spirit to respond to Him. Now you can close your eyes or put out your eyes and refuse to see; you can stop up your ears and refuse to listen; and you can harden your heart and refuse to believe.

Sometimes people say, “Well, we who don’t believe in God, we deal with facts. And those of you who do believe God, you believe in superstition, and you deal in faith, and you deal in metaphysics.” Now, everybody is a believer. You see, I believe there’s a God. If you don’t, you don’t believe there’s a God. I believe there is a God; you don’t believe there is a God. Everybody is a believer: it’s just what kind of a believer are you. You see, it’s all a matter of faith. By faith I know there’s a God; by faith you say there is no God. But the great revelation is this: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

II. The Great Response

Now, the second thing I want you to see is: the great response. What are we to do about that? Well look in verse 5: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God” how? “with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

A. A Sincere Love

I’m to love God, first of all: I’m to love Him with a sincere love. I’m to love Him with all of my heart, not half a heart. Half a heart is blasphemy. Jesus said, “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” Not a divided heart but a sincere heart, with all there is in me. The word sincere means “unmixed.” I’m to have a sincere love: I’m to love Him with all of my heart. I’m to love Him with a burning, passionate, blazing, emotional, wholehearted love.

B. A Selfless Love

But not only am I to have a sincere love for my Lord, I’m to have a selfless love for my Lord. I’m to love Him with all of my soul. The word for soul is the word for life. That means that my whole self—everything—my life—is to be given over to Him. There’s to be no area in my life or your life that is marked “private, keep out.” God is to have complete control of all there is of Adrian Rogers.

C. A Strong Love

Not only should there be a sincere love and a selfless love, there needs to be a strong love. Look again: “I shall love Him with all of my might,” that is, with all of my strength. Now somebody has well said that it doesn’t take much of a man, it just takes all there is

of him, to be a Christian. God demands all of your strength. You say, “Well, I don’t have any strength.” Well I’m not just talking about physical strength. If you have physical strength, you’re to love Him with all of your physical strength. But you’re to love Him with all your emotional strength; you’re to love Him with all of your financial strength; you’re to love Him with all of your intellectual strength, you’re to love Him with all of your influential strength. With everything that God has placed at your fingertips, with everything that God has placed at your disposal—anything that makes you mighty, you’re to use to love the Lord.

And so we are to love the Lord with all of our heart: a sincere love. We’re to love Him with all of our souls: a selfless love. We’re to love Him with all of our might: a strong love. Now that’s the response.

III. The Great Responsibility

But now let’s move on to the responsibility. And now let’s bear down just a little bit and pull over and park, if you don’t mind. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign between thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Now the great responsibility is to transfer this love to our children. Now you fathers, may I say that this scripture is directed primarily to you. Notice in verse 2 of chapter 6: “That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, and keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.” Here God is speaking primarily to fathers and God is saying primarily, it is for the father to say, “As for me [pounding sound] and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

A leading psychiatrist in the Menninger Clinic said, “If the husband or father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” Let me say that again for emphasis: “If the husband and father is not the head of the family, there can be nothing but chaos.” God gave families fathers to provide stability, to provide leadership, to provide character, to provide strength, to provide protection for the family.

But many fathers have abdicated their responsibility. Many fathers today have become so preoccupied by their jobs, by television, by sports, by business, by sex, that they have forgotten their God-given assignment and one day they’re going to face Almighty God, and they’re going to be judged for it.

And at the same time fathers have denied their responsibility and abdicated their responsibility, women are being pushed out of the home more and more and more, and they are forsaking their God-given assignment and multiply millions of children in

America are left unattended, to roam the streets or else be put in day-care centers. Nearly half of all children under eighteen have working mothers. And at the same time that fathers have failed and mothers are being pushed out of the home in order to keep up with inflation and everything else, and working outside the home—at the same time, Satan is moving into this vacuum with certain sinister forces that seek to take the plastic mentality of the minds of these children and mold those mentalities to new philosophies. Children are being raised and instructed by other people who do not hold the same value systems that the parents hold.

Television becomes the chief babysitter as kids come in after school, lock the doors, and sit around in afternoons watching television. And what do they think about when they watch television? Did you know that according to a survey I read, sixty-five percent of Americans use television as the central source of their information? I mean that's all they get. They don't get it from books, they don't get it from newspapers, they don't get it from pulpits. The central source of their information, sixty-five percent say, is television. And thirty-six percent use it as the only source and this is true especially of children because they don't read much. And again, Dr. Menninger said recently, "We are raising a generation of violently aggressive women, who are being formed through children's exposure to television's fantasy female: the superhero." And he meant the *Bionic Woman*, *Wonder Woman*, *Police Woman*, *Charlie's Angels*, and this type of thing. And he says as a result, these children are being brainwashed until we're getting a generation of what he calls "violently aggressive women." You see, all of these values pervert God's plan for the child and the parents are not putting their values into the hearts of the children, somebody else is—a substitute is.

There's a new book written: *The View from Sunset Boulevard* by Ben Stein, and he interviews and examines the forces and policymakers behind today's television. And he says that they are systematically attempting to overthrow traditional values and the number one tool—listen to this now—is the situation comedy. You know what situation comedy is? Something like *Soap*, or *All in the Family*, or something like that—what they call a sitcom. Why is this? He says, "Because, if you can laugh at it—if you can laugh at it, it causes you to gloss over the real issues." When people think something is funny, they no longer take it seriously. We are teaching people to laugh at homosexuality; we are teaching people to laugh at adultery; we are teaching people to laugh at drunkenness; we are teaching people to laugh at fornication; and when they laugh at it, they can no longer take it seriously. Our children are laughing their way to hell.

Parents have failed to take their values and transfer them and teach them to their children. Fathers have dropped out, mothers have pushed out, and the children lose out, and what a shame it is! Oh, you talk to some people, they say, "Well, we've never

had a better generation of young people. These, today's kids and they blah blah blah." And the reason they think their kids are doing so well is they don't know what their kids are doing. I mean that's easy talk. But friend, if you read the statistics and find out what is happening; it's enough to make angels weep.

Now we do provide for our children physically: we take care of them physically. They are healthy, they are taller, they are bigger, they are stronger. They'll make it physically, that is, if they get born because already in America, we've wiped out six million little precious babies. I mean—we've—we've just mutilated them in the womb. You and I are having to pay the bill for that, by the way—our tax money. Hitler killed six million: everybody thought he was a tyrant. I feel like telling these people: pick on somebody your own size. I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said "Abort the court." I said, "Amen." But if they make it, if they get past that, if they come into this world, they'll make it all right physically, and they'll make it all right to be entertained. I read also that we spend more than four billion dollars a year on toys in United States of America. That is more than the gross national product of sixty-three nations—we spend on toys. And we give them vitamins, and we give them food, and we give them clothes, and we give them toys.

But now hold on, and I want you to listen: emotionally and spiritually, America's children are bent out of shape. One hundred thousand of America's children are in prison tonight; four out of every ten live in a broken home; seven to fourteen million will become alcoholics; sixty-five out of a thousand between seven and eleven have received psychiatric help; the average age now of beginning smokers has dropped from fourteen to ten. One million girls from twelve to seventeen will get pregnant; this does not even count those who will have an abortion. One out of every five children uses drugs twice a week; ten million minors are infected with VD and there are five thousand new cases every day. And the abortion rate in New York City exceeds the birth rate. And suicide now among children is staggering: between ten and fifteen percent of all children contemplate or try suicide, some as young as six or seven. And juvenile delinquency is increasing seven times faster than the population. That's in America because we've let somebody else take the responsibility of raising our children. We've let somebody else try to place their values, as I've said this morning, into the hearts and minds of our children.

And let me tell you again, let's go back to this humanist philosophy that I talked about this morning. We didn't have time to cover all the bases. Let me just talk to you about humanism and children. Let me tell you what the humanists believe that we ought to do with your children. Humanism is at war with the family. And some of the statements that these humanist leaders are making are absolutely frightening. Let me give you some, I quote: "To free the child, we must do away with parenthood and

marriage. We must settle for nothing less than the total elimination of the family.” Again a quote: “A woman, who stays at home caring for children and the house, leads an extremely sterile existence. This kind of woman leads a parasitic existence, that is, she’s a parasite that can aptly be described as legalized prostitution.” That’s taken from a pamphlet called “Sisterhood is Powerful.” Roxanne Dunbar said, “The family is a decadent, energy-absorbing, destructive, wasteful institution.” A feminist leaflet said quote: “We can’t destroy the inequities between men and women until we destroy marriage. We must free ourselves and marriage is the place to begin.”

And who reaps the bitter fruit? It is the children. Now, they don’t want your children to have the values that you hold. And don’t take it for granted that your children believe what you believe. They may believe some of the values but there may be some sleepers back there. There may be some things about this country and about communism and some other things, some values that your children don’t share with you. You may just think that they share them with you but it might surprise you to sit down and talk with your children about these things.

Children, according to the humanists, are to be liberated from traditional morals and values. Now let me give you a quote again: “The real solution requires a fundamental change in the value commitment and the actions of persons who control the public and private sector of our common lives: parents.” That is, they are trying to control the minds of the parents. And they go on to speak of different ways that they’re going to change these values. Gloria Steinem said this, she’s one of the big women libbers, a former Playboy bunny I believe: “By the year 2000, we will, I hope, rear our children to believe in human potential and not God.” That’s what they’re working at.

Now you think maybe I’m just a calamity howler. But you better open your eyes and see what’s going on. Children, according to the humanists, are to be delivered from parental authority. Again, I quote: “We recommend that the laws dealing with the rights of parents be examined and changed when they infringe upon the rights of children.” And already in Sweden a law has been passed by the Swedish Parliament that became effective last July 1. This new law absolutely prohibits a parent from striking a child anywhere, any time, for any reason.

Now there are certain ways you ought not to do it. You ought never to whip a child on an empty stomach. My dad never whipped me on an empty stomach. He always turned me over and whipped me back here.

Listen to that: never strike a child anywhere, any time, for any reason. Parents may not read the child’s mail or even prohibit him from reading pornography. Sending a child to bed without supper, restricting his television rights, or any other humiliating experiences are a violation of this latest child abuse law dedicated to the United Nations program of the Year of the Child. Now that’s sweet and it’s not here yet—yet. But you

wait until these internationalists have their way; you wait until they come in with this values modification, until they take the values that they have and insidiously infuse them into the lives of your children.

They want to give to your children total sexual freedom. Again I quote: “We have to free the children from physical punishment, freedom to vote, and give them total sexual freedom.” That means they want freedom for perversion or anything else. They want a classless, a sexless, a Christ-less, and a godless humanist society.

And again, the children are to be freed from religious indoctrination. I’m quoting from the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, principle number 10 says and I quote: “The child shall be protected from racial and religious discrimination.” Now, that’s a very hard thing to ferret out because you notice, when they put racial and religious side by side, you see, you see how that gets mixed in there so easily? And so these things are supposed to be hooked together, but they’re not hooked together. What they’re saying is this: you cannot tell your child this religion is wrong and this religion is right; that it’s not good to believe this or it is good to believe that because you’re putting discrimination in the hearts and minds of your children. And if you’re a Christian, you would have no right to indoctrinate your child in the facts of the faith.

And as I said this morning, they want to liberate your child from nationalism and from patriotism. Remember what I said about the humanists being great one-worlders; remember that it’s the world government first and America second? Let me give you another quote: “As long as a child breathes the poisoned air of nationalism, education and world-mindedness can produce only rather precarious results. As we pointed out, it is frequently the family that inflicts the child with extreme nationalism. The school should therefore use the means described earlier to combat family attitudes that favor this.” That is, the school should do all that it can do to take away from the child: America first. Combat that; we don’t want that; we want a one-world government. Now what they’re saying in plain English is: don’t let them love this country.

I want you to leave Deuteronomy and turn to Isaiah chapter 3 for a moment. And as Isaiah under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit prophesied, he gave us the three marks of a decadent society. And I want you to turn to Isaiah chapter 3 and let’s read together beginning in verse 8 and I want you to see what Isaiah’s three marks of a decadent society were. “For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.” And then verse 12: “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”

Now what were the marks of decadence in Isaiah’s day? First of all: depraved men.

Look in verse 9: “They show their sin as Sodom and they hide it not.” Sodomites have come out of their closets. They’re not ashamed of it: “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them.” They can no longer blush; rather, they brag about their immorality and their perversion.

But not only depraved men—disrespectful children. Look in verse 12: “As for my people, children are their oppressors.”

And not only disrespectful children, but domineering women: “And women rule over them.” When you have depraved man, disrespectful children, and domineering women, friend, according to Isaiah, you’ve also got the wrath of God—the wrath of God.

Now if that makes you angry, you come up to me after this service and apologize to me and I’ll forgive you. Listen, I’m just reading the Scripture to you. Don’t take it up with me; take it up with God, all right? Don’t get mad at me; you ought to get mad at me if I don’t read the Bible to you, if I don’t say what the Bible says. What I’m saying is that the values that you and I are taking for granted, our children are not necessarily taking for granted. And while fathers have dropped out, and while mothers are being pushed out, their children are losing out. And there are others who are moving in to take advantage of their plastic mentalities, and there are others who are placing these values in their hearts and in their minds.

Now go back, if you will please, to Deuteronomy chapter 6 and see what God’s plan is. How are we going to do something about this? What can parents do? What is our great responsibility? Number one: it is to know God. Number two: it is to love God. But number three: it is to share God with our children. And how are we to do it? Well, He tells us here in Deuteronomy chapter 6 how we’re to do it.

A. There Should Be a Vital Conversation

First of all, we’re to do it by vital conversation. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” You see, your very conversation is a teaching tool—the way you talk. Your faith is caught as well as taught. Some of you come to church and then you go home and for Sunday dinner you have roast preacher, or roast Sunday-school-teacher, or whatever. And you talk about the church and you criticize the church. Now Mother and Daddy are talking; Throckmorton is over there eating his peas. But he’s listening—he’s listening. And he’s learning and he’s learning that you’re one thing at church and you’re another thing at home. Oh, what tragic mistakes some parents make when they criticize, and they carp, and their conversation is such that it is so warped. We need to learn, dear friend, to take the Bible and in all that we do and in our conversation—to apply the Bible to life situations. Some of the best teaching that you’ll do, you’ll do almost accidentally as you

say to your child, “Well, we can’t do that because the Bible says” or you know, “What would God have us do?” Or when children get in a little argument: “Remember children, the Bible says through love, serve one another.” “Be kind” or whatever—that kind of teaching: “thou shalt talk of them.” You know that passage that says “Train up a child when he is young in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”? And that word train up literally means to put something in the mouth to be tasted—put something in the mouth to be tasted. The family altar is not primarily somewhere where you sit a child down and you say, “Now you sit still while I instill.” You know it’s like a dose of cod liver oil: a dose a day keeps the devil away. There is a time when we sit down and we open the Bible and we teach the Bible. There is a time when we gather together as a family to pray, but the family altar should be a time also continually, when we rise up, when we lie down, when we walk. We’re to be talking these things; we’re to be living these things. They are to be part of our lives and we’re to transfer these values: number one: by what I call vital conversation.

B. There Should Be A Victorious Demonstration

Number two: we’re to transfer these values by what I call victorious demonstration. Look again in verse 8: “And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” Now the Jews wore little boxes and in these boxes they had scriptures. These boxes were called phylacteries and in these phylacteries they had little scriptures writ. They took this so literally that they would take the law of God and bind it upon their hands. They’d take the law of God and they’d put it between the frontlets of their eyes, right on the forehead. And I’ve seen Orthodox Jews and so have you, wearing these, or many of us have.

Now I’m not saying that’s altogether wrong or I’m not saying it’s wrong at all; but I’m saying I don’t think that’s primarily what God is meaning. I think there’s a deeper meaning here. What does He mean by binding them upon your hand? The hand speaks of action and He’s saying that you are to put the Word of God into action and as between the frontlets of your eyes, that’s your mind. And what He’s saying is you’re to saturate your mind with the Word of God. He is saying it’s to permeate all of your life: every thought, every act should be under the control of the Holy Spirit mediated through the Word of God. And it is to be in conformity—everything in your house is to be in conformity with the Word of God. There is to be a victorious demonstration. You see, it’s not enough to talk; we’ve got to walk. Our hands and are minds are going to have to match our mouths. That’s what He’s saying. Not only should we talk it, we ought to live it, we ought to think it, we ought to know it.

C. There Should Be a Visual Manifestation

But now look, if you want to transfer this faith, not only should there be that vital

conversation, not only should there be that victorious demonstration, but they're also ought to be a visual manifestation. Look, if you will, in verse 9: "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." That is, there ought to be things that people can see and read. The Scripture ought to be portrayed in your house. There ought to be open Bibles in your house. There ought to be in this day—of course they didn't have it in that day—but in this day, there ought to be Christian albums on the stereo. Now some of you ought to throw away a lot of the junk you're buying, and buy you a good stereo and some Christian albums. Fill your house with music—it's a good investment.

And some of you need to take that fat Buddha you got when you went overseas and chunk it out and put an open Bible somewhere there in your family room. Who wants an idol in their home? And you say, "Well, we just, you know, just kinda look at it." Well, quit it. Man, this home belongs to Jesus. Get all of that horoscope junk out of your home; get all of those magazines out of your home. Get some Bibles in your home, some godly pictures in your home, and some scripture mottos in your home, and get some music in your home, and get an atmosphere in your home that when people come to that house they can tell this house belongs to Jesus Christ. Raise your children in that kind of an atmosphere. There ought to be verses, and mottos, and symbols in the home: there ought to be a visual manifestation.

Conclusion

Now, friends, it's time you and I started caring for these children. I'm so grateful for our preschool department here at Bellevue church. I'm so grateful for our children's department. I don't know how many they had this morning, but I dare say that our children and our children's department had close to five hundred children who are older than preschoolers and younger than junior high and high schoolers. That's a great—that's a great gift that God is given us. Look up here in this choir; isn't this pretty tonight? Just say amen, isn't that pretty? Kids, we love you; we thank God for you and God is blessing this church.

But now people, you listen to me: I want the moms and dads to be able to bring their children here and put them in a place where those children are taken care of and then I want those moms and dads to come over here and get some values from this pulpit that they can pass on to their children. And some of you are old-time Christians. Some of you have already got it. I was talking to Mary Hight and she said, "Pastor, you will not believe the problems that some of these young parents are having: financial problems, divorce problems, business problems, communication problems. She said, "They come and they tell me and they pour it out." And she's trying to do all that she can do but she says, "So many of these parents are bringing their children to church and then do you

know what they're doing? Sitting with their own children in the nursery while we're over here saying amen. Some of you are saying, "Well I raised mine, let them raise theirs." I've got one word for that attitude: selfish— selfish. There's a job to be done.

Did you know that one of the hardest tasks in all of Bellevue Baptist church is just this one thing: getting people who are qualified and dedicated to take care of those babies during the service. That's perhaps the hardest one single job in all of this church. And therefore, I'm going to ask you to do something tonight. I'm going to ask you to make a commitment; many of you, now I know some of you cannot for one reason or another, but I'm going to ask many of you—young and old—to make a commitment to work at least once a month in one service in the preschool department. Now I'm not asking you to do it for me, I'm not asking you to do it for Mary Hight, I'm not even really asking you to do it for the children or their parents. I'm going to ask you to do it for Jesus Christ and it's just that simple.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we thank you so much for your Word. Lord, it's refreshed us and cleansed us and blessed us and we just thank you for it. Lord, how good you've been to us all this day long. And Lord, I pray now tonight, if there are those in this building who are not saved, whether they be fathers, mothers, whether they're married or unmarried, whether they're children, whether they'd be boys or girls, Lord, that they might come to Jesus, just bless in the invitation time I pray. In Jesus' dear name, amen.

Will There Be Peace in the Middle East?

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: October 15, 2000

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 7:6

Outline

Introduction

- I. Facts About the Nation Israel
 - A. A Special People
 - B. A Special Purpose
 1. God Chose Israel for His Glory
 2. God Chose Israel for Our Good
 - C. A Special Prospect
 - D. A Special Place
- II. Jerusalem and the Temple Mount
 - A. Israel Will Never Willingly Give Up Jerusalem, Especially the Temple Mount
 - B. Israel Will Be Invaded from the North
 - C. There Is Coming a Roman Prince Who Will Make a Treaty with Israel

Conclusion

Introduction

Well, take your Bible, if you would, please, and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 6, for starters. We're going to be all over the Bible tonight, and if you want to just listen and jot the scriptures down on a slip of paper, that may be better. I'll try to read them clearly for you. I don't want you to get lost shuffling in the pages, but I do want you to learn how to use your Bibles. And, by the way, thank God for the Word of God. You take the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other: you will know more about what is going on in this world than all of the wiseacres in the Pentagon and the Congress put together who do not know the Word of God. I mean that with all of my heart. Now I want to talk to you about the nation Israel and what is happening this very moment in Jerusalem as well as all of the nation Israel. And we may be watching right now what I would call the beginning of the end, the prelude to Armageddon.

I. Facts About the Nation Israel

Now, let me give you some things about the nation Israel. And, by the way, the title of

the message tonight is more of a Bible study: “Will There Be Peace in the Middle East?”

A. A Special People

The first thing I want you to understand is this: that Israel is a special people. Now we're not merely talking about the land; we're talking about the people. Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 6—God said to Israel, *“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself,”*—now, listen to this—*“above all people that are upon the face of the earth”* (Deuteronomy 7:6). Now, whether you agree with that or not, that, friend, is the Word of God. God has sovereignly chosen Israel. Now you may not understand it. As one man said, “How odd of God to choose the Jews.” But He did! And the nation Israel is a God-created, a God-decreed, a God-loved, a God-called, a God-elected, and a God-protected nation. As you study the history of the Jew, you're going to find out that the Jew has left his mark on history like no other people. He stands beside the grave of his persecutors.

Now in my study I found out that less than four-tenths of one percent of the world's population are Jews—a minute proportion: four-tenths of one percent. And yet they have captured more than twelve percent of all of the honors in science, health, medicine, music, and public life. And of the Nobel Prize winners in the last twenty-five years, one-third to one-fourth have been Jews. Think about that. Think how small they are in relationship to the rest of the six billion people here upon the face of the earth. And, as a matter of fact, if you study history, you're going to find out that all history revolves around the name of six Jews—all history! Of course, number one is Jesus Christ; but then, Moses; the Apostle Paul; Karl Marx; Freud, the psychologist; and Albert Einstein—all of them Jews, all of them Jews. And the history of the world hinges on these people.

B. A Special Purpose

Now Israel is a special people. Secondly, God has a special purpose for Israel. Now God did not merely choose the Jews to show His love to them, but He has a special purpose with them and through them.

1. God Chose Israel for His Glory

God chose Israel, number one, for His glory. Write down Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 7. God says, *“Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, yea, I have formed him; yea, I have made him”* (Isaiah 43:7). And there God is talking of the Jew, “created,” He says, “for His glory.” And so God created him, the Jew, for His glory. God is going to be glorified in the Jewish people, the Jewish nation.

2. God Chose Israel for Our Good

Secondly, not only did God create Israel for His glory, but, also, God created Israel for our good. We have been blessed by the Jew. Now, remember Genesis 12, verse 3. God spoke to Abraham, and here's what God said to Abraham: *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee..."*—Abraham, the progenitor of the Jewish nation—*"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* (Genesis 12:3). So God chose the Jew for His glory. God chose the Jew for our good. For example, I preached this morning from the Old Testament, the Book of Genesis. That, my friend, is a Jewish book. The Old Testament is a Jewish book. The Scriptures came to us from the Jew.

Put this verse down—Deuteronomy chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. God says, *"Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it."* Here's what Moses is saying: *"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people"* (Deuteronomy 4:5–6). God said, "I'm going to teach you, my people; and then the other nations are going to see what I've taught you. And they're going to say of the Jewish nation—the Jewish people; the race, if you will—'This is a wise and an understanding nation.'"

To those of us who are Christians, you want to know how all nations of the world have been blessed by Abraham? Our Messiah is a Jew—Jesus is a Jew. God said to the Jewish nation, in Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,"*—now, listen to this—*"upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."* And then He says this: *"The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"* (Isaiah 9:6–7). You can be sure—you can be sure—that Jesus will reign upon the throne of David. And God says, "The way you can know is by my zeal. I will perform it."

C. A Special Prospect

A special people. A special purpose. And a special prospect. God has a wonderful future for the Jew. Take your Bibles and turn to Jeremiah chapter 31; and look, if you will, in verse 31: *"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah..."*—God made a covenant with the Jew, with Abraham, but God said, "There's a new covenant coming."

Do you know what the words “*new covenant*” mean? They mean, “New Testament.” *“I will make a [New Testament].”* We already had the Old Testament, and the Jews believed that; but there’s coming a time when they will understand the New Testament—*“with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in that day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD,”*—He’s talking about the future time now—*“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the LORD,”*—now, listen to this—*“which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name”* (Jeremiah 31:31–35).

Now God says, “I’m giving you my credentials right now. I’m the One who flung the sun, the moon, and the stars into space. I’m the One who scooped out the seas. I’m the One that has the universe in my hands.” Now God says, *“The LORD of hosts is [my] name.”* “The Jehovah of the armies of heaven” is what that literally means. Now God says, “I made all of that.” And then God makes a proposition in verse 36: *“If those ordinances”*—the sun, the moon, and the stars, He’s talking about—*“depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.”* What God is saying is, “To get rid of the Jew, first of all, you’d have to pull down the sun, moon, and stars, and dry up the oceans.” That’s what He’s saying. *“Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured,”*—“if you can tell me, friend, how high is up”—*“if the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,”*—“if you can tell me what this world sits on”—*“I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 31:36–37).

Now what God is saying is this: “To destroy the Jew, you would first of all have to destroy the power that regulates the sun, the moon, and the stars.” You could no more destroy Israel than you could destroy the universe itself. Israel is one of the great proofs of the inspiration of the Word of God. After eighteen centuries, the Jewish nation still exists. Other centuries, other nations who are dispersed go into oblivion. They are absorbed into those nations ’round about them—but not the Jew. The Jew continues on with his ethnicity, with his laws, with his tradition, with his statutes, and even with his language. You can go to Israel and hear the Hebrew language spoken. Other

languages, when they die, they don't come back to life. But Amos could walk the streets of Jerusalem and understand the Hebrew that is taught there.

When I lived in Florida, I lived in West Palm Beach as a child, and West Palm Beach is closer to the Gulf Stream than any other point on the North American continent. And the Gulf Stream is a river that flows in the ocean. It's a remarkable thing. The Gulf Stream flows north. And if you're out fishing, as I used to do—and long to do—you get to the Gulf Stream—about three miles. It meanders off the coast of Florida. The water, as you're there, if it's a clear day, the water might be about the color of this aqua rug that I'm standing on. But when you come to the Gulf Stream, suddenly there is a crisp line in the water, and the water is deep indigo blue, like blue ink. It's a strange thing. There's a river in the ocean. It's very much like the Jewish nation. You would think that they would be dispersed. You'd think that somehow they would be absorbed. But they're not.

And, friend, the devil has tried to exterminate the Jewish nation. But the king of Egypt could not diminish Israel. The Red Sea could not drown Israel. Jonah's whale could not digest Israel. The fiery furnace could not devour Israel. And the gallows of Haman could not hang Israel. And the nations of the world cannot assimilate Israel, and the dictators of this world cannot annihilate Israel. Israel is a God-decreed nation.

Now God has taken this special people, and God has given these people a special purpose; and God has protected them with a special prospect: that one of these days there's going to be a wholesale turning to their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jeremiah tells us He's going to give them a new covenant. He's going to put His laws in their heart. I can hardly wait for that day when my Jewish friends will say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," when they shall look upon Him whom they've pierced and shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son (Zechariah 12:10).

D. A Special Place

Well now, God has this special people with a special purpose and a special prospect. And God has put His people in a special place. That place is the Holy Land. Joyce and I have been to the Holy Land so many times, and one of the things that I love to do is to take a group first coming to Israel, take them up to Mount Scopus. The word *scopus* means, "to oversee" or "to scope out." It's a mountain there just northeast of the city of Jerusalem. And I'd take them to Mount Scopus and put them there on a beautiful night with the heavens ablaze with the stars and then tell them, "I want you to look out. I want you to see those stars against the black velvet of space. Just look at those stars." And all you can see from pole to pole is the Milky Way—one galaxy among billions of galaxies. "Just look at that."

And now, among all of those galaxies, there's the Milky Way. And then, in the Milky Way, there's one solar system. See the moon, the other planets that revolve around our sun? Just one solar system that God has picked out. Many stars are like our sun, but there's one particular solar system that pertains to us. And in that solar system, of all the planets, there's one little planet—an insignificant planet, really, just a speck of cosmic dust called the earth. But God says, "*The earth is the LORD's*"—"the earth is the LORD's" (Psalm 24:1). And on that earth there are many continents on that earth, Planet Earth. But God has taken all of the other continents and all of the other lands and, as if it were, almost kind of brushed them aside. And God takes that earth, and He finds one land there, and God calls it "My holy land." And then, in all of the Holy Land, from Dan to Bathsheba, God takes one city, and He calls it "the Holy City." And then, in the Holy City, God takes one hill—the hill where Abraham was willing to offer Isaac, the hill where the temple was built, the hill where Jesus was crucified—and God calls that, "My Holy Hill." That's the Temple Mount that all the trouble is about right now. That, my friend, is the most important spot in all the universes. Out of all of the galaxies, the Milky Way; out of the Milky Way, one solar system; out of the solar system, one planet; out of that planet, one land; out of that land, one city; out of that city, one holy hill. That's the reason that the battle has begun. That's the reason that the emphasis is so strong today.

II. Jerusalem and the Temple Mount

Now, let me tell you—let me try to answer the question, "Will there be peace in the Middle East?" The issue is not primarily Israel or Palestine; the issue is primarily Jerusalem—and not only Jerusalem, but a significant part of Jerusalem called the Temple Mount.

I read in *The Commercial Appeal* on the thirteenth, just recently, and I copied it down: "The central issue involved the future status of East Jerusalem..."—now East Jerusalem is that part where the Temple Mount is—"of East Jerusalem, which has been held by Israel since the 1967 war and is now annexed to the western part of the Holy City. One Israeli proposal called for the Palestinians to get most of the West Bank"—that is, all of the land on the west side of the Jordan River—"in return for giving up claims of sovereignty over East Jerusalem"—that's where the Temple is, or where the Temple was, and where the Mosque of Omar and the Al-Aqsa Mosque is today—"Without agreement on Jerusalem, there can be no agreement over other issues involving the borders of a Palestinian state, the fate of the Palestinian refugees, and the future of Israeli settlements on the West Bank." Now what they're saying is this: that the sticking point in all of these negotiations—the sticking point—is Jerusalem; and not only

Jerusalem, but East Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the place where Abraham was willing to offer Isaac, the place where Solomon's temple and Herod's temple were built, the place where Islam says that Muhammad ascended to heaven on his steed. That is the point.

The whole thing started when Ariel Sharon, former Minister of Defense, took a contingent of people and went up on the Temple Mount. Now Jews can go up on the Temple Mount if they want. No ultra-Orthodox Jew will go up there, because he's afraid he might step on the Holy of Holies somewhere, so he won't go up there. Until the Holy of Holies is dedicated and re-consecrated, he would not go up there. But Ariel Sharon, this Jewish leader, went up there. Why did he go up there? Because in the negotiations they'd been talking about what might happen to the Temple Mount. He went up there to say, "Israel is still sovereign here, and I can go up here if I wish." And when he went up there, a riot broke out. And what has happened the last seventeen days is the result of that riot that broke out there. The issue is the Temple Mount, and the issue is not any other city but Jerusalem.

Now I want you to write down these scriptures. We're talking about Jerusalem. God speaks of the time in the future that He is going to put His Son Jesus Christ upon that holy hill. In Psalm 2, verse 1, God speaks of the yammering and the evil imaginations of all of the nations of the world and the kings of the world: *"Why do the heathen rage, and the people...take counsel...against the LORD, and against his anointed"* (Psalm 2:1-2). And yet He says here, in Psalm 2, verse 6, *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion"* (Psalm 2:6). God is going to enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ there on Zion. Zion comprises the uprising of the entire city of Jerusalem; sometimes one hill, but He's speaking there of Zion as the city of the great King.

Isaiah 62, verse 1: *"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace..."*—that's what God is saying. Now, listen—*"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth"* (Isaiah 62:1). God says, "I'm on a purpose, and I will not rest until righteousness goes forth from Jerusalem."

Ezekiel 5:5: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her."* Some have called Jerusalem "the navel of the earth." *"In the midst of the nations"*—it's set there in the confluence of three great continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe (Ezekiel 5:5). And God says, "This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the midst of the nations." All of these scriptures deal with Jerusalem now.

Zechariah 1, verse 17: *"Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion,*

and shall yet choose Jerusalem” (Zechariah 1:17). God says, “I’m not finished with Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 2, verse 12: *“And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land,”*—notice He calls Israel *“the holy land”*—*“and shall choose Jerusalem again”* (Zechariah 2:12).

Notice this scripture—Zechariah chapter 8 and verse 3: *“Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth;”*—He’s talking now about the Second Coming—*“and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain”* (Zechariah 8:3). God takes that mountain, and He says, “It’s going to be called the mountain of the Lord of hosts. When I return, I’m going to do that.”

Then the Psalmist said, in Psalm 137, verses 5 and 6, *“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy”* (Psalm 137:5–6). And the Lord Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, teaching us not to take an oath or to swear, said we’re not to swear by heaven; and then He says, in Matthew 5, verse 35, *“nor by the earth, for it his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King”* (Matthew 5:34–35). Who said that? Jesus said that. Who is the great King? Not Herod; Jesus. Jerusalem is the city of the great King: that’s what He said.

Now there was the immediate reason for the riots, and the turmoil, and the pitiful bloodshed, but the deep-seated reason is Jerusalem. On September 28, Ariel Sharon went up there, but that was only a spark. That Temple Mount—I’ve been on it many times—it’s about thirty-five acres. It is a site that is holy both to Jews and to Arabs, and revered by Christians. At this moment Israel still has sovereign control of the Temple Mount. That happened in the 1967 war, when the Israelis took East Jerusalem and, one more time, took the Temple Mount. On that Temple Mount now there is no more temple, but there are two mosques. That’s an Islamic house of worship and prayer. There is the mosque that you see, when you see the pictures, that has the golden dome on it. That’s called the Mosque of Omar, and that is most beautiful. But the most sacred to the Muslims is the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and it’s a little bit further south. If you will remember—some of you will remember—that’s the mosque, when Anwar Sadat visited Israel after Camp David, he wanted to go this mosque and pray. It is the third most sacred spot to the Muslims. And they consider the Temple Mount to be sacred to the Islamic faith.

Now they have taken polls in the nation of Israel. The Israelis, many of them, are so heartsick, so tired of war, that they are willing to give up certain areas. For example, you read where the tomb of Joseph—you’ve been reading in the paper—you read where the tomb of Joseph has been desecrated in Nablus. And the Israelis withdrew, and they

desecrated the tomb of Joseph. Remember Joseph said, “Take my bones with you” (Genesis 50:25). And they believe that tradition says that’s the tomb of Joseph. The Israelis have allowed the Arabs to take control over the burial place of Rachel, Joseph’s mother, just outside of Bethlehem. And we’ve been past there so many times. And they said, “All right, you can do that.” Abraham’s tomb is in Hebron, and the Cave of Machpelah. Abraham and Sarah are buried there. And many of the Jews have said, “All right, we’ll let you take control there, if you wish.” But they said, “Yes, we want the Temple Mount.” And they say, “No! No! You cannot have the Temple Mount. We will not give up the Temple Mount.” The struggle for control is the Temple Mount. Islam, the world’s fastest growing religion, now has over one billion followers, who will never ever willingly accept Israel’s sovereignty over the Temple Mount. It is very special, very special, to the Jew; it is very special to the Muslim.

Now there are a lot of secular Jews who couldn’t care less about a future temple or anything there, but the deeply religious, deeply committed, Hasidic Jews—those that you see with the black hats and the curls down each side, those who are praying at the Western Wall—they’re praying for Messiah to come, and they’re praying for the Temple to be built there.

Now I want to leave three thoughts with you.

A. Israel Will Never Willingly Give Up Jerusalem, Especially the Temple Mount

Number one—and you need to understand this, as you read the newspapers—number one: Israel will never willingly give up Jerusalem, especially the Temple Mount. Israel will never do that. Menachem Begin was one of the leading Jewish leaders a decade ago, the Prime Minister of Israel. I met with Menachem Begin in Washington, talked with him. I actually had prayer with him. And he made very clear that he felt that Israel should never even begin to negotiate about Jerusalem. Let me tell you what he said at Camp David—I’ve copied it down: “Without a doubt, Jews everywhere through all the centuries have put their trust in the Bible promise. Jerusalem will be the center of our national unity. My answer to all these proposals and demands is Jerusalem—east, west, north, and south; all parts of it—are under the single sovereignty of Israel. Jerusalem is the heart of our nation, our history, our culture, our dreams, and our prayers. It will remain that way throughout all generations, so help us God. The world is to know of Jerusalem’s indivisibility, its completeness, and its sovereignty over it. Jerusalem is our capital. It is David’s capital. Any proposal that would result in dividing the city of Jerusalem will immediately be rejected by our people, because we stand for the unity of Jerusalem for all eternity.”

Now, you wonder why people fight over Jerusalem like they do? Why? I mean, it’s

not of great economic importance. It has no harbor. It doesn't have a great airport. There's no major highway that goes past it. The very word *Jerusalem* means, "city of peace." Yet for 3,000 years—three millenniums—it has known nothing but war. But here's the first thought I'm going to give you: Israel will never willingly surrender Jerusalem—willingly. You can bank on that.

B. Israel Will Be Invaded from the North

Here's the second thought I want to give you: Israel will be invaded from the north—Israel will be invaded from the north. Ezekiel 38, verses 1 through 9: *"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers"—that means, "shields"—"and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all his bands..."—and many believe Gomer is one of those East Asia countries or Central Asia countries, probably Turkey—"Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."* Now, notice verse 8: *"After many days..."—this is a prophecy, not for Ezekiel's time, but—"After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years"—that is, "in the last days"—"thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people,"—that is, in the end time, after Israel has come back to her land, then this is going to happen—"against the mountains of Israel,"—"you're going to be brought against the mountains of Israel"—"which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee"* (Ezekiel 38:1–9).

Now this is a very hard to understand passage. It's quite convoluted. It speaks about many places, names that we're not familiar with, cryptic phrases like "Gog and Magog." And I do not have time to get into all of that tonight, except to say this: that there is coming an invasion from the north part in the last days against Israel. That is made all the more understandable with the implosion of the Soviet system.

Now, many times, preachers—and myself included—said, "Soviet Russia is going to invade Israel." But now there is no Soviet Russia, and it's broken up into to small

republics. Of course, Russia itself remains, but all of these former Soviet nations are republics of their own. Now there's one thing about all of them: they are unstable, and Russia itself is unstable. The man who is running for the vice presidency, Dick Cheney, said, "The only point probably on which we agree is the realization that we simply do not know what the future will bring for the former Soviet Union." The whole system is now on the verge of bankruptcy. And we know that a bear is dangerous; a hungry bear is more dangerous; a wounded, hungry bear is most dangerous. There is now a deep, deep, anti-Jewish feeling in the former republics. And there's an agreement now between these republics and the fanatic state of Iran—former Persia, one of those nations— and the southern republics: that agreement is becoming stronger and stronger. And now the number of Soviet citizens of the Muslim faith in central Asia is more than fifty billion, and it's on the increase.

Now, on top of that, they have in their hands atomic weapons. Many of these Islamic states are now former republics. Who knows what Iraq may have in poison gas? Who knows what Saddam Hussein is doing? By the way, Saddam Hussein is already moving his troops towards Israel. Pakistan, Iran, and Libya could possibly get their hands on atomic bombs from some of these rogue nations.

When I was in Moscow, I went to the American Embassy, and sat there and talked shortly after the implosion of Soviet Communism. And I said, "Would you tell me about these republics? I've heard that there are atomic weapons out there that are not accounted for." And the man said, "That's right." He said, "We do not know where all of the atomic weapons are." And he said, "You would not believe the unbelievably poor system of accounting that they've had," and said, "there are just some weapons out there that we don't know where they are." The former USSR had around 25,000 atomic warheads at her disposal. There were 1,400 long-range missiles, 63 nuclear subs, and 100 long-range bombers. Now when these get together, there's one thing that unites them all—and that is their hatred of Israel.

Now without going down any deeper than that, you can expect one day—perhaps next week, perhaps next year, perhaps five years—I don't know—but there's going to be an invasion of Israel from the north. The Bible says that will be true. It will come in the latter days.

C. There Is Coming a Roman Prince Who Will Make a Treaty with Israel

Now, here's the third thing I want to say, and then I'm going to wrap it up: There is coming a Roman prince who will make a treaty, negotiate a treaty, with Israel, and this will forecast the end of everything. Now our President has gone right now; he's probably in the air right now flying to Egypt. He's going to meet there in Egypt. I pulled this down

off the Net—and just some recent news—and it talks about who’s going to be at this summit, and it says, “The summit will be attended by Clinton, Barak”—that’s the Israeli leader—“Arafat”—that’s the PLO leader—“Mubarak”—that’s the leader of Egypt—“UN Secretary General Kofi Annan”—now this is the United Nations Secretary—“King Abdullah II of Jordan, and a senior European Union representative.” That is, the European community is getting involved, and you can expect them to get more and more involved, because out of this European community is going to come the Antichrist.

Daniel chapter 8 and verse 25—the Bible describes this Antichrist, and it says, *“And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand;”*—the Antichrist is going to be a very crafty individual—*“and he shall magnify himself in his heart,”*—he’s going to be full of ego—*“and by peace shall destroy many:”*—not by war, but by peace. Under the pretense of peace he will destroy many—*“he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes;”*—of course, that’s Jesus—*“but he shall be broken without hand”* (Daniel 8:25). That’s the Second Coming of Jesus and the Battle of Armageddon. His back will be broken. And Daniel chapter 9 and verse 27 speaks of this one, and it says, *“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:”*—now it literally means, “seven years”—a week of years, not a week of days—*“and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”* (Daniel 9:27).

Now, what’s going to happen? There’s going to come a very crafty person. This crafty person is going to make a covenant with Israel, and he’s going to give them a seven-year covenant. During this time, somehow, perhaps, the Temple Mount will be divided, and the Mosque of Omar will stay there; and, finally, they will say, “All right, you build the Temple.” By the way, what would cause the Temple to be reconstructed? I’ll tell you beyond the shadow of any doubt what would most likely cause it to be reconstructed: it would be to discover the Ark of the Covenant, find out where the Ark of the Covenant is. Where is the Ark of the Covenant? I believe it’s under the Temple Mount. And, by the way, there are all kinds of excavations that have taken place now under the Temple Mount. And the Arabs made the Jews cease and desist.

One time I was in the Israel and I saw an open door. Nobody was around, and I went in there. And it was poorly lighted, and there were tunnels. I was so full of curiosity, and I kept going this way and that way. And there were deep shafts down in the ground. And Joyce didn’t know where I was; no one knew where I was. And I kept going and going. It seemed like I went a city block up there in a labyrinth passageway. And I said, “If I get lost in here, Joyce will never forgive me.” And I said, “I’d better get out of here before I fall in a hole or get lost.” And I turned around and picked my way back out of that place. It was so intriguing to be there. Now a portion of that is now opened up—what they call

the Rabbi Tunnel, that you can go and walk along the base of the Western Wall there in Jerusalem, what is the remainder of Herod's Temple, and see those Herodian stones that are there. I believe that the Ark of the Covenant is probably somewhere there, buried by Jeremiah before the Jews were taken out of the land into captivity. Who really knows where the Ark of the Covenant is? But suppose the Ark of the Covenant were discovered: what would they do with it? Would they put it in a museum? Of course not! Would they put it in a warehouse? Of course not! They would have to have a house to house it. They would have to build some sort of a temple to house it.

Now this passage says that there's coming a man who's going to make a peace treaty with Israel. And it will be a seven-year treaty. And then the Bible says, "*In the midst of the week*"—after three and a half years—"*he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*" (Daniel 9:27). "Well, pastor, do you mean they're going to be having sacrifices?" Yes. You can go to Jerusalem now and see where they're training young boys to offer sacrifices. They're making the utensils, and they're training them how to offer today—they're training them how to make these sacrifices.

But this Antichrist, this beast, this devil in human skin, this cunning, crafty person, who will have had a covenant with Israel, a seven-year treaty, will in the middle of that covenant enter into that Temple. And 2 Thessalonians the second chapter says, "*He as God [will sit] in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). You read in Matthew chapter 24 Jesus spoke of this also. Jesus said, "When you see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, then flee, get out... For then shall be great tribulation, such as the world has never seen" (Matthew 24:15–21). There's coming a time—Jesus believed it—that there is coming a wicked person. He was so terrible that Jesus called him "the abomination of desolation." He's going to come in the holy place, and he's going to say, "I am God." At that time, the Jews will have their eyes opened. They will realize that he's been a false messiah. Jesus said, "I've come in my Father's name; you wouldn't receive me. If another will come in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43). And they will believe him for a moment. But then, when that two-legged man says, "I am God," they'll say, "You're not God"—"You're not God." And in his fury, he will seek then, finally, to show Satan's hatred for God's ancient people, to exterminate them. There will be great tribulation in the land of Israel, as this man now has all of the armies of the world gathered together against Jerusalem. They will be under his control. When it looks like it's absolutely dark for Jerusalem, then our God will come. The Lord Jesus will come. He's coming in power and great glory.

Let me give you some scripture that blesses my heart every time I read it. Zechariah chapter 12, verse 8: "*In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of*

Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” Now, listen to this: *“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,”*—now, think with me. God is speaking. God is Spirit. Every Jew knows that God is Spirit. God doesn’t have a body. And yet this scripture says, *“And they will look upon me whom they have pierced.”* Who is that? Jesus. They’re going to see Jesus when He comes. Listen—*“and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn”* (Zechariah 12:8–10). And a nation will be born in a day.

There’s so much more I could say, but what’s going to happen? Listen. The Jews will never willingly give up Jerusalem. There is coming a false prophet, a politician *par excellence*, who will somehow, with the help of the UN and unified Europe, make a covenant with the Jews. They will believe this. They will be betrayed. It will look dark for them. But then their Messiah will come.

Conclusion

I love the Jewish people. I have many Jewish friends. They do not agree with what I’m preaching tonight. I have many Arab friends. They don’t agree with what I’m preaching tonight. I love Arabs. I love Jews. God has a wonderful plan for the Arabs. God has a wonderful plan for the Jews. And I was reading in the Bible recently where Egypt and Persia and Israel will all be like that during the millennium. God has a plan for the nations of this world, but it centers in Jerusalem, and it centers in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, years ago, I read a story that deeply moved my heart. A little boy had a dad who was going away on a business trip. The little boy had not yet even started school. His father was wealthy, and the little boy had a nursemaid that watched over him and took him out to play. The father said, “Son, I’m going away on a long trip.” He said, “Dad, when will you be home?” The Dad, knowing that little boy did not understand the calendar, said, “Son, you watch the leaves on the trees.” The father had planned to come back in the fall time. He said, “When you see the leaves begin to turn color, you know Daddy will be home pretty soon.” And that little boy would go out every day, and with his nurse; and she’d take him out to play. And he’d look up, and the leaves would be green. And after a while he forgot about it.

But then, just like this time of the year that we’re in right now, the leaves began to blush, and to turn, and to get a little lighter green; and then little twinges of yellow and red and orange would come. But it was happening so gradually that he failed to take

notice of it, until one day there was a tremendous thunderstorm and it rained; and bushels and bushels and bushels of leaves came down. There were great piles of leaves. It was so obvious. The leaves were all different colors on the ground. And when the nursemaid took him out—his nanny—and he saw all those leaves, he remembered his father’s words, and he jumped into a pile of leaves and began to kick them sky high, and to shout, “Daddy is coming soon!”

Now, folks, I’m not going to set a date, but I’m going to tell you, the leaves are turning color—the leaves are turning color. And soon, soon, and very soon we’ll see the King.

Can America Survive?

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 8:7–14, 19–20

Outline

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Introduction

Now, would you open your Bibles, please, to Deuteronomy chapter 8. Start in the front—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and then Deuteronomy—and you'll have it—Deuteronomy chapter 8. The message this morning is entitled "Can America Survive?" I believe that there is one thing that we learn about history: that is, that we are not willing to learn much about history. One thing that we learn about history, if we are willing to learn something about history, is that history tends to repeat itself. History tends to repeat itself in the life of nations, and what has happened before tends to happen again. And so, as I read this scripture this morning, you're going to see how applicable it is to our situation right now.

I'm reading in Deuteronomy chapter 8. This is God's message to the nation Israel. But it could be very much God's message to us. Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 7 through 14: *"For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which*

he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” (Deuteronomy 8:7–14) And then, skip to verse 19: *“And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.”* (Deuteronomy 8:19–20)

Now, if there was ever a scripture that was applicable to us right now, I certainly believe this is the scripture. The question we’re asking is this: Can America, as we know her, survive, or will the grand ol’ ship of state go down in a sea of sin because she has been destroyed by moral dry rot? Will the great American eagle give way to the vulture of judgment? That’s the question we’re asking right now. Will America find her place in the graveyard of the nations? And will America, great as she has been, become nothing but a moldy crust in history’s garbage can? We’re asking this: Will the great American dream one day become a national nightmare? That’s a question, isn’t it? It needs to be asked. And I believe it can be answered.

I. Where We’ve Been

Now, first of all, I want us to look at where we’ve been. I want us to look at our heritage. I want us to look at our founding. I want us to look at our creation. I want us to see the pit from whence we were digged. I want us to understand something about our past history, because I, for one, believe that our past history has been glorious. Let me say that no nation has ever had such a birth as America. America was conceived in the womb of liberty and spirituality.

Did you know that, even when our discoverer Columbus left that foreign soil across the sea and came to this land, he thought of himself as a minister, as a priest, as a servant of Almighty God? Before Columbus set sail, he kneeled in fervent prayer. He put a cross on that lead ship, and when he came to these shores, Columbus planted that cross in American soil. He got upon his knees and dedicated this new land to Jehovah God. Did you know that? That’s the first act that Columbus did.

When our forefathers came here, that English colony, landed at Jamestown, their first act was to kneel. The very first thing they did was to kneel and to thank God for these shores, and dedicate themselves to God, and dedicate this new continent to the

God who created it. When our Pilgrim Fathers came to Plymouth Rock, they placed, first of all, the cross upon Plymouth Rock, and they kneeled in prayer and dedication to Almighty God. The very first public buildings that were built by these people were church houses. Their very first act of assembly, when they assembled together, was to worship God—it was to praise God.

When they finally decided they would become a nation, and when they set forth their Declaration of Independence, they made in the Declaration of Independence four specific references to Almighty God. Among those: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.” They believed, as I believe, and as you believe, that God is the Creator, and it is God that gives human rights, it is God that gives human dignity. And they believed this.

When they got ready to form a constitution, and they were worrying and laboring and thinking and sweating, wise ol’ Benjamin Franklin stood and made a speech to that congress who was gathered, the constitutional convention, and he said this: “Gentlemen, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without God taking notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without His aid?” He said, “Gentlemen, we need to pray.” And that congress, that constitutional convention, stopped and knelt in fervent prayer, and asked Almighty God to guide them in the framing of the Constitution, and prayed for divine wisdom. Those people who crossed the ocean came not to find soil for their plows; they came to find liberty for their souls. They came to worship God. And this is why America has been so great.

A South American president was talking with Roger Babson, and this South American president was discussing the difference between the greatness of North America and the seeming mediocrity of South America. And the South American president said, “The difference is in this: those who came to South America came to South America seeking gold, and those who came to North America came seeking God.”

As President Eisenhower said in a 1952 speech, “America is great because America is good. If America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that America is great, and has become great, because America believes in God. And when she ceases to be a spiritually minded nation, she will cease to be great; she will cease to be good. And perhaps that time is here upon us right now. And don’t you let anybody hand you that line, when you stand up for spirituality and belief in America, and when you try to be spiritual about America, don’t you let anybody wave his finger in your face and say, “No, no, no! Remember separation of church and state!” There is nobody who believes in separation of church and state more than I do. But the framers of our Constitution never meant that to be

even slightly interpreted to mean the separation of state and God—never! And don't you ever buy that, friend. It was taken for granted by our Founding Fathers that we believe that our nation was based in belief in God.

Certainly we're not going to impress our denomination upon somebody else, and Congress is not going to get in the business of prescribing denominational prayers, or taxing churches, or supporting churches with tax money. And that's what we've tried to guard against. But all Americans know this that this is our motto: "In God is our trust." That's it! America was formed and framed and grew out of the womb of spirituality and belief in God. This is what has made us. And don't you ever let anybody move you away from it. It is American as apple pie to believe in Almighty God. And we must continue to keep our country saturated in spirituality, if America is to survive.

I tell you, God has blessed America. You look and see. We talk about the poverty in America. And there is some poverty in America, but the "so-called poor" in America own more automobiles than all the people in Russia put together. Don't forget it. Let me tell you something. The people in America who we call poor are rich compared to most of the people in the world, and America is an island of plenty in the midst of an ocean of need. God has blessed us, because we can meet here this morning and have the freedom of assembly. We can preach as we want. We can believe as we want. We can assemble as we want. We can put out Bible under our arms, take our children by their hands, and lead them off to Sunday School on Sunday morning. Perhaps you don't cherish that enough. Perhaps you don't appreciate that enough. But I tell you God has blessed America.

You think of the other countries that have been scarred by war. Think what's happened to Germany. Think what's happened to France. Think what's happened to Italy. Think what's happened to Japan. Think what's happening in Indochina. By and large, and mainly, God has kept the wars away from these shores. Oh, we've had to send our boys, and it breaks our heart, but I tell you, as you compare this country to other countries, God has blessed America. And we would have to say, with the national anthem,

*Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"*

—FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

God has blessed us.

And I tell you, dear friend, never has there been a nation on the face of this earth that has been as good to her enemies as America has been. People talk about America

being imperialistic. I don't buy that. People talk about America being greedy and sticking her nose into other people's business. I don't buy that. Oh, we may have made some mistakes. But, dear friend, America does not want anything that anybody else has. Think of what Hitler did. Think of those who marched under the swastika and the iron boot of Hitler's regime. Think of what Germany did to this country. And then, when we came out of that war, even before the guns were cool, we were moving into West Germany bringing in supplies, bringing in architects, bringing in builders, bringing in anything we could do to build up their economy again.

You compare, if you will, West Germany and East Germany, if you want to see why I'm proud of this country. See what happened to Japan. I tell you, there was never a more dirtier or dastardly deed than what the Japanese did at Pearl Harbor—infamy, a day of blackness. Nothing has ever been perpetrated upon a people internationally any worse than what the Japanese did at Pearl Harbor. But I tell you, before the guns had stopped belching out their destruction, the American ships were plowing their way to Japan rebuilding the country. And it is rebuilt to the extent today that American businessmen are hard put to keep up with the Japanese. They are selling transistors, and they are selling radios, and they are selling Toyotas like they are going out of style. And the Americans are saying, "What are we going to do? We can't keep up with the Japanese."

Now I want to ask you, where else in history has that ever happened, when a country has been so good to their enemies? We may have some faults—and I'll get to that in a moment—but I want to say, before I do, I'm proud to be an American—I'm proud to be an American. We may have some faults, but if you look back at our country, you can say, thank God for America. America is great because America is good.

II. Where We Are

And I'm not with these who want to badmouth our country. That's where we've been, but let's look where we are, because I've given you the good part first. There is a bad part. And America faces some grave dangers and some real threats. And I want to list them.

A. The Danger of Materialism

The first threat that America faces is this: materialism—her materialistic soul, her materialistic philosophy. Dear friend, the greatest thing about America is not free enterprise; it is her spirituality. And when she loses that, she will lose her soul. The greatest thing about America is not capitalism, but we have become so materialistic, and we are being sucked down into a swirling cesspool of iniquity and sin, and our claim

to fame is the adult-only movie. May God have mercy upon us! You see the great threat to America friend is not what the communists might do to us. The great threat to America is what God might do to us as He judges us. The Bible says, *“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and every nation that forget God.”* (Psalm 9:17) And God is bound to judge America if she does not repent of her materialism, and her immorality, and her sin.

B. The Danger of Liberalism in Our Churches and Courts

The second danger that America faces is the liberalism in her churches and in her courts. The reason that America has strayed is because the liberalism started in the pulpits. There’s nothing much wrong in America that could not be cured if we had a generation of preachers who would preach the Word of God as it is written. *Ministers used to say, “Thus saith the Lord.” Then they started saying, “The church says.” Then they ended up saying, “Well now, it seems to me.”* And that’s what’s wrong: when we have gone from “the Bible says” to “it seems to me”; we have substituted “thus saith the Word of God” for “thus saith the mind of man.”

And the same thing has happened in our courts. I’m very distressed about what the Supreme Court has done concerning the death penalty. You might have thought that is fine. You may have thought that is humane. But, dear friend, it is unscriptural. And I want to remind you that God is the Supreme Court judge of the universe, and God has something to say about capital punishment too. God says, in Genesis 9:6, “Any man who murders shall be killed, for to kill a man is to kill one made like God.” God says murderers should be put to death. That is what God says. Now you can call God a perpetrator of cruel and unusual punishment, if you want. But, as sure as I’m standing here, if the Supreme Court could vote on it, they’d try and outlaw hell too. They would say, “Certainly, to put a man in hell is cruel and unusual.”

Well, I want to warn you, dear friend, that the Bible knows nothing about the coddling of criminals; the Bible knows nothing about the permissiveness of our society. God is love. He certainly is. And that’s one reason that God has said that sin ought to be punished: because God is love. And I tell you, when restraint is taken away, all hell is going to erupt here on this earth. And right now we’re seeing lawlessness, as it wants to abound. Surely, God is love. God loves you, and God loves your children, and God loves everything that is good and right and decent. And this is the reason that the God of love says that sin must be put down. Don’t you let anybody come along and talk you into believing the Bible doesn’t teach capital punishment. Don’t let anybody say to you that’s the Old Testament and not the New Testament.

Well, I’ll preach a message on this pretty soon. I’m about to get derailed here on the

subject of capital punishment. But I'm saying, dear friend, the liberalism in our pulpits, the liberalism in our courts, is going to ruin America unless we come back. It's insane the way we are having "National Be Kind to Criminals Week." It is a lamb defending a lion's right to devour it.

C. The Danger of the Rebellious Spirit of America's Young People

Let me give you another danger that America is facing. It is the rebellious spirit of her young people—the rebellious spirit of her young people. It is one of our gravest dangers. Now, did you know that the Bible has specific instructions to young people? And it is this: the Bible says that young people are to honor their father and their mother, that their days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth them. (Exodus 20:12) Do you know what that means? It means, friend, when young people no longer respect their parents, when young people no longer respect authority, a nation cannot long endure.

Now the Yuppies are coming down to Miami Beach to the convention. They are led by one Jerry Rubin. Let me quote him. He speaks of Uncle Sam as "the Man"—that is, the institution, the establishment, the Uncle Sam, the United States of America. I'm quoting now: "If you keep on hitting the Man from every side, punching him, laughing at him, ridiculing him, he will eventually collapse. That is what is going to happen to America." You see, we've sown the wind, and we've reaped the whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7)

We have young people who will buy that—and I'll tell you why: they have been Spocked rather than spanked. They have not believed the Word of God, as it is written, that we're to chasten our children while there's hope. (Proverbs 19:18) The only hope of America is when we come back to some fathers and mothers who have not abdicated their position and their place as the heads of the house. A child that does not learn to respect authority is headed for destruction. And when there's a rebellion against authority, the nation is gone.

D. The Danger of Complacency and Apathy

All right, let me tell you another danger that we're facing—and many of you who have been sitting here nodding are guilty of this: that is complacency and apathy, doing nothing. It has been said that, while the communists are out to win the world, Americans are out to enjoy it. It hurts me to say that, but I believe that, for the most part, it's true. We think that somebody else is going to do it. Somebody else is going to take charge. Somebody has written this—he has given a record of what has happened to other nations—and I quote: "The history [of all democratic societies has been] from bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to selfishness; from selfishness to apathy; from apathy to

dependency; and from dependency back again to bondage.” And America is right now somewhere between apathy and dependency. We have come the circuit, and we are only a few steps away from bondage, because we’re getting more and more dependent upon the federal government, and more and more apathetic, and more and more complacent about it. And we don’t do much. We want to blame it on the politicians. We want to blame it on other people. And then we go about our business. We want to blame it on the Supreme Court because of the ungodly pornography that takes place in Brevard County. But let me tell you something, friend. You don’t need a Supreme Court to run that business out of town. The problem with most of us is that we have no backbone, and we have a soft underbelly, and we just don’t want to get our hands soiled.

Have you ever heard of anything called public opinion? Listen. If enough citizens were irate enough—I’m not talking about breaking the law; I have some strong feelings about this so-called civil disobedience—but I tell you, if people were to walk into drugstores where salacious literature is sold, and look at that proprietor and say, “What do you mean having this out here?” it would scare him to death. That’s right. But we don’t want anybody to be mad at us. We don’t want to take a stand. We don’t want to get involved. There are enough of us right now, why, we don’t have to get them out legally; we can just make it very uncomfortable for them. That’s right—the league of the indignant. Oh, but we want everybody else to do it. We want the federal government to do it. I tell you, we have so many apathetic, careless people who really do not care.

Let me tell you something. If democracy has one fatal flaw, it is this—now I believe the democratic form of government is the best in the world, but it has a fatal flaw: a democracy is no better than its people. And when the majority of the people are corrupt, then the majority of the people will pass corrupt laws. When the majority of the people believe in drinking, then the majority of the people will repeal prohibition, and the majority of the people will liberalize liquor laws. When the majority of the people believe in obscenity, then the majority of the people will let obscenity pass. When the majority of the people believe in welfarism, when the majority of the people believe that it is right for those who don’t work to take money from those who do work and put it in their pocket—when the Bible says, “If a man won’t work, don’t let him eat,” (2 Thessalonians 3:10) but when the majority of the people feel that way—and when there are more votes that way, then in a democratic society, those things can be voted in. And I tell you, dear friend, that democracy, as good as it is, is no good at all with a corrupt people. And the only hope for America is God, because, when our people get right, then our votes will get right, then our government will get right. But democracy itself is no answer to anybody. I tell you, it is the apathy of our people—it is the apathy of the American people—that

makes me frightened for the future of America.

III. Hope for America

Now let me come on. We've talked about our past. We've talked about where we are now. What about our future? Can America survive? Is there hope for America? Yes, praise God, there's hope. As long as there's God, there's hope. And I, for one, am not a pessimist. I believe that there's hope as long as there's God. And I believe that the only hope for America is God. And I'll tell you why.

A. God Is the Only One Big Enough to Deliver Us

In the first place, God is the only one big enough for Americans to bow down to. No freeborn American is going to bow down to any king, any prince, any president. Americans will only bow down before God, so God is the only one big enough, God is only one high enough, God is only one lofty enough, to deliver us.

B. God Is the Only One Wise Enough to Deliver Us

I want to say, secondly, that God is the only one wise enough. I believe that most of our politicians—I said most, not all—are honestly doing the best that they know how. They just don't know how. It's like Winston Churchill said: "Our problems are beyond us." And I tell you, we need God's wisdom. God is the only one who knows how to deliver America. And we need to say, "O God, stand beside her, and guide her, through the night with the light from above."

C. God Is the Only One Strong Enough to Deliver Us

And I tell you, God is the only one strong enough to deliver us. "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:31) And if God be against us, then, sweet friend, who can be for us? And so God is the only answer.

And I want to say something else. I'm encouraged, in spite of the dark picture that I painted. I believe things are starting to happen. Do you know these young people? Look at them up here this morning. I wish you could have seen them at 9:30. I was surrounded. The youth choir was filled with young people—young people on fire for Jesus Christ. I wish you could have seen them several weeks ago out in Dallas—thousands and thousands of them pointing one finger skyward, and shouting, and praising Jesus, that Jesus is the only way.

Do you know what young people are saying today? They are saying, "Uncle Sam, Jesus wants you." Isn't that great? "Uncle Sam, Jesus wants you." Do you know what they're doing? Let me tell you what they're doing. They're going to political rallies, and when a candidate stands up to speak, and he tells what he believes about this, and

what he believes about that, and a balanced budget, and Vietnam, and the Gulf of Tonkin, and all of the rest of this, these young people are not asking him questions about that. They get up in his face, and look him eyeball to eyeball, and say, “Do you love Jesus?” Oh, you talk about blowing a politician’s mind. “Do you love Jesus?” Now, what would you say? “Do you love Jesus?” Man, that’s one the speechwriters can’t handle. That’s one the image-makers don’t know what to do with. “Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?” Young people on the move for Jesus, and I thank God for it.

And I tell you something. The world is beginning to take notice. If you don’t believe it, get yesterday’s Orlando Sentinel, and read there the columnist Kevin Phillips. Kevin Phillips wrote in yesterday’s Orlando Sentinel about a great revival of fundamentalist religion. And he was bothered by it. He was perturbed by it. And this is what he said. His conclusion was this—and I quote, “The November impact of the new revivalism could be immense.” Do you know what they’re saying? Look out. Young people are getting turned on. And the young people who believe in Jesus Christ, and people who are fed up with immorality and sin, and fed up with what’s happening to America, say, “We’re going to take a stand for God and country.” And this man was saying, “Look out. There’s something coming—not out of left field, there’s something coming out of right field that you’d better look out for.”

But let me say, we don’t have to have great numbers. That’s the thing that encourages me. Jesus Christ turned that entire world upside down with twelve disciples. He started with twelve. Castro started, in 1956, with a band of eighty cutthroats to Cuba. Stalin started with just a few thousand followers there not so long ago in 1917—just a handful. Friend, you don’t have to have many, if they’re on fire. Do you know what the Bible says? The Bible says, in Joshua 23, verse 10, “*One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.*” (Joshua 23:10) Don’t ever make the mistake, friend, of thinking that we have to outnumber them to out pray them, to outlive them, to outwork them.

Oh, friend, listen. “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” I want you to be encouraged today. I believe America can survive. I don’t believe America needs to die. I believe America can yet be delivered. And as God repented of the evil that He was going to do to Nineveh, (Jonah 3:10) I believe that God can spare America.

Conclusion

I must close, but let me say this. Listen. True patriotism consists of more than waving a flag on the Fourth of July. True patriotism consists of more than standing up and saying, “My country, right or wrong.” The most patriotic thing you can do is to get right with God. Now you say, “Brother Rogers, that’s a truism. That is simplistic.” No, it is not, my friend.

It is profound, if you had enough sense to know it. The greatest, most patriotic, thing that you could do is to get right with God. But the motivation is not primarily for America's sake; it's for God's sake, and for your sake, because we're to be citizens of another country.

Let me tell you something, friend. A nation is nothing more than the sum total of its people. And America will be great as you and I are great. America will be godly as you and I are godly. America will be good as you and I are good. America will be Christ-like as you and I are willing to be Christ-like. And would to God you would say this morning, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (Joshua 24:15) And may God bless America.

Heaven on Earth

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: July 18, 1999

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 11:8–21

Outline

Introduction

- I. God Has Graced Us with His Promises
 - A. A Land of Fertility
 - B. A Land of Variety
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- III. God Will Guide Us with His Principles
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 - A. Refreshment
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 - A. We Need to Be Faithful in Our Personal Lives
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Conclusion

Introduction

Take God's Word and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 11. I want to talk to you a little bit about "Heaven on Earth"—"Heaven on Earth"—Deuteronomy chapter 11. When we came out here, we named this land Canaan, and we sang a song as we were raising the money: "It's a Brand New Day Claiming Our Canaan." We had so much fun coming out here: a lot of work, a lot of faith, a lot of planning, a lot of vision, long hours, many committee meetings. This was a gargantuan task—a major, major, God-sized job—to move from where we were downtown, in midtown, out here. God led us all the way. No church has ever moved with more unanimity, more joy, more victory, more just downright good Christian fellowship and fun than we did as we moved out here.

I remember when I came to this church in 1972 to be the pastor and we walked into that big worship center downtown that would seat almost 3,000. And we were running about 1,300 in Sunday School, and I said to Joyce—I said, "Well, one thing—praise

God—we'll never have to be in a building program." But God began to bless and pour blessing upon blessing, and that worship center filled up. So we said, "Well, we'll have two Sunday morning worship services." And we began another Sunday morning worship service, and that one filled up. And then we said, "Well, we'll have three Sunday morning worship services." And we began three back to back, and that one began to fill up. And, folks, while that was happening, I tell you, when I got home on Sunday night, you could just slide me under the door. I was too tired even to go to sleep. Or at night I would just stay up—and sometimes past midnight—because preaching three times on Sunday morning I would not know whether I had just said something or was getting ready to say it. But God was blessing in a wonderful way.

And we were trying to build downtown. We moved heaven and earth to try to build downtown, and God would not let us. And I remember there was a piece of property—a strategic piece of property—that we had to have. And the man who owned that property kept going up on the price. And I can remember one of my deacons saying to me, "Pastor, that man's gone up on the price again on that piece of property that we need." I could take you to the spot on the parking lot where I said, "Well, praise God! Praise God! No two-legged man whose breath is in his nostrils is going to stop what God is doing!" That's exactly what I said—and right there—and I didn't know what God was going to do.

Later on, Bob, you, and myself, and Bill Mills, and Al Childress went to Orlando to look at some buildings down there, trying to see what we needed to build down where we were at midtown. Folks, I saw the First Baptist Church of Orlando was building on some new acreage. I saw a church over there in Lakeland called the Carpenter's Home Church, which is an Assembly of God, building a big building there on some new acreage. And I thought to myself, "Bellevue is a stronger church"—not that we're in comparison with any of those churches or in competition with them. I said, "You know, we're a stronger church than that, and we already have more people than they're having."

And that night I just spent a sleepless night. And, generally, folks, it's lights out when my head hits the pillow. But that night I had a rock for a pillow, and all night long the Lord just seemed to be saying to me, "Adrian, you're trying to do the wrong thing building in midtown." So the next morning I asked those two men who were with me, Al Childress, and Bill Mills, and Bob Sorrell—I said, "Guys, I want to ask you a question." I said, "Just put in parentheses everything we've said and done, everything we have downtown. I know we've just built some new buildings down here, but just put it in parentheses, if you can, and just put it out of your mind. I want to ask you a question. What would happen if we moved out Interstate 40, and just bought some acreage, and

started from scratch?”

Now, folks, I want to tell you something. An idea is a very fragile thing. Had those men said to me, “Pastor, that’s impossible,” you know what I think I would have said? “You’re right”—because at that point it was not a conviction; it was only an idea. It became a conviction, but it was only an idea. Ideas are at the same time very fragile and very powerful—both at the same time...very fragile. But I’ll never forget Al Childress looked at me, and he said: “Pastor, you’re serious?” I said, “I’m serious. I want us to think about it.” Bill Mills said to me, “Pastor, I’ll tell you one thing. It would be easier to pay for it”—“easier to pay for it.” Well, then we got to thinking, and we got to planning what we would have to do downtown: the property we would have to buy, the parking garages we would have to build, and all of that.

You’ve heard the story before. As we looked at it and began to study it, and then I sent Caleb and Joshua out here, Roland Maddox and Morris Mills, to spy out the land to see if they could find any property out here. They came out here and, by God’s providential blessings, put together a piece of property, this piece of property that we call Canaan, owned by, I think, five different people. But it came together in such a glorious way in direct reverse proportion to the difficulty we were having downtown trying to buy property. All this just came together. And I’ve told you before, after we bought the property, the man who owned this major part where we sit said, “Pastor, I didn’t tell you before, but I bought mine from an old Baptist preacher who used to walk around out here and pray one day there would be a church out here.” It’s an amazing thing what God did.

But this came together, and, you know, with fear and trembling, I presented it to the congregation. I told my children before that business meeting—I said, “Listen, how would you feel hearing your dad criticized?” They said, “It wouldn’t bother us.” I said, “Well, thank you a lot.” But I didn’t know what was going to happen, because, folks—listen—we had blood, sweat, and tears, prayers in those buildings down there. And God has blessed. And they’d been there since Hector was a pup—right down there—but God was in this so much. This is a wonderful congregation. When we told the story that night in that historic business meeting and asked for the vote, our people stood like one mighty army, began to applaud and cheer, and then went to their knees to pray, and stood up again to sing praises to God. And from that time on, it has been all glory coming out here claiming our Canaan. And God has blessed in an incredible way, and He has piled victory upon victory. So we call this “Canaan.”

Now, look, if you will, in Deuteronomy chapter 11, verse 8—here’s what God says: *“Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it”*

(Deuteronomy 11:8). And then, notice—skip on down to verse 21: *“That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them,”*—now, watch this phrase—*“as the days of heaven upon the earth”* (Deuteronomy 11:21). Is that not a great phrase: *“as the days of heaven upon the earth”*? Folks, what we have been experiencing here at Bellevue has been heaven on earth; it has been heaven on earth as we have come in to possess this land.

My wife wrote a piece of prose about this land, the good land and a land flowing with milk and honey, and here’s what she said: “Thousands of years ago, God promised Abraham a good land; it was called the land of Canaan, because the Canaanites had previously occupied the land. It became known as the Promised Land, because of God’s promise. When Moses sent out the twelve spies, they brought back a report of what a good land it was. It was abundant in provisions, a land flowing with milk and honey, but there was an obstacle: there were giants in the land. Ten of the spies were frightened, and forgot God’s promise to be with them. Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed that God was able.” And then she said, “God is able. There were twelve men who were sent out to spy out the land to see if the people were strong or weak, few or many, whether the land was good or bad, whether they lived in camps or walled cities. And so they went. They searched for forty days and came to Hebron, to the valley of Eshcol. How luxurious were the grapes! How huge! It took two men to carry one cluster of grapes. It was just like you said, Lord: ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ How delicious! Fruit of all kinds! ‘But the people are giants that dwell in that land, and we’re but grasshoppers compared to them. And their cities are walled and very great. We can’t go up. We can’t! They’re stronger than we.’ And all the people cried, and wept, and murmured that night: ‘Would to God we’d died in Egypt or that He would kill us here in the wilderness. God, why are you bringing us here: to make us a prey?’”

“But there were two spies who didn’t agree with the crowd. Caleb and Joshua no longer stay silent: ‘Yes, it’s all like they said, except for one thing: we are able. Let us go up at once—God is with us—at once, to possess this great land. Yes, we saw the giants and the walls so strong, but their defense is departed, for God is with us. There is nothing to fear. He will give us this land so abundant. He likes to show us His power.’ I can hardly believe the sight I now see. The people are angry. They’re picking up stones to stone the two who believed only God. Then God’s anger was kindled. He destroyed them right there. Make of Moses a greater nation than they, but Moses pled for the people. He fell on his face before God: ‘God, the Egyptians will hear and say the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land He promised, so He killed them in the wilderness. Lord, you’re patient, of great mercy. Pardon, I pray, the great sin of this people.’ And the Lord answered Moses: ‘I’ve heard your plea. They won’t all die here,

but those over twenty years will ne'er see this land. They'll aimlessly wander forty years and then die in this desert place, because they murmured, complained, and would not trust me. But these ten spies who gave an evil report, who caused the multitudes to stumble and sin, they will die now by a plague I will send. Their sin is greater by far.”

“But Joshua and Caleb were blessed and lived on, and God gave to each rich reward. To Caleb, Mount Hebron, filled with giants and grapes. And, one day, when old but still strong, he conquered, because he knew that God was able. To Joshua, the leadership of all this great band, an honor for faithfulness. Yes, he believed God.” And then Joyce wrote these words: “Are you like the ten? Have you spied out the land, the land of the Spirit-filled life, and seen the sweet fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, and the rest? Did you see what a life of victory and joy...but you brought back an evil report and said, ‘There are giants in this land: doubt and fear, hatred and strife; we like that sweet fruit, but we are not able’? Or, are you like Caleb, a Joshua, who, though they knew the giants lurked round, knew that their God was able and have entered Canaan, crossed Jordan, to possess this good land? Oh, praise the name of Jesus who drives the giants out! Come, walk around Canaan with me. We’ll possess our possessions one step at a time. Then we’ll safely dwell in the land.”

Thank you, Joyce, for writing that, because it fits so well with what I want to say tonight about days of heaven on earth. Now, let me just give you four or five facts about days of heaven on earth as we go out here to break ground for this new building, and I pray God will write these upon your heart.

I. God Has Graced Us with His Promises

Number one—listen to me: God has graced us with His promises—God has graced us with His promises.

A. A Land of Fertility

Look in verses 8 through 10: *“Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs”* (Deuteronomy 11:8–10). Now, what God is doing here is saying that this land is a land of fertility—it’s a land of fertility. It’s not like Egypt. In Egypt—and I’ve been to Egypt and seen this—if you wanted to water the land, you had to take a foot straddle. And I’ve seen them do this in this modern day. With their foot they’re just

pumping water, and the old dirty Nile would just belch up water. And that's the way they had to water their crops. But God says, "I'm going to send you into a land—a land of fertility."

And now we're going to spiritualize this a little bit, because the Bible says, "*All these things happened [to] them for examples [to us]*" (1 Corinthians 10:11), and there are greater spiritual blessings than material blessings that were in Canaan so long ago. And, friend, God has given to us a land of fertility. God has put us right in the center—right in the center—of one of the fastest growing areas in the whole South, and we are right in the epicenter. And I thank God for the fertility of this land.

B. A Land of Variety

But not only is it a land of fertility; it's a land of variety. Look at it in verse 11: "*But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven*" (Deuteronomy 11:11)—not some vast, monotonous plain. I was listening to the radio the other day, and a man was talking about West Texas. He said, "It's so flat out there you can see a dog run away from home for three days." Folks, God has given us not only the fertility, but the variety.

And, you know, it's so exciting being a Christian—it really is. I have been on the trail for Jesus a number of years now—more than I like think about—but I can tell you—and God is my witness—I don't know when I've ever been more excited about being a Christian than I am right now. That is the truth. It is not old. It is not dull. It is not boring. His blessings are new every day. Thank God for the hills. Thank God for the valleys. You know why you have boring sermons? You have bored preachers. That's right. Friend, there is an excitement in knowing the Lord Jesus when we get into Canaan.

II. God Will Guard Us with His Presence

Now, not only has God graced us with His promises, but God will guard us with His presence. Look, if you will, in verse 12. He says, "*A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year*" (Deuteronomy 11:12). Boy, is that not a blessing? Don't you want God just to be looking down at this land that we affectionately call "Canaan," and just say, "God, just keep your eyes on us—just keep your eyes upon us. Guard us and guide us with your presence"; to say, "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me"?

III. God Will Guide Us with His Principles

Now He graced us with His promise. He guards us with His presence. And He will guide

us with His principles.

A. A Hearing Obedience

Look, if you will now, in verse 13: “*And it shall come to pass,*”—and here are the principles. Number one—“*if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments...*” (Deuteronomy 11:13). There must be hearing obedience.

B. A Loving Obedience

And then—listen—he goes on to say, “*To love the LORD your God*” (Deuteronomy 11:13). There must be loving obedience.

C. A Serving Obedience

And then, “*to serve him with all your heart*” (Deuteronomy 11:13). There must be serving obedience.

How are we going to keep on keeping on here at Bellevue Baptist Church? Well, we’ve got to hear the Word of God so that we obey it. We’ve got to love God with a burning, blazing, passionate, emotional love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and we’ve got to serve Him.

Hey, I want to ask you a question. Do you have a job in Bellevue Baptist Church, or are you just a benchwarmer? You come sit, soak, and sour, and don’t serve? You know, if a sponge just soaks up and doesn’t give out unless it’s squeezed, after a while it gets rancid and sours. You’d better begin to pray about your ministry at Bellevue Baptist Church. Anything you can do you can plug in for Jesus here some way. You can wash a window, drive a truck, serve a meal, coach a team, sing a song, paint a picture, plant a flower: there’s something you can do for Jesus. Change a diaper for the Lord Jesus. What’s he saying? “Hear the Word of God.” What’s he saying? “Love God with all of your heart.” What’s he saying? “Serve the Lord.”

Brother Bob, this morning I saw this auditorium filled twice. What would happen if all of those people got in the harness for Jesus Christ? What would happen? When old Ben Franklin looked at the lightning, and he thought, “Man, if I could harness that, if I could harness that...” Colonel, this is an army. If we could all get them to march under the blood-stained banner of our Prince and King, the Lord Jesus Christ!

IV. God Will Gladden Us with His Provisions

Well, what does He do? He graces us with His promise. He guards us with His presence. He guides us with His principles. And He gladdens us with His provisions.

A. Refreshment

Look, if you will, in verse 14—this is what makes heaven on earth. He says, “*I will*

give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full" (Deuteronomy 11:14–15). There is spiritual refreshment. He said, "I'm going to send you the rain." That speaks of heaven's blessing.

B. Enrichment

There's spiritual enrichment. The corn there in verses 14 and 15 (Deuteronomy 11:14–15)—the corn speaks of Christ, the bread of life. The wine speaks of Jesus, the joy of life. The oil speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The cattle speaks of the meat of the Word. He's going to refresh us. He's going to enrich us. And then He says, in verse 15, "You'll be full" (Deuteronomy 11:15).

I don't know how much of Jesus you have, but you've got all you want. And, friend, Jesus satisfies. He's the only thing that really does satisfy. You ask any person who has what the world calls "having it all." Ask Donald Trump, and I'll guarantee you he's not satisfied. Heard the other day he was thinking about being President. Send up a flare! I mean, wanting more and more and more and more and more. "To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough." Friend, if you have Jesus, you've got it all. Yes.

C. Contentment

What is in this land? Why, listen. God gladdens us with His provision. There's refreshment. There's enrichment, and there is contentment.

V. Our Response as a Church

Now, let's cut right to the chase and get to the bottom, because we've got to get outside here in just a moment. What should our response be as the people of Bellevue, as we claim our Canaan, as we want days of heaven on earth? Well, begin in verse 16, and notice through verse 21. He says, "*Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you*" (Deuteronomy 11:16–17). God warns us. Friend, these are days of heaven on earth at Bellevue Baptist Church, but they will not necessarily always be this way—not necessarily. If we're not careful, we begin to take God's blessings for granted, and if we don't keep our hearts humble and pure and clean, these blessings can leave us. And how do we need to be faithful, therefore?

A. We Need to Be Faithful in Our Personal Lives

Well, we need to be faithful in our personal lives. Look in verse 18: *“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand,”*—that’s what you do—*“that they may be as frontlets between your eyes”* (Deuteronomy 11:18)—that is what you think. Your hand and your head, and my hand and head, is to be under the control of the Lord God.

B. We Need to Be Faithful in Our Parental Lives

Not only faithful in our personal lives, but faithful in our parental lives. Notice verse 19: *“And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deuteronomy 11:19). That’s the reason, folks, we put such an emphasis here upon young people. That’s the reason we have this choir. That’s the reason why Jamie is going to be taking them on a choir tour. That’s why our junior high-schoolers have just been to camp and come back and had a glorious camp. That’s the reason this morning in the children’s department, and in the nursery, we had about 2,400 boys and girls, and workers—just in the children’s and the nursery department. You know why? Because, folks, if we don’t raise up these children—if we’re not faithful as parents and pastor and people—this church is going to evaporate; it’s going to go away.

Some people say, “Well, why are you putting all this emphasis upon kids?” Just plain, good, spiritual common sense: that’s why we’re doing it. We need to be faithful in our personal lives. And, friend, the Word of God needs to be in your mind and in your hand. What you think and what you do needs to be under the control of the Word of God. Faithful in our parental lives.

C. We Need to Be Faithful in Our Professional Lives

And then, faithful in our professional lives. Notice, if you will, in verse 20 of this same chapter—and we’re coming to the end: *“And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates”* (Deuteronomy 11:20). When you go out to work in the morning, the Word of God ought to be sending you out upon the doorposts of your house—the gates, the place of business. They did business in the gates. It was like the courthouse. He says, “Have the Word of God there.” What’s he saying? He’s saying, “Look, you want to keep the blessing going? Be faithful in your personal life. Be faithful in your parental life. Be faithful in your professional life.” And he says here, if we’ll do that—in verse 21—*“That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give to them, as the days of heaven upon the earth”* (Deuteronomy 11:21).

God has been so good to me to let me be the pastor of a people like this, and I want, when one day I pass from the scene, and one day when you're gone from the scene—do you know what I want? I want our children and our children's children, if Jesus tarries, to be able to come to this place and enjoy what we enjoy. Don't you? That's why we're building these buildings. Folks, these buildings are nothing; they are trash apart from the Holy Spirit of God. They're just premature rubble—that's all. But, oh, they can be a great and an awesome tool in the hand of a holy God. And don't ever, ever, ever denigrate or put down fellowship! The Bible has so much to say about fellowship. There's a special word for it in the Bible: it's called *koinonia*. It means, "to hold things in common." In Acts chapter 2, the Bible says, "*They continued...in...fellowship, and in breaking of bread*" (Acts 2:42).

I hear people say, "Well, you Baptists: all you think about is eating." Well, we do think about that quite a bit. I'm going to tell you something, folks. You go to the Bible and see what Jesus did with His disciples. Jesus was saying over and over, "Come and dine"—"Come and dine." He commemorated His ministry with the Last Supper. After His resurrection, He was cooking fish and bread for His disciples on the seashore, and He said, "*Come and dine*" (John 21:12). He speaks of the time when we're going to heaven—and what is that going to be? "*The marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Revelation 19:9). He talks about salvation—He says, "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*" (Revelation 3:20). The Bible puts a great emphasis upon fellowship.

And you know what we're going to do? God willing, we're going to use this building as a tool, not only to enrich our fellowship, but to reach the lost. There was a man named Matthew. He was a tax collector, and he got saved. And you know what he did? He made a great dinner for his friends and invited his friends to come and hear about Jesus. That is unique, wonderful evangelism. We're going to have some dinner theater. We're going to have some concerts. We're going to have some drama to present the Lord Jesus. You can say to your friends, "Hey, come. Go with me, and we'll have fellowship." And then, first thing you know, when they're not looking, we'll shoot them full of Jesus. That's right. That's what we're going to do. I mean, you know, we need to be very creative in what we're doing. There are so many ways, so many opportunities. We need to use every available means to reach every available person with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what we're going to do. That's the reason we're building this building.

Conclusion

Now, do you want to be a part of that fellowship? Well, there's no way that you can have

fellowship with the Father till you're born into His family. And you're born into His family when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. Now the Bible puts it in one sentence. The Bible says, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:31). That word *believe* doesn't mean just intellectual belief. "*The devils...believe, and tremble*" (James 2:19). But that word *belief* means, "trust." Trust Jesus—trust Him. Put your faith in Him. Put your faith where God put your sins: on Jesus. You can believe an airplane can fly, but you don't put your faith in it until you get on it. Trust Jesus. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [you will] be saved*" (Acts 16:31). To be saved means that every sin is forgiven. To be saved means that God sends His Holy Spirit into you to give you peace and power and purpose. That's not necessarily an emotional experience, but it is a reality. He puts His Spirit into you. And to be saved means that when you die, or when He comes again, He'll take you to heaven.

The Family

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: May 10, 1981

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 28:1–15

Outline

Introduction

- I. The Family Faith
- II. The Family Finances
 - A. Transfer the Ownership of Everything That You Have to Almighty God
 - B. Begin to Tithe as a Reminder That It All Belongs to Him
 - C. Learn to Give
 - D. Get out of Debt and Stay out
 - E. Pray about All Your Spending
- III. The Family Fellowship
- IV. The Family Feud
 - A. Don't Use Coercion
 - B. Don't Use Desertion
 - C. Learn to Talk It Out
 - D. Learn to Attack the Problem Rather Than One Another

Introduction

Turn to Deuteronomy, please, chapter 28. And if I just read this Scripture to you today, you'd get blessed. It blesses me every time I read it, because it's about blessings. How would you like to be absolutely run down, run over, with blessings? I mean, for God just to take you, and pick you up, and bless you so much that you wouldn't know what was happening to you? He was blessing you in such a wonderful way? That's exactly what He wants to do to you.

Look, if you will now, in Deuteronomy chapter 28, verse 1: *“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:”—*that is, the nation that honors God, God will honor. The Bible says, *“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”* (Psalm 9:17)—*“and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee,”*—that means God will just run you down to bless you—*“if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou*

comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before they face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee”—well, think of that! The great, omnipotent God commanding the blessing upon thee—“in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.” These blessings have a condition—that is, to keep God’s commandments, to walk in His ways. *“And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail;”—heads, you win, rather than tails, you lose—“and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: and thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”* (Deuteronomy 28:1–14) Plenteous and marvelous are the promises of our great God!

Now, these were promises to the nation, indeed, but as you read these promises, you see that God is speaking to the nation through the families of that nation. So I want to talk to you today about the family. I want to talk to you today about the family and its faith, the family and its finances, the family and its fellowship—or, if you will, the family and its fun—and then, the family and its feuds. I want to tell you how to argue in a biblical way, just to help you to learn how to settle those differences.

Any of you ever have any differences in your home? Let me see your hand. Never mind. I’ll ask your children. All right, you know that you do. And so we’ll just stay right on there until we get to that last point, the family feud, and find out, because I believe in this scripture there’s something that deals with all of those things.

I. The Family Faith

Let’s first of all just talk about the family and its faith. Oh, dear friend, I hope that your family is built upon the Lord God, upon His Word, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, a marriage is not just a union of a man and a woman; a marriage is a union of three: a man, a woman, and Jesus Christ. The Bible says in the book of Ecclesiastes, “A

threefold cord is not [easily] broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12) How wonderful when over here on a mountainside a little stream just bubbles up and starts to trickle down the mountainside, and over here on another mountainside a little stream bubbles up and trickles down the mountainside, and both of them join a magnificent river, and all are blended together! Here’s a boy. Here’s a girl. And here is God. And those lives mix and mingle, and go together into a beautiful river of love.

The reason that so many marriages are ending in divorce is that they’re not built upon the solid rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that’s the reason the marriage is on the rocks: because it is not on the Rock. *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 3:11) And all of these blessings that I’ve just read to you are predicated upon those who believe in God and take God at His Word. Why are people not getting along with one another? Why has divorce become epidemic in America? I’ll tell you why. People have forsaken the true God and have gone off after other gods.

Now, this piano’s supposed to be in tune with this organ. And if they’re not in tune, rather than having a duet, we’ll have a duel. But they’re supposed to be in tune. Well, how are we going to get them in tune with each other if they’re not in tune? Well, one way, a very obvious way, is to have a master tuner to come in here with a tuning fork and tune this organ to that tuning fork, and then tune this piano to the same tuning fork. Now I want to ask you a question. If the piano’s in tune with that fork, and the organ is in tune with that fork, are the piano and the organ going to be in tune with one another? Absolutely! You see, when a man has his life in tune with Jesus Christ, and a woman has her life in tune with Jesus Christ, then both of them are going to be attuned with one another. That’s the way to have harmony in the home: is to have Christ as the head of that home, to have the Lord Jesus Christ as the third partner in that wedding, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation, the partner in every decision.

You see, a Christian is somebody who not merely believes in Jesus Christ, but a Christian is somebody who has enthroned Jesus Christ. When the Bible says, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”* (Acts 16:31) it doesn’t mean just give intellectual assent to Jesus Christ. The devils believe and tremble. (James 2:19) But that word *believe* means “commit, trust.” It comes from an old English word *by-live*. What we really believe, we live by. And what it really means is this: “to take self off the throne and to put Jesus Christ on the throne.”

Now, let’s say that James wants to marry Mary. And let’s say that James is not a Christian and Mary is not a Christian. You see what happens? James is on the throne of his own little life, so we’ll call him King James. And Mary is on the throne of her little life, and we’ll call her Queen Mary. Now let’s suppose that King James and Queen Mary get

married, and they move into one house trailer, or one apartment, or one cottage. Do you think a cottage is big enough for two kingdoms? I'll tell you it's not. And before long, King James and Queen Mary are going to have war. It may be a cold war—just pouting. It may be a hot war—throwing a frying pan. But there will be war. And then, after a while, there will be tragedy called a divorce.

But you let King James step off his throne and enthrone the King of kings, you let Queen Mary step down from her throne and enthrone the King of kings, then you don't have two kingdoms that move into that house trailer; you have one kingdom. Jesus Christ rules both thrones. And a kingdom that is not divided will not fall. And the Jesus in her is not going to fight the Jesus in him. And the Jesus in him is not going to fight the Jesus in her. And Jesus will be in both hearts and in both lives. Is your home built upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is more than trite to say that the family that prays together stays together, that Jesus is that divine glue that holds a home together, for the Bible says, "*By him all things consist*"—that is, all things stick together. (Colossians 1:17) And your home has so many things that are pulling against it, so many things that are warring against it.

II. The Family Finances

My, how you need to build your home upon the Lord Jesus Christ! But once you've done that, once you take Jesus as your personal Savior, is the battle over? No siree! Friend, then the devil's going to attack you with financial problems. And so, not only must your home be built upon the Lord Jesus Christ; it must be lived upon biblical financial principles. And so, think with me not only about the family that prays together, but think with me about the family that pays together. Think with me not only about the family faith, but the family finances.

Now chapter 28 speaks a lot about financial blessing. Notice verses 4 and 5: "Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground..."—incidentally, no God-respecting person in the Old Testament, or in the New, would ever have thought of aborting a precious baby—"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body..."—the Bible says, "*The fruit of the womb is his reward.*" (Psalm 127:3) This is God's way of describing a blessing—"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks or thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." (Deuteronomy 28:4–5) And then—and I could read many others; I'm just selecting a few—look in verses 11 and 12: "*And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations,*

and thou shalt not borrow.” (Deuteronomy 28:11–12) That is, “You’re going to have money in the bank that you’re going to be able to help others with.”

My, it’s amazing—it’s amazing that God here is speaking to His people about blessings, and He speaks to them about financial blessings. Don’t ever get the idea that you’re being more spiritual if you’re poor. Don’t ever get the idea that the Bible is against God’s people prospering. The Bible says that God has pleasure in the prosperity of His people. (Psalm 35:27) God wants you to prosper. It is the devil that wants you to be in financial bondage. And many of God’s people are in financial bondage. And the devil is suffocating Christians financially. And I want to say that it is not always relative to the amount of income. I have counseled with people who have had handsome incomes who were still in financial bondage. The Bible has so much to say not only about the family faith, but about the family finances.

I want to give you five rules for financial freedom. Now, these are just five rules. They’re just starters. If you want to fill in the fine points, you come and get the tape on financial freedom or the tapes of the seminar that we had when we had Wayne Coleman here and he dealt with that. But let me just give you five things to get you thinking today, because I’ve got a lot of territory to cover in this message.

A. Transfer the Ownership of Everything That You Have to Almighty God

But if you would have financial freedom, number one: Transfer the ownership of everything that you have to Almighty God. Have you ever done that? Just give it all to Him. Now, you remember there when they were taking an offering to build the tabernacle and the temple? And this is what those people said in the Old Testament: *“Of thine own have we given thee.”* (1 Chronicles 29:14) “Lord, we’re going to give it to you, because we’ve already given it to you.” *“Of thine own have we given thee.”* In other words, “We’ve already transferred the ownership of everything that we have to you.”

Have you done that? I mean, everything! Give Him your clothes. Give Him your house. Give Him your pets. Give Him your automobile. Give Him everything. Just turn it all over to Him. It’s His already, but it’s time that we recognize that. *“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof”* (Psalm 24:1)—*“the cattle upon a thousand hills.”* (Psalm 50:10) They all belong to Him.

Joyce and I, early in our marriage, made up our mind that we would never own anything. Now we may hold the title to some things, but we made up our mind that we would never own it, that it would belong to God; and, therefore, if God wanted any of it, He could have it; and, also, if we lost any of it, we weren’t going to worry about it, because we weren’t losing anything that belonged to us. I mean, why should we worry about something that doesn’t belong to us? And if it belongs to Him, it’s His responsibility, amen? You know, that just takes a lot of sweat out of it.

Do you know what the Christian life is? The Christian life is not your responsibility. The Christian life is your response to His ability, you see. You just give things to Him, and you just say, “Here, Lord, take it. I give it to you.” Transfer the ownership of everything to Him.

B. Begin to Tithe as a Reminder That It All Belongs to Him

Number two: Begin to tithe as a reminder that it all belongs to Him—begin to tithe as a reminder that it all belongs to Him. Now, don’t make the mistake of thinking that, if you tithe with one tenth, then you spend the other nine tenths as you want. That’s a tragedy, if you think that way. Friend, ten tenths belong to God. It all belongs to God. The tithe is just God’s reminder that it all belongs to Him. And so you just tithe as a reminder. The Bible says in Malachi 3:10, *“Bring ye all the [tithe] into the storehouse...and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

Now, when you start talking about tithing, someone says, “That’s Old Testament. That’s law. I’m a Christian. I live under grace.” Well, friend, *any Christian who’ll let a Jew do more under the law than he’d do under grace is a disgrace to grace*, amen? You can say *amen*. Listen—listen. Let me tell you something, friend. A Christian doesn’t try to do less than they did in the Old Testament. He always tries to do more. The tithe is not the ceiling; it’s just the floor. You just start with the tithe. And that’s just a reminder. You just come along, and you say, “Lord, this is my way of coming every Sunday to show you as I bring on the first day of the week the first fruits of all of my increase. I just bring it as a reminder that it all belongs to you.”

Now, friend, we’re foolish if we don’t tithe. I mean, we’re foolish, because God says, if we will, He’ll bless us. You know, you say, “Well, I don’t tithe, because I can’t afford it.” That’s not the reason you don’t tithe. You don’t tithe because you don’t believe God. Come on, folks: because you don’t believe God. I mean, anybody who believes that would tithe, because it says, “I’ll open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing; there will not be room enough to receive it.” That means *you’ll do more with nine tenths and God as a partner than you could ever have done with ten tenths by yourself*, you see. So you just tithe as a reminder that it belongs to Him.

And God said, *“I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.”* (Malachi 3:11) Now, what does that mean to you? It means your washing machine will last longer. I mean, back then, He’s talking about the grasshoppers and the boll weevils and those things. It means your tires won’t wear out as soon. It means your hospital and medicine bills will not be as great. Now, listen. You don’t tithe because it pays. If you do, it probably won’t. You tithe because it’s right—and then it pays. You just do it because God says to—just to trust God, to look to God.

C. Learn to Give

All right now, look. You want financial freedom? Number one: Just transfer the ownership of everything to God. Number two: Tithe as a reminder that it all belongs to God. Number three: Learn to give—learn to give. The way to receive is to give. Now, many of you say, “I don’t believe that.” Well, I feel sorry for you. The Bible says in Luke 6:38, “*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together...shall men give into your bosom.*” Learn to give. Learn to give to God. You see, look. When you tithe—when you tithe—you’ve just sort of done what we call your duty. You haven’t really started to give yet. You remember what that scripture says? “*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?*” And how? “*In tithes and*”—what?—“*offerings*”—“*tithes and offerings.*” (Malachi 3:8) Learn to give to God.

I was visiting a church two weeks ago: First Baptist Church of Houston, Texas, where John Bisagno is the pastor. You know what he asked his people to do? He asked them to double their tithe for the next two years. They’re going to raise twenty million dollars to build some new buildings. They’re calling the program “Two by Two.” “All in favor say *aye*.” All right now, listen—listen. “Just double your tithe.” You say, “Oh boy, I feel sorry for those people.” I’m excited for them. I’m excited for them. I believe God’s getting ready to do something fantastically wonderful in that church as people learn that they cannot out-give God. You see, you shovel out, and God shovels in. And God’s got a bigger shovel than you’ve got. It’s just that plain. The Lord is so good to those who give to Him.

But now you don’t just give in order to put God in a corner. You give by revelation. You give what God tells you to give. But not only should you give to God; you ought to give to the saints. Let me give you a good verse this morning. Turn to Romans chapter 12, verse 13. Let me show you something good here. Romans chapter 12, verse 13—listen to this: “*Distributing to the necessity of saints*”—“*Distributing to the necessity of saints*” (Romans 12:13) Did you know that, after you give directly to God, you ought to be looking around for some saint to help, one of God’s children? Do you know, I believe, before we even help those who are unsaved, we ought to help those who are saved, those who are Christians? The Bible says, “Do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith”—“especially those of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10) You know, just like a man’s supposed to take care of his own family—but he takes care of others. But the Bible says, “*If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*” (1 Timothy 5:8)

And so, find some saint here. It may be before you leave these premises God will bring you face to face with someone into whose hand you should put a large bill. And you’ll know them when you meet them, if you’re walking in the stream of the Spirit. It

might be one of these seminary students. Say *amen*, seminary students. And God will just say, just plant the idea in your mind, “You know, I ought to give that boy a hundred dollars; I ought to give that fellow fifty dollars,” and God will just lay it on your heart to do it. You won’t miss it. God will bless you for it. You need to know how to give. You’re not going to get God indebted to you. You’re not going to be able to out-give God.

Learn how to give, dear friend, to the poor. This church, and every church, and every Christian, needs to learn to give to the poor. I’ve been reading my Bible lately and underscoring the passages that talk about giving to the poor—so much, that in my own life I’ve been looking around for people that God lays on my heart that He wants me to share with. And I don’t mind telling you that I want to do it, because I know that God has promised to bless me. There is one particular psalm I found where God promised me He’d take care of my children if I just help Him take care of poor people. (Psalm 109) And I said, “Well, Lord, I want you to take care of my children. I want to do that.” Learn to give to the poor.

Don’t loan to the poor. Give to the poor. If a poor man comes to you and asks you for a loan, don’t give it to him. Or if you give him money on a loan, what do you do? You’ll just put him deeper in debt. He’s already in debt. Look in Proverbs chapter 19 for a moment. We’re talking now about financial freedom and how to find that financial freedom. Proverbs chapter 19, verse 17: *“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”* (Proverbs 19:17) Now, look at it. You do not lend to the poor man; you give to the poor man. You lend to the Lord. *“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD.”* And whatever you give to the poor man, Jesus will repay. You don’t have? Don’t worry about it. Just like that Good Samaritan—Jesus said, “And what thou spendest, I will repay” (Luke 10:35)—we just take care of these that the Lord has brought to us.

Now, learn to give by revelation. Don’t give by feeling, and don’t give by figuring. Give by faith. When God tells you to give something, then give it. You want financial freedom? *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* (Acts 20:35) *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together...shall men give into your bosom.”* (Luke 6:38)

D. Get out of Debt and Stay out

Number four: Get out of debt and stay out. Some marriage ceremonies ought to say, “until debt do us part,” because that’s what’s breaking up so many homes today. People are in financial bondage. And it is not primarily that they’re not making enough. They are not living within the means of what they have established. The Bible says in Romans chapter 13, verse 8, *“Owe no man any thing.”* (Romans 13:8) Now, does that mean that it’s absolutely against the law, or against Christian principles, to borrow any money? Or,

does that mean that we should not buy anything on time? Not absolutely. Wayne Coleman told us it may be wise to buy appreciating items, like a house, on time. It may be wise to borrow money to invest in business. But the Bible says, “*Owe no man any thing.*” What does that mean: “*Owe no man any thing*”? When do you owe it? When it is due and you can’t pay it. When your liabilities are greater than your assets, and it is due, and you cannot pay it, you have embarrassed yourself, and you have embarrassed the great God, whose you are and whom you serve.

Now you say, “How am I going to get out of debt?” Well, again, you might listen to the tapes on the financial seminar. But one thing is, you need to start selling things and turning things back. And you say, “Man, I’d lose money.” You’ve already lost it. It’s time you recognized it. You’re losing more by the interest you’re paying. I read this just the other day: “He who knows what interest is, makes it. And he who doesn’t it, pays it.” Just get out of debt. “*Owe no man any thing.*”

E. Pray about All Your Spending

And then, pray about all of your spending. Just ask God to show you about every purchase—before you buy a suit, before you buy a house. Ask God to show you where you ought to do your grocery shopping. Just pray and ask God to lead you. He’ll lead you. You say, “God is so great He doesn’t want to be bothered about those little things.” Friend, God is so great He can be bothered about those little things. The little things mean much to God. And just say, “Lord, show me.” Did you know that, many times, if you feel that you want something, you pray about it, and God will tell you you don’t need it, you ought not to have it? Or, sometimes, if you want something, God will give it to you—you won’t even have to buy it. God will just send it your way, because you pray and you ask Him for it. But get His permission.

You see, every dollar God gives you is a designated dollar. Now He may want you to spend it for recreation. He may want you to spend it for medicine. But it’s a designated dollar. And you need to say, “Lord, why did you give me this dollar? Is it a dollar to save, a dollar to spend, a dollar to give, a dollar to invest? What? But I’ll just do it, Lord.” You see, it all belongs to God, and it is all to be administered according to His discretion. We are stewards of Almighty God.

And so, go back to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 28, and you’ll just find out that God says that, if we’ll start living by His principles, if we’ll start obeying His Word, He wants us to prosper. He just wants to run us down with blessings, just to overtake us with blessings. But now, remember, it starts with the family faith. It must be built upon the Lord. And then we come to the family finances.

III. The Family Fellowship

But I want us to look up a little bit about the family fellowship, or the family fun, if you will. I like the word *fun* better than *fellowship*. Fellowship sounds a little “stained glass” to me. But it’s a good word. But just look at that word *bless*—bless, bless, bless, bless, bless, bless. It’s not the money we want. It’s not the cows we want. It’s the blessings we want. You see, the blessing talks about the joy. The New Testament word for “blessed,” *makarios*, means “joy, happiness, fun, fellowship.” Think of the family fellowship. This is what God wants us to have.

Do you know there are so many families today who do not know how to enjoy life? Your home ought to be a place of rollicking good fun. Sometimes kids ask my kids, “What does your daddy do around the house all day long? Does he wear a dark suit and peach?” You know, they think, “Boy, what’s it like to live with a preacher, and so forth?” Well, I believe, if you’d ask my kids, they’d tell you we have a tremendous amount of fun in our family. We may put more emphasis upon fun than some other people do because of the fact that we sometimes have to act so dignified in other places. Maybe we don’t have any dignity at all. But we enjoy fun. You ought to enjoy fun. Your home ought to be a blessed place, a place where God has just run you down with fun and fellowship and good times.

One marriage counselor discovered, after looking at three thousand cases of family problems, that eighty to ninety percent of those families that were having difficulty had no planned form of family recreation. It is very important that your family have planned recreation. We believe in it so much here at our church that we have a recreational department—but that’s spelled *re-creation*, not *wreck-reation*. Now a lot of what people call recreation is just that: they end up a wreck because they’re jaded and emptied and drained. They go to watch some of these filthy movies. They go to one of these discos. Can you imagine any child of God doing that? Can you imagine that? If we were to get one of you young ladies and just have you stand up here and do that without the music, you’d be embarrassed to death—every one of us. You’d be absolutely vulgar. It’s not recreation. That’s dishonoring God—dishonoring God.

You want to know what recreation is? Recreation is that which refreshes you. Recreation is that which relaxes you. Recreation is that which restores you. And God enjoys you having fun. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verse 4, there’s “*a time to laugh*.” (Ecclesiastes 3:4) The Bible says in Psalm 16, verse 11, at God’s right hand are “*pleasures for evermore*.” (Psalm 16:11) Jesus said in John chapter 10, verse 10, “I’ve come that you might have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10) That could be translated like this: “I’ve come that you might live; I mean, really live.” Are you really living? I mean, your home ought to be place of just joy and conviviality. And God is saying, “Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed—joyful, joyful, joyful, joyful—happy, happy,

happy.” That’s what God wants our homes to be: a little bit of the Garden of Eden.

I believe that God’s people, Christians, are the only ones that are truly liberated to laugh. Look in the book of Nehemiah. Let me just show you something interesting here in the book of Nehemiah when God blessed His people and they had great victory. I want you to see what Nehemiah commanded them to do. In Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 10: *“Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry;”—*that is, “don’t go around with a face so long you could eat oatmeal out of a lead pipe”—*“for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”* (Nehemiah 8:10) And then, look, if you will, please, in verse 12: *“And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth.”* (Nehemiah 8:12) Do you know what that word *mirth* is? That means “a rollicking good time.”

I feel sorry for people who think that, when you get saved, somehow you have to go around looking like an advance agent for the undertaker: a black Bible under one arm, and a tombstone under the other. Your family ought to be happiest place on this earth: a place filled with laughter, a place filled with joy. Somebody has said the definition of a puritan is this: a person who suffers from the overwhelming dread that somewhere, some time, somehow, someone may be enjoying himself.

Well, friend, I believe we ought to enjoy ourselves. Incidentally, to our younger married people who are living on a shoestring and a budget, and I’m telling you that you should have financial freedom, you’re saying, “Brother Rogers, we just can’t afford to have a good time.” Well, I have found for you some ideas to blow your boredom to bits. Are you ready? These are cheapies. Here you go.

Picnic at the lake. Number two: Play Frisbee. Number three: Feed the ducks. Number four: Visit the zoo. Number five: Go fly a kite. Number six: Go jogging together. Next: Pick wildflowers, leaves, dried wood, and pine cones. Next: Walk in the country. Next: Go for a drive. Next: Eat at a quaint little restaurant—take her out to the yellow room at McDonald’s. Watch TV and eat popcorn. Go bicycle riding. Take a tour of historical sites. Celebrate your husband’s birthday with a treasure hunt of small gifts around the apartment. Canoe down the river. Play table games at home. Look at family pictures. Walk in the neighborhood. Visit museums. Go to the art gallery. Window shop. Make a tape of your voice for your friends abroad or back home. Play tennis. Walk your dog in the park. Bake a pie together. Go to the airport and watch planes arrive and leave. Create table centerpieces together. Go roller-skating. Sing together. Shop and learn about antiques. Make candles. Walk through a cemetery and read the old markers. Play touch football in the park. Learn archery. Let the children entertain you with puppets. Camp out, and so forth. Well, don’t laugh. Those things could be a lot of fun.

I remember when I was a kid my daddy was out of work and so poor that, you know what we had to do? Now, this is how deprived I was as a kid. Mother would get some Crisco and some Van Camp's Pork and Beans and a big, black skillet. My dad would get his fishing tackle, and we would go over there to Singer Island on the Atlantic Ocean. It was practically uninhabited. And we kids would scarp up driftwood to build a bonfire. And we had a seine net. And we would seine for minnows, called shiners, that we'd use for bait. And my dad would stand there on the shore off a big rock there, where the waves were beautifully coming in and splashing on that rock, and catch fresh snapper out of the ocean. And we would clean them, build a big roaring bonfire, fry fish, and eat pork and beans, and stay on the beach all day long. We were so poor! Oh, it was just awful! Boy, I wish I could do it again! I tell you, the sweetest memories I have are just going over there all day long, and, just for nothing, just enjoying one another, and enjoying what God had made, and having sweet fellowship together.

You know, some people think you have to have so much in order to be happy. That's the reason some of you people don't want kids. You say, "Kids will make a rich man poor." No, friend. They make a poor man rich. You put it down. A poor man can't take his money to heaven. I can take my kids to heaven. And, oh, what a blessing we have when we learn to have that family fellowship, when we learn that God wants us to be blessed, and God wants us to have a good time!

IV. The Family Feud

Let's move on to the last thing here, the family feud, because the devil doesn't want us to have our family faith, and he doesn't want us to have our family finances; he doesn't want us to have our family fun; so he's going to war against it all with a family feud.

I did some research on families that fight. You want to know which families fight the most, which husbands and wives fight the most? Those who fell in love at first sight and had a whirlwind courtship are most prone to arguments. The longer the courtship, the less storm and strife afterward. I've seen it happen. If you can't keep them apart before marriage, you can't keep them together after marriage. And so, have a nice, long courtship. Don't rush into it. Those people who were married by the justice of the peace rather than a minister have far more incidents of divorce and argument. Of course, I'll admit that I've met some I didn't think were married by the justice of the peace; I thought they were married by the Secretary of War. The younger a couple is at marriage, the more the frequency of domestic free-for-alls. The older you get, the more discriminating you get; the wiser you get. You look before you leap.

When do people argue? When do we have these family feuds? A study at Columbia University said people are more likely to become violently angry just before meals than at any other time. That makes sense, does it? Your blood sugar's low, and so forth. So

look, lady. If you met one of those posts in the garage when you were parking the car, feed him first, and then tell him about it. And for what periods of time? The first three years of marriage are the most dangerous. Seven out of ten divorces take place in the first three years of marriage. It's that dangerous time: the early years of marriage. So, if you're just married, stick it out. It will get better. It will get sweeter.

Well, let me just give you now in addition to the tools for financial freedom—I have just a couple of moments left in this message—let me just tell you how to settle your differences.

A. Don't Use Coercion

Now, don't use coercion. There are always people, you know, sometimes a husband, because he's bigger and stronger, sometimes he bullies his wife. If you're a guy, because of your strength, and you bully your wife around, maybe they ought to tie you to a wagon wheel and take a snake whip to you. What kind of a man would strike his wife? But then there are women that use coercion. There are some women, you know, they have the invalid neurosis. Now some of them are really sick, but not all of them. I heard about a hypochondriac, who died at ninety-eight, and had put on her tombstone: "See, I told you I was sick!" Some people just try to coerce. The man sometimes uses money as a way. The woman uses sex as a way to get her will when there's a disagreement. That's playing God in someone else's life. That's saying, "I believe I know more about your life and what you ought to do than God knows, and I don't respect your right as a person." Don't use coercion.

B. Don't Use Desertion

Others use just the opposite. They use what I call desertion. They just leave. They sulk. They pout. It's the silent treatment. No, no, no, the way, if you're having a family difficulty, is mediation—mediation. People in business know that. People of the world know that. You have two different sides, and you come and you mediate. Now what do you do? Number one: If you and your wife are having a difficulty right now, if there's a family feud, the very first thing you do is to try to put yourself in the other person's place. Try to understand the other person. Honestly see it from their viewpoint. Have you ever really, honestly, tried to see it from your wife's viewpoint? from your husband's viewpoint? You'd be amazed how many differences will dissolve. As a matter of fact, the next time you get in one of those "discussions" that you can hear several blocks away, cool it down, and say, "Honey, let me see if I can state what you're saying." And you'll state it. And he'll say, "No, that's not what I've said." "Well, let me try it again." "No, that's not..." "Well, tell me"—until you finally can write down what he says, or what she says. It's amazing how many times we do not hear what the other person is saying. Try to see it. Try to understand the other person.

And then, try to understand yourself. Is it really your husband that you're upset with? really your wife that you're upset with? Are you just bitter at life? Are you really angry at yourself? Maybe you're angry at your boss. Maybe it's that guy that headed you off on the expressway on the way home. One wife was wise enough she realized that sometimes she just was feeling out of sorts. Do you ever feel grouchy? I do sometimes. I just feel plain grouchy. And I don't know what it is. It's just maybe I got out of bed on the wrong side or something.

One woman, she said, when they had this disagreement, if he met her at the door and she had her apron on backward, look out! I mean, it meant, "Just stay away for a while. I don't feel good." And so he said, "All right. When I come home with my hat all turned down like this, stay away from me." They're smart. They're smart. I mean, all of us get our apron on backward sometime. All of us have our hat that turns down sometime. I mean, a lot of it is just psychological. Sometimes your red corpuscles are not hitting on all eight. And it's just, dear friend, that you need to understand the other person and understand yourself.

C. Learn to Talk It Out

Number three: Learn to talk it out. Can you communicate? Communication is so needed in marriage. Talk and talk. Don't let little things become big things. Get a good book on communication and marriage and read it.

D. Learn to Attack the Problem Rather Than One Another

Number four: Learn to attack the problem rather than one another. Oh, what advice this is!

Conclusion

I want us to bow our heads in prayer. Every head bowed and every eye closed. And while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I want to ask you, do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? Are you saved? Are you born again? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit of God? You ought to be; you should be; you can be; you may be. Why don't you pray right now, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Forgive my sin and save me." He will if you ask Him to. The Bible says "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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I Choose Life

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: October 29, 2000

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 30:19

Outline

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I. It Is a Matter of Life

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III. It Is a Matter of Logic

Conclusion

Introduction

Find in God's Word the book of Deuteronomy chapter 30, and in a moment I'm going to share with you verse 19. We're hearing a lot today about choice, and people are calling themselves "pro-choice." But that's basically an unfinished thought, unless we know what the choice is. And what they're saying is that, "I reserve to myself the choice to snuff out an innocent life." What it is is a choice to take the life of an unborn baby. I want you to hear God's Word—Deuteronomy chapter 30 and verse 19: *"I call heaven and earth to record against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:"*—now, listen to God—*"therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed"*—that is, your children—*"may live."* (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Now we as Americans talk much about choice, and we say we're free to choose. We're not free to choose the consequences of our choice. Once we choose, then the choice chooses for us.

Each day in America some four thousand lives of little preborn babies are snuffed out. They will be executed. They will have no trial. They will have no lawyer, no counsel to represent them. They will be executed in a cruel and inhumane way. Every twenty-one seconds, one will die. These little beings have committed no crime. Who are the conspirators in this atrocity against the innocents? Well, first of all, Supreme Court justices; secondly, governmental social planners; thirdly, willing physicians, doctors; fourthly, owners of abortion clinics and willing hospitals; next, mothers and fathers of little preborn babies; and next, silent and unconcerned citizens who sit idly by.

January 22, 1973, three men robed in black, high priests of secular humanism, issued a ruling that will live in infamy: and that is that little preborn babies do not have the status of human beings. And so now, in so-called "God-blessed" America, it is legal

to kill a baby.

Oh, there are three requirements—and here are the three requirements: number one, that the baby still lives inside the mother, or a portion of that baby’s body is still inside the mother; number two, that the mother wants the baby killed; and, number three, there is a licensed physician willing to do it—only three requirements! Pharaoh, step back in the shadows. You killed babies, but you step back in the shadows. Herod, you murdered the innocents, but step back in the shadows. There are those who have outdone you both.

There’s a certain insanity in America today. You crush the egg of an eagle, you could be fined five thousand dollars and put in jail for a year. But you may make a handsome living killing little babies. It is now legal for a doctor to kill a baby while the mother is in labor—or even that the baby is now partially delivered, mostly out of the birth canal—and it still not be a crime.

Now, what is the ruling of the Supreme Court, January 22, 1973? Let me give it to you in their words: “A state is forbidden to proscribe”—that means “to forbid” or “to hold back”—“abortion anytime...”—notice the phrase—“anytime prior to the birth, if in the opinion of one licensed physician an abortion is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother.” Now, few would argue about preserving the life of the mother, but what do they mean when they say “the health of the mother”?

Well, again, let the court describe what they mean by that: “The health’ means the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors, physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age relevant to the well-being of the patient. All these factors relate to health.” And so, let me explain a little bit more. What do they mean when they say “the health of the mother”? For example, if the pregnancy would force upon the mother a distressful life and future; number two: if the pregnancy or the baby would produce psychological harm; number three: if it would tax the mental and physical health by childcare; next: if it brings distress accompanied by an unwanted child; next: if it may bring a child into a family already unable psychologically or otherwise to care for it; next: if it brings the continuing difficulties and stigma of unwed motherhood. All of those things are involved in the so-called “health of the mother,” which means, really, that any doctor can find a reason at any time to take the life of a little baby.

Did you know what we’ve come to in America today? In America today, a teenage girl may receive sex education in the public schools, and she may be given birth control devices without parental permission in the school. And, actually, the sex education in America today is primarily how to have sexual intercourse without catching a disease or conceiving a child. That’s sex education in America today. But if there is a pregnancy,

that same school that's given this kind of sex education may escort a child to Planned Parenthood. That child may have an abortion without the parents' consent or knowledge. And yet, school administrators are afraid to even give an aspirin without parental consent in America.

Now, folks, I want to tell you, that is wild and wicked. It is crazy. I want to give you three reasons why I choose life. God has said in His Word, "*Choose life.*"

I. It Is a Matter of Life

Number one: I choose life because it is a matter of life. We're dealing with life. When the ovum and the sperm are united, that unity brings human life.

Someone wrote Dear Abby these words, protesting those of us who protest abortion—and this is what this person said to Abby. Here was the argument: "To believe that the ovum and sperm united are human life would be like believing that a vehicle was in existence after a nut and bolt were joined together at the beginning of an automobile assembly line." So they're saying that nut and bolt is not an automobile, nor is that ovum and that sperm a human being. That's a very poor analogy. As a matter of fact, it is nonsensical. There is a great difference. When you put a nut and a bolt together, that's all you have—is a nut and a bolt. But when you put a sperm and an ovum—an egg—together, what you have is life—and everything is there to produce a full-grown baby. Nothing is added. No fenders. No radiator. No carburetor. No steering wheel. It's all there. All you do is add nutrition and fluid. That baby is already there.

Someone says, "Oh, but that is not human life." Well, if it's not human life, would you tell me what kind of life it is? Is it animal life? If it is not human life, tell me what kind of life it is. Is it vegetable life? I remind you that that life in the mother's womb is not a part of the mother's body. It is a new life, totally different, and that life is from God.

Now, put in your margin Psalm 139. It's a wonderful psalm. I would suggest you read the whole psalm. But let me read just a portion of that psalm, beginning in verse 13. Here's what the psalmist said when he considered himself in his mother's womb: "*For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.*" Now, notice he's not talking about *it*. He's talking about *me*. Where am I? "*In my mother's womb.*" "*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works...*"—that is, what is happening in the womb is the work of Almighty God, and it is marvelous—"*marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee,*"—that is, God has His eye upon that baby in the mother's womb—"*when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect...*"—that is, incomplete; or that is, non-mature. God sees that little baby. Now we're able today to

look inside the womb and see the little baby. God's been able to do that for a long time—*"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."* (Psalm 139:13–16) What does this verse tell us? Read it in a modern translation or paraphrase, and you'll find out that God Himself is forming a child in the mother's womb, and it is wonderful and awesome, and that that baby in the mother's womb is the subject of God's love and concern.

Now, in the Bible, the Bible does not differentiate between prenatal and postnatal life. The Bible speaks of those in the womb as persons, just as the Bible speaks of those outside the womb as persons.

Another scripture to jot down would be Jeremiah chapter 1 and verse 5. Here's what Jeremiah the prophet said. God is speaking to him, and God says to Jeremiah, *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee..."*—God says, "I knew you before you were conceived. I knew you while you were in your mother's womb—*"I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."* (Jeremiah 1:5) Here is a baby in its mother's womb sanctified and ordained to be a prophet of God. I wonder how many prophets we've snuffed out. I wonder how many people we may have killed who may have had the cure to AIDS, or cancer, or whatever? What a shame it would be, had Jeremiah's mother aborted a prophet—not a blob of protoplasm!

I read in the Bible that Elisabeth had in her womb a baby. That baby was to be John the Baptist. And Mary, the earthly mother of our Lord, had in her womb a baby who was to be the Savior of the world. And Elisabeth and Mary met, and the little baby in Elisabeth's womb recognized, through the Spirit, the presence of his Lord, and leaped for joy—a baby! Listen to Luke 1, verse 41: *"And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary,"*—that is, Mary says, "Hello, Elisabeth"—*"the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."* (Luke 1:41)—the baby leaping at the presence of the Lord. And the word for "babe" there is *brephos*. According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, the definition of *brephos* is "an unborn child, embryo, fetus, a newborn child, an infant, a babe." The same word, whether it's a preborn child or a child out of its mother's womb, is a *brephos*, a child. Now the same word is used in Luke 18, verse 15: *"And they brought unto him"*—that is, to Jesus—*"also infants, that he would touch them."* (Luke 18:15) It's the same word that's used.

When does life began? Consider an argument from science. When the ovum and the sperm come together, there is the nucleus of a human cell. And that human cell has chromosomes in it, and forty-six altogether. Twenty-three of them come from the mother, and twenty-three of them are furnished by the father. And so that's a completely

different life: a part of the father, as well as a part of the mother, is there. Now the word that we hear today is *fetus*. Did you know the word *fetus* is merely a Latin word that means a “baby”? You see, listen. Life is in a continuum. When that egg and that sperm unite, that life begins, and it goes on and on. Over here an egg and a sperm unite. That life is there. Everything is there. Then that life begins to grow, through nutrition and maturation. And then it becomes a baby that is squirming and kicking. And then, after a while, it’s a baby that is born and delivered. And it’s now a toddler. Now it’s a teenager. Now a young man. Now a middle-aged man. Now an old man. Now it goes down to the grave. Now I want to ask you a question. Which is a child? Which is a human being? which? which? which? It’s all just a continuum.

Would you say that, because the child in the mother’s womb is not fully developed, it is not a human being? Well then, would you say that the toddler, because it’s not a teenager, is not a human being? Or would you say the teen, because he’s not a mature man, is not a human being? Or the mature man, because he’s not an older man, is not a human being? Friend, there is an unbroken line. There’s a continuum. You need to understand this: that the child in the mother’s womb may be not developed completely, but it is a human being.

Now there is a gradual development. Now, when a baby is conceived, it’s about as small as a grain of sand. But now, notice. Five to nine days: the baby’s sex can be determined. Twenty-one days: the heart begins to beat. Forty-two days: the brain waves can be measured. Ten weeks: the tongue moves. It swallows. It makes a fist. It sucks its thumb. Six months: one and a half pounds, eyelashes are formed. With care, he can survive out of the womb. Nine months is normal for the birth. No, that is a little baby.

Over in Arkansas, four women went into a medical center. One of the women was carrying a child. She was going to have that child aborted. The doctor gave her an injection to induce an abortion. When the baby came from the birth canal, it was a little girl with dark hair, squirming and kicking. And the mother was grieved when she heard the cries of the little baby. She squeezed her eyes shut. She didn’t want to listen to that. The doctor wrapped that little squirming life in a towel, and laid it aside, and continued to treat the mother. But the little thing was still wiggling and squirming. The doctor wrapped it up, and gave it to the three friends, put it in a sack, and said, “After a while, it will stop moving.” They took that little piece of life, and took it to the mother’s home, which was a few doors away. It wouldn’t stop moving. They got frightened. They brought it back to the hospital, went into the emergency room. The doctors went to work. Medical art was brought in. They spent 150,000 dollars of state money to save a life. Today that baby is alive and well. I thank God for that. But by what form of reasoning can we say that one doctor here is now trying to take the life, and the other

medical team are trying to save the life of the same being? And what I'm trying to tell you is that that is life, and abortion is the taking of innocent life. It's not a little blob of tissue.

People say, "We've decided not to have this baby." If you're pregnant, that's not your decision. Your decision is, are you going to have a live or a dead baby? You have a baby. Listen to what God's Word says—Proverbs chapter 6, verse 16: "*These things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood...*" (Proverbs 6:16)

II. It Is a Matter of Love

So, let me give you three reasons. I've given you the first one: it is a matter of life—it is a matter of life. That is human life: no ifs, ands, and buts about it. The baby is life. God says, "Choose life." Second reason: not only is it a matter of life; it is a matter of love. Why do I choose life? Because I choose love. You see, abortion transgresses the golden rule. What is the golden rule? Matthew chapter 7, verse 12—here's what Jesus said: "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*" (Matthew 7:12) That is, all the Old Testament is summed up in that: just do to others as you would have others do to you.

Well, mother, if you have a baby, would you want to be killed by being dismembered? Then, don't do that to your baby. Doctor, would you like to be trapped in a cell somewhere and have corrosive liquid poured over you that you might absorb into your body and into your lungs and stomach till you convulse and die? Then, don't do that to someone else.

We talk about partial-birth abortion. The baby's turned around in the mother so that it's born feet first. And out come the feet. And out come the knees. Out come the hips. Out comes the chest. Out come the arms. The little head is there. Then a doctor will take a pair of surgical scissors and insert them into the base of the skull of that little baby, make an incision, put a tube there, and suck the brains out until the head collapses and kills that little baby.

You say, "Pastor, tell me that's not true." Friend, that is happening in so-called "God-blessed" America. "Oh," you say, "well, that's necessary to save the life of the mother." It is not! Medical doctors tell us there is no reason at all that that must be performed to save the life of a mother. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, has said exactly that. What I'm trying to tell you, doctor: If you don't want somebody to suck your brains out, don't suck the brains out of a little baby.

You say, "Adrian, are you threatening the doctors?" No, you miss the point altogether. Don't ever try to use violence to stop abortion. It's self-defeating. I'm not

suggesting that. I'm just saying do to others what you want others to do to you.

Mother, if you don't want somebody to dismember you, don't dismember your little baby. Doctors, if you don't want somebody to destroy your health, then don't destroy the life of somebody else. Mr. Judge, how would you like to be ripped from your chambers by some machine and put to death? Then, Mr. Judge, please don't do that to little children. You see, it's a matter of love. Jesus said we're to do unto others as we would have others do unto us.

Listen. When we're talking about love, abortion is completely, totally, contrary to basic human instinct, whether you're a Buddhist, Muslim, Confucianist, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, pagan, it makes no difference. Common instinct says that we protect the life of the unborn. That's the way God made us.

When God spoke of a nation on its last rung of the ladder on the way down, here's how God described that nation. Romans 1, verse 31: "*Without understanding,*"—and, friend, we've come there—"*covenantbreakers,*"—that is, people who don't keep their word. We are there—"*without natural affection*"—"*without natural affection.*" (Romans 1:31) Now the word *astorgous* is the word "*without natural affection.*" It's the Greek word. Do you know what it means? It literally means "without family love." It speaks of being "without love for one's own children." And that, friend, is unnatural. That's the reason the Bible calls it "*without natural affection.*" You see, abortion is not rooted in love. For the most part, it's rooted in selfishness—not always, but for the most part.

You know, so many people think that abortion is for the overburdened and the poor. Listen. Fifty-three percent of those who have abortions have no other children. Most are over twenty. Most are white and middle- and upper-class. And one-third of the women who had abortions are going back for the second, third, and fourth abortions. As a matter of fact, abortion is not primarily, but in great preponderance, those who've had illicit sex, are those who don't want their profession and professional life interrupted, or those who don't want to be bothered with a child. It's rooted in selfishness, primarily. And did you know that the abortion industry is a multi-million dollar industry? Doctors are paid, and some doctors are making a handsome living with abortion clinics. And every abortion they perform is filling the coffers of their bank account. They may be living in a beautiful mansion, but I want to tell you, every brick in that mansion is a baby's bone, and the mortar is baby's blood. Selfishness—selfishness.

You say, "Well, you're just a Baptist preacher." They made the mistake of inviting Mother Teresa to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. Now, this is not Adrian; this is Mother Teresa. I'd say she has been pretty much an international icon. February 3, 1994—here's what she said—and thank God for the courage of that little lady. She had to stand on a little block to speak out there in front of all those moguls out there. I

want you to listen to what Mother Teresa said: “Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love but to use violence to get what they want.” That’s what Mother Teresa said.

III. It Is a Matter of Logic

So it’s a matter of life. It’s a matter of love. Now, thirdly—and I must hurry—I choose life because it’s a matter of logic—it is a matter of logic. Now there are some high-sounding arguments that people give. Argument number one—they say, “Well, it’s not human life until it breathes. When the baby comes out and takes its first breath, then that is life. Life begins with breath, because God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul.” But Adam had no animation till God breathed into his nostrils. But that little baby is alive. Its heart is beating. It is already receiving oxygen through the umbilical tube. The analogy breaks down.

Somebody says, “Well, abortion may be necessary to save the mother’s life.” And few would argue with that, though many mothers would be willing to die that the baby might live. But let me tell you what a noted physician, Dr. Jérôme Lejeune, said. He’s a world-famous geneticist. He said, “I would do everything I could to save the life of the mother, but I would never attack and kill the unborn child—that is, if there’s a complication. I would do everything to save the mother’s life. If the baby died, that would be unfortunate. But I would never willingly, voluntarily, intentionally destroy a little child.” And, by the way, such cases are very rare.

Someone says, “Well, abortion is necessary in a case of rape or incest.” Well, how many of you have ever heard of Ethel Waters? Let me see your hand. Ethel Waters, the beautiful, gracious, black woman, gospel singer. Ethel Waters was conceived out of rape. I’ve heard her sing in Billy Graham Crusades. What a wonderful lady! Ruth, in the Bible, an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ, was also a descendant of Moab, who was born out of incest. Thank God that her life was not taken!

You see, if you had a little baby right here, let’s say a little baby that’s three months old, and that little baby happened to be conceived out of incest, or that little baby perhaps is the product of rape—which is very rare—and there’s the little baby, would you kill it? I mean, it’s three months old. Would you kill it? Oh, no. Well, don’t kill the same baby in the mother’s womb. Don’t play God. And, by the way, only one-tenth of one percent—one-tenth of one percent—of today’s abortions are performed on babies conceived because of rape.

“Well,” you say, “pastor, what about the problem of deformity? What if the little baby is deformed? Shouldn’t we then destroy that life?” Well now, wait a minute. Think about that. Are we going to begin to eliminate those that we feel defective? That’s the first step

toward Hitler's gas ovens. How perfect do you have to be in order to live? There are none here perfect. When we start eliminating the imperfect, the unwanted, what's the next step? Infanticide. And there are some who are already suggesting that. What's the next step after infanticide? Euthanasia. And there are those who are already talking about that. What's the next step beyond that? Genocide. And there are already people in the world who want to do that.

"Well," somebody says, "it's a woman's body. She can do with it as she wishes. She has the choice." There should never be freedom of choice to kill another human. That's not a choice that we ought to have. I have no right to murder an unwanted person. You say, "But the child is inside the mother." Well, suppose there's an unwanted guest in my house. I don't have a right to kill her. And you say, "But it's her own body."

Suppose I took my hand, took a hatchet from underneath this pulpit, chopped off my thumb, and it fell down there. Then I chop off this finger, and it falls down there. Before I got to the next finger, I hope some of you men would have come up here and stopped me. I say, "Hey, leave me alone. It is my body."

Well, the truth of the matter is the body of that baby is not her body. That baby may have a different blood type. It has the father's chromosomal recipe in it. But no one has freedom over their own body. Does a woman have the freedom to sell her body in prostitution? No! Do I have the freedom to use my body to rape an individual? No! Don't get the idea that, because it is your body, you can do anything you want to do with your own body.

Somebody says, "Well, it's none of your business. And, by the way, you're a man. What do you know about it?" I want to tell you my wife feels the same way I feel. You say it's none of my business. If I'm walking down the street, and I see several people taking little babies—I'm talking about one-year-olds, two-year-olds—and scalding them to death in boiling water, and I just walk away, and say, "That's none of my business, none of my business"—friend, when the babies die, it is my business. When the babies die, it is your business.

"Oh, but, Pastor Rogers, abortion laws are unfair to the poor. The wealthy have more access to legal abortions than the poor." Well, the wealthy have more access to most things when it comes to crime. They can get better counsel. They can have better ways to escape. If the wealthy want to use illicit drugs, they have more access to illicit drugs. Because the wealthy have more access, does that make it right? The wealthy have more access to heroin. Does that make it right? No, friend. Think with me logically about these things.

Conclusion

Well, our time is gone. What should we do? Please listen to me. I preached this with a broken heart.

Number one: We need to be informed. I didn't want to preach this message this morning. I really did not. But I felt that it was crucial that I preach this message. We need to be informed. I'm aware that there are some who may not like this message. I'm aware we may lose some members. I'm aware that some may not want to be a part of this church. I'm aware of that. But I cannot be silent. I must speak. God's Word—Isaiah 58, verse 1—says, *“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”* (Isaiah 58:1) God's Word says, in Proverbs 24, verses 11 and 12: *“If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”* (Proverbs 24:11–12) We need to be informed.

We need to vote for life. And don't someone come up to me and call me “being political.” I'm telling you, if it's a Republican, and he wants to kill babies, I'm voting against him. If it's a Democrat, and he is for life, I'm for him. I am for life. This is the highest issue. God says, “Choose life.” And I'm going to choose life.

We need to teach sexual morality at home and in the church. We need to have compassion on those who have an unwanted pregnancy, especially out of wedlock, and provide a place for that baby to be safely delivered; and if that mother doesn't want that baby, then for adoption. And thank God we're doing that through Life Choices here at Bellevue Baptist Church. We need to have compassion on those who've already had an abortion. And if you're here today burning with shame or anger, please know my heart. I love you. I would not hurt you. I'm not here to incriminate you. I'm telling you there is the grace of God that is greater than all of our sin. But we must speak out for the unborn. So, hear my heart.

Next, we need to clearly articulate our position. And don't be swayed by the high-sounding arguments of liberals and humanists and social planners and experts. Friend, what do they know? Planned Parenthood—Planned Parenthood—does for life what Orkin does for insects. What a contradiction in terms! Isaiah 5 and verse 20: *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* (Isaiah 5:20) Be informed. And speak out.

Next, we need to pray to Almighty God for time and space to repent. God have mercy upon this nation! We're ripe for judgment. But I want to give you some good news. The abortion statistics are coming down. We are making progress, because there

are some who will not be muffled. I read recently in *U. S. News & World Report*, October 9, 2000, that abortion statistics have dipped to their lowest level in twenty years. And for that I say, “Thank you, God.” And you know why that is? Because, in spite of all of the propaganda, people have refused to be muffled, to back up, shut up, let up—but they continue to speak for the unborn.

The last thing I want to say is this: We need to continue to preach the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. The main thing we need in America is a change of heart. And all the preaching, all of the arguments, apart from a new heart fall on stony ground. Jesus said, in John 10, verse 10, “I’ve come that you might have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10) Jesus said, “The thief comes”—Satan—“to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” If it’s Jesus, He’ll say, “God says, ‘I’ve set before you life and death. Choose life. Choose life, that you and your babies will live.’”

My heart is broken, broken for what has happened in America. Please, in the name of all that is decent and holy, choose life. I choose life!

What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out

By Adrian Rogers

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 32:9–12

“He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.”

DEUTERONOMY 32:10

Outline

- I. Are You Recognizing God’s Dealings?
 - A. The Nest Is All We Know
 - B. The Fear of the Unknown
- II. Are You Responding to God’s Dealings?
 - A. Utter Abandonment
 - B. Complete Commitment
 - C. Unlimited Freedom
- III. Are You Rejoicing in God’s Dealings?
 - A. God Is Manifesting His Presence
 - B. God Is Guaranteeing His Protection
 - C. God Is Developing His People

Conclusion

Introduction

I want you to be finding, please, Deuteronomy chapter 32 and we will commence our reading in verse 9. Remember the title for our message today: “What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out.” Now in verse 9: “For the Lord’s portion is his people; and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him”—that is, God found Jacob—“in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he”—God—“led him”—Jacob—“about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.” And now notice especially verse 11: “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

Now, spiritual lessons are often learned from the natural world. Somebody has said, “There’s sermons in stones, books in brooks, and God in everything.” “The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament sheweth his handywork” and there are spiritual lessons to be learned from the natural world.

Now Moses, who wrote this, is saying that God’s dealing with His ancient people

Israel is very much the way that a mother eagle would teach a young eagle to fly. Now remember that Moses was a shepherd and Moses spent forty years in the wilderness. Actually, Moses' life could be divided into three periods of forty years. Do you remember, at first, he was raised in Pharaoh's court and he had all of the amenities and niceties that life could offer; and then he found himself a recluse on the back part of the desert because there were some things in his life that God had to get out; and then after that, that God really used him in a wonderful way? Somebody said, "He spent the first forty years of his life learning to be somebody. He spent the next forty years of his life learning to be nobody. And he spent the last forty years of his life learning what God could do with somebody who learned the first two lessons." First he was a prince, and then he was a pauper, and then he became a prophet.

Well, while he was a pauper, while he was out there on the back side of the desert, doubtless, many times he had watched the mother eagle and her dealing with the young eaglet, teaching the young eagle to fly. And here's what the naturalists tell us, and here's what Moses had discovered and discerned as he watched the young eagle learn how to fly. At first, of course, the young eagle is hatched out there in the great eagle's nest in some lofty perch, perhaps on some mountain crag somewhere. And there's that huge, giant nest. And that baby eagle is hatched out there and is taken care of by the mother eagle and by the papa eagle, who go and fly all around that vast area and to bring fish, and to bring worms, and to bring mice, or whatever it is that little eagles have for dinner. And he brings all of that and feeds the little eaglet, but the time comes when it's time for that youngster to learn to fly. And at first the mother eagle and the father eagle will try to coax that baby eaglet from the nest and teach it to fly. But of course it's there on some precarious perch, some lofty high thing, and the little eaglet is afraid and so the mother eagle goes to work. She does what Moses called here, "the stirring of the nest." All of that nest now that is meant to be so comfortable and so warm and so protective, this mother eagle takes those strong talons and begins to tear it apart, and to scatter it and to disturb it and to stir it up. And then she takes her giant strong wings and she comes to that little eaglet and she begins to beat him with her wings. Now that's what is the phrase here: "She fluttereth over him with her wings." Notice in verse 11: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young": she actually begins to beat on this little eaglet with her wings. He can't understand it: those wings that meant to him sustenance, those wings that meant to him protection, those wings that symbolized to him love and power, now seemed to be his worst enemy. And he's being moved closer and closer to the precipice; and suddenly, he trotteth and over he goes; and down, down, down he falls twisting, tumbling, screaming; all the time she is diving like a dive bomber right alongside him as he falls. It looks like he's going to hit the bottom. It looks like it's the end for Baby Eagle. But just at the right moment, she swoops beneath him

and she spreads her broad wings and he lands right in the center of her back and he's safe for a moment because up she goes—him, with his little talons in her feathers—up she goes, up, up, up, up, up and suddenly, again the bottom comes out. She dives out from underneath him; again he falls, twisting, screaming, tumbling, turning—down, down, down, down, down he goes and she dives beneath him. And up again she goes, and over and over again, the lesson is repeated until suddenly he puts his wings out and he feels a strange sensation. He's never known it before but he feels the lift of the air. He feels that this unseen substance called air actually has weight to it, and if he puts his wings a certain way, he can sail. He can soar. And he discovers something that he never knew—that he has wings and with those wings he can fly. And that's what she's trying to teach him.

And now God, through the pen of Moses, takes that lesson from nature and applies it to us because notice in verse 11: “as an eagle,” verse 12: “so the Lord.” You got that? “As an eagle”: verse 11, “so the Lord”: verse 12. That is, the eagle—God deals with us very much as the eagle deals with her young; and many times God, in His own way, brings into our lives what I call the discipline of divine disturbance. And the reason for the discipline of divine disturbance, as God stirs our nests, is that He wants us to learn to fly. Ladies and gentlemen, God wants you to win your wings. He wants you to learn to fly.

And so with this as a background, I want to ask you three questions. And those three questions will be the three points of our message this morning. Are you ready for them?

I. Are You Recognizing God's Dealings?

Question number one: are you recognizing God's dealings? Are you recognizing God's dealings? Many times when we have difficulties and troubles in our lives, we fail to understand that they are indeed God's dealings—that it is God who is bringing trouble into our lives. Sometimes people say, “Well, the devil must be after me today. I'm having all kinds of difficulty.” Has it ever dawned on you that God may be doing that? Has it ever dawned upon you that it's not the devil, but God who is stirring your nest? Has it ever dawned upon you that it may be God that's beating over you with His wings, those very wings under which you nestle, those very wings that you thought meant to you protection and sustenance and strength—that it is God, who is bringing into your life, what I call: “the discipline of divine disturbance”? And why does He do this? Because he doesn't want you to settle down in your little nest.

I was asking Joyce this morning if she could tell me the name of that song. I've forgotten the song and I've forgotten the words, but I know that these two songsters behind me perhaps know it. It's a secular song but we used to sing it back in the fifties, about a fellow who's wistfully thinking. And one line in that song is this: “I want to build a

sweet little nest somewhere in the West and let the rest of the world go by.” What is it? That’s it: “Let the Rest of the World Go By.” “A sweet little nest somewhere in the West and let the rest of the world go by.” And there are a lot of people who would like to do just that: find some sweet little nest somewhere and settle down and let the rest of the world go by. As a matter of fact, Job said in Job chapter 29, verse 18 “I will die in my nest.” But he didn’t. God stirred the nest of Job. He didn’t die in his nest because God had something more wonderful than a nest for Job.

He has something more wonderful than a nest for you. One great preacher of yesteryear said, “Lord, if I’m building a nest, put a thorn in it.” And I think we need to make that our prayer today. You know, one of the biggest cults in America is the cult of the comfortable. We just want to be comfortable. And somebody has said that it is the job of a minister of Jesus Christ to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. Now, we need sometimes to get out of our nest because God doesn’t want us always to be comfortable. Now contrary to popular opinion, God is not primarily aiming at your comfort. He’s aiming at your sanctification.

Do you know what George W. Truett said? George W. Truett was to preaching what Warren Angell is to music. George Truett said and I quote: “If you have imagined that the ideal life is ease and rest and quiet, your imagination has been of vain one. The ideal life is marked by struggle, change, conflict, upheaval.” Congratulations on your ideal life! Oh, listen: struggle, change, conflict, upheaval: that’s what George Truett said that an ideal life was. And you see that’s necessary—that God has to bring conflict and change and struggle and upheaval, that God has to beat with His wings, and God has to stir the nest. Why? Because God has something better for you. God has a divine purpose for you. God wants you to discover the wings of faith that will bring you to a fuller life than your little circumscribed nest in which you live.

A. **The Nest Is All We Know**

And it’s awfully hard to get out of the nest. Number one: the nest is all we know. We just assume that’s all there is because that’s all we know. And the little eaglet in the nest, he doesn’t know anything of the great, vast world beyond. God is saying, “There’s more to life than you know right now, and I don’t care how far along you are in your sanctification, mister; there’s a whole lot more for you to learn—a whole lot more for you to learn, dear lady. God has some vast horizons that you’ve never seen.

B. **The Fear of the Unknown**

Now I’ll tell you another reason He has to stir the nest: there’s always the fear of the unknown. You know, when we get something like we like it, even if it’s not too good, if we at least know what it is, we feel comfortable in that. And this little eaglet has never flown before and there’s the fear of the unknown. Again, I want to quote George W.

Truett. This is what he said to those of you nest dwellers. Listen: “You were not made to grovel in the dust. You were made for the hills; you were made for the vast firmament. You are not to be muckrakers; you are not to wallow, grovel, and grope like the beasts of the field or of the stall. You were made to fly and the very meaning of every event, every task, every experience, every cloud, every struggle is to teach you to fly.”

Oh, but it’s so hard sometimes when we have things just the way we like them. You know before I pastored here I used to pastor down in Florida at a place called Merritt Island, Florida, there on the east coast of Florida. And Joyce and I were there and we were so happy and God bless that church. We started with a church that was a relatively small church, and it grew and prospered, and we built the buildings and had a lovely home there that the people built for us. And we just loved the people and they loved us and we were so happy.

As a matter of fact, the local newspaper there did a profile on me. They said, “We’re going to write what we call a profile and that is, a human interest story on certain people in the community.” And they wrote one on me and a reporter came and followed me around and lived alongside me in my office and so forth and he wrote, you know, the things that I do and say and some things about the church. And in things that he asked, he asked this question: “How long do you expect to be at Merritt Island?” And my answer to that question was: “Well, I expect to go to heaven from Merritt Island.” And in a way we felt kind of like we were in heaven because we had a lovely home there, and a beautiful grapefruit grove right there by the Indian River Lagoon. I had a little sailboat there that I would go sailing in in the evening, and we just loved the people and God was blessing the church and I expected to go to heaven.

Well, Joyce and I took a vacation and a mother eagle started to beat our nest. It was in the form of a pulpit committee and these cruel, horrid, wicked, mean, mischievous, and heartless people from Memphis Tennessee rather, came and they started to stir our nest. God used them as His wings to beat upon our lives and to bring such confusion and consternation. They said, “You’re supposed to come to Memphis, Tennessee. You’re supposed to be the pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church.”

Well, we didn’t want to go. We really didn’t want to go. We were so happy and the people were so good to us. Some of them are sitting right over here right now—some of the Merritt Island folks—and some of them were sitting back right over there in the first service—just members of our church visiting with us up here today and we’re so glad to have them. And we loved those people and they loved us.

But finally, God showed us He wanted us out of that nest. And you know, that was so difficult. And the people came and they packed our things and you sent Tom Joyce, one of the best movers. He came down there and loaded his truck up with all of our junk and took it all to this—to this faraway land. I didn’t even know why Memphis, Tennessee

was in the world. I didn't know much about Memphis, Tennessee. I thought it was a place God put here to hold the world together: that's all I knew.

Off we were going and I can remember crossing that bridge that leads from Merritt Island over to the mainland: the 520 Causeway. It used to have so many cars travelled it; we called it the "Car-Strangled Spanner." It went over that causeway and when we started over, I didn't think I'd make it to the other end because my eyes were blinded with tears. I looked back over my shoulder at the house where we lived, and the island where we'd served, and so many people that we'd seen come to Jesus, and so many people that we loved, and so many people that we'd baptized. I didn't even know whether people could be saved in Tennessee. I didn't know, you know. I really—it broke my heart. It was so hard—so hard. And yet as I look back, God knew exactly what He was doing. And I'm so grateful that God has given me the privilege of these seven years of service with you—and a place and responsibility that I never would have known had not God, in His own way, just stirred the nest—had God not in His own way, put something in our hearts and in our lives that at first was painful, but was a part of God's wonderful plan.

Now what I'm trying to say is this: that God is doing things like that in your life and in my life, not just once or twice, but constantly; God is stirring our nest. You see, the Israeli—the Israelites had settled down in the land of Egypt at first. Humph! Man, they had it good. Don't think they were always slaves: they were not always slaves. When they first came, they had it wonderfully well. They lived in the land of Goshen, the best part of the land, and they prospered and they were fed, and if anybody ever had a nest, they had a nest. But God had a promised land for them. And so God, through persecution and trials and trouble and tribulation and many things that God brought into their lives, God so stirred that nest and God so fluttered over them that finally, they were ready in the exodus with the wings of faith to find God's land of fullness.

Now the first question therefore I want to ask is this: are you recognizing God's dealings? Many times we're not recognizing the troubles that we're having in our lives as coming from God. We're not recognizing them as God's discipline of divine disturbance.

II. Are You Responding to God's Dealings?

Now the second thing I want to ask: not only are you recognizing God's dealings, but are you responding to God's dealings? Now why does God do it? Well, God does it for a purpose. He's trying to get a response out of us. And the first response that God wants out of us is the same response that the mother eagle wants out of the eaglet. "As the eagle, so the Lord."

A. Utter Abandonment

What does the Lord want out of that eaglet? Well, He wants that eaglet to be utterly abandoned to the air—just utterly to the air. And there’s one thing about air; it’s invisible. You see, a Christian is to have no visible means of support. Air is invisible and you can’t see it, just as God is invisible and the great eternal. And the things that are seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are eternal. You just can’t see the air and that little eaglet, he can feel the crag; he can feel the brambles; he can feel the nest and so forth. But here, the eagle wants this eaglet to be abandoned to the air, just to give himself to the air, to feel the strength of the invisible. And that’s hard—that’s hard.

I heard about a man one time who fell over a rocky ledge and was hanging with his feet dangling, with the jagged rocks hundreds of feet beneath him. He said, “Help!” No one answered. “Help!” he said. No one answered. Finally, he yelled at the top of his voice, “Is anybody up there?” And a voice, a very calm and serene and majestic voice, said, “I’m up here, my child.” He said, “Help me!” And the voice said, “I’ll help you, my child. Let go of the limb.” “Is there anybody else up there?”

Can you identify with that? One of the hardest things in the world to do is to let go and let God. Oh, it’s so hard because, you see, we live in our little nests and things that we’ve learned to trust in; and it’s so hard sometimes to trust in the great, eternal, unseen, but never-failing God.

B. Complete Commitment

And so what He wants, first of all, out of us—the response—is our utter abandonment. And then number two, as a result of that, He wants us to learn complete faith—to trust Him. Just as the eaglet learns to trust the wind, we are to learn to live by faith underneath the everlasting arms. And even if we fail Him, He’ll not fail us—to learn that He’s there beside us, to take care of us, to guide us.

C. Unlimited Freedom

And with that utter abandonment and with that complete confidence, there comes the sum total of these other two things which is unlimited freedom—freedom that we could never know in the nest. Haven’t you ever wished that somehow—that you had the ability to fly? Well you can in the spiritual realm and look to where your wings will take you. Go back to the Scripture and look if you will please here. We read verse 11 but continue to read in verse 12: “So the Lord alone did lead him,” and where did He lead him? Well, verse 12: “He made him to ride on the high places of the earth,” that is, He made him to fly. Why? Look at it: “that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of kine”—that is, butter of cows—“and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.”

Oh, what a blend of bounteousness and blessing that God had for this eagle, but he could never know it in the nest. God had a plan, a glorious plan, for him to fly on high places. And I want to say, dear friend, that God wants you today to learn that unlimited freedom that comes when you win your wings.

III. Are You Rejoicing in God's Dealings?

Now the third and final question I want to ask is this: the first question is: are you recognizing God's dealings? Secondly, are you responding to God's dealings? But thirdly, are you rejoicing in God's dealings? Are you rejoicing in God's dealings? You see, I'm not only to recognize and respond, but actually to rejoice. This whole thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy is a song. It's the song of Moses and it is a song not written in a minor key. It is a song of triumph, a song of joy, a song of victory. Haydn was asked why he wrote his song so full of joy and so full of triumph and he said, "When I think of the goodness of God to me, the notes fairly dance off my pen."

Now Moses is here praising God and rejoicing in the Lord for His dealing with His people. I want to ask you: have you rejoiced in God's dealing with you? Oh, I know you rejoice in the good times, but have you rejoiced when the eagle stirs her nest? Have you rejoiced when God flutters over you with His wings rather than protecting you beneath His wings? Have you rejoiced in the discipline of divine disturbance? The Bible says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" and the Bible says, "And all things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose." and what a time of rejoicing we ought to have.

A. God Is Manifesting His Presence

Why? For three reasons. Number one: This divine disturbance is manifesting the presence of God in your life. It doesn't mean that God is not with you. To the contrary, it may indeed mean that God is with you. "For whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives." You know as well as I that that mother eagle would fight for her life for that baby. And when she's stirring the nest, it means that he has a mama who can stir the nest. It means that he has a mama who does love him and there is a manifestation of the divine presence. And if your nest is being destroyed, I want you to know: the nest builder is right there. He's the one—that's the one that really counts.

B. God Is Guaranteeing His Protection

And so I can rejoice, number one: because God is manifesting His presence. I can rejoice, number two: because God is guaranteeing His protection. Look again in our text, would you please? Look in verse 10: "He found him in a desert land, and in the

waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him,”—now underscore this next phrase—“and kept him as the apple of His eye.” He kept him as the apple of His eye. What does that mean? We talk about a little boy being the apple of his daddy’s eye. The apple of your eye is your eyeball. That’s the apple of your eye: your eyeball, the most sensitive part of the human body, or one of the most sensitive parts. Who likes anybody to stick their finger in your eye? And what do we do? We constantly protect our eyes. There’s an explosion; we go like that. Why? To protect our eyes. We keep the apple of our eye. What is God saying? God is saying, “Little eagle, no matter how bad it looks, I want you to know: I’m beside you to guide you and to keep you as the apple of my eye.”

And some of you today are going through deep trouble, but I want you to know: God loves you with an everlasting love and don’t you forget it. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.” And the whole time that little eaglet is falling, screaming, tumbling, and turning, that mother is there by his side, right alongside with him, and ready at the right moment to come beneath.

Colonel F. J. Miles said this and he’s talking about this text: Deuteronomy 32, verse 11: “Here is a revelation of God who bears”—now what he means by that: who bears us up, who takes care of us—“for when these little eaglets essay to fly and fail, and the bottom seems to fall out of everything, and they drop down, down, down. Then, swifter than the little eaglet’s fall, is the sweep and swoop of the parent bird. She, diving beneath, catches the eaglet on her broad back and bearing it beneath her pinions, carries it to the safety and shelter of the ledge. And so the game goes on until the eaglet learns to fly.” Now here’s the part I want you to listen to: “Never, never once in the whole world’s story has it ever been placed on record that a little eaglet, in learning to fly, has been permitted to fall to its destruction by the parent bird. Never. “As the eagle, so the Lord.” What we’re trying to say is that, not only is God manifesting His presence, God is guaranteeing His protection. “I will keep thee as the apple of my eye.”

C. God Is Developing His People

And thirdly, we ought to rejoice because God is developing His people. I mean, who doesn’t want to fly? Who wants to nest when you can have the land that flows with milk and honey? Who wants to live in Egypt when you can live in Canaan? God has a very purpose—a very wonderful purpose.

And what was God’s purpose for Israel? I want you to just jot down, please, in the margin there by verse 11. I want you to jot down Exodus 19, verse 4. Exodus 19, verse 4 and here I want to read it to you: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.” See? That’s what

God—that was God’s purpose. Why did God give them wings? So they could fly to Him—to His bosom. And so, God has a very purpose: He wants to bring us to Himself.

A lady in a Sunday school class was studying with her class that verse of Scripture that is found in Malachi 3, verse 3 and it’s a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus. And this is what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus. It says: “And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” And the Sunday school class was studying that; and so the lady in the class decided that she would get some first-hand information. And so she went to a silversmith shop of a silversmith that she knew, and asked if she could come in and watch him at his art. He said, “Fine.” And, as she watched as he got his smelting pot, and he turned the fire up under the silver ore. And as the silver began to melt, the ore began to exude the impurities and the filth and the scum that was not part of the silver. And the silversmith had a scoop, a ladle, and he was constantly taking the scum from the top. And the silver was getting purer and purer. And she asked him: “Tell me something about your work.” He said, “Well, I must be very careful that I don’t let the fire get too hot because” he said, “if the fire gets too hot, the silver may be harmed.” She said, “That’s beautiful.” She said, “How do you know when it’s pure?” He said, “I know it’s pure when I can see my face reflected in it.”

I want to tell you, dear friend, you may think that you’re going through persecution. You may think that you’re going through difficulty but He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and He’ll not turn the flame up too hot, and He’s only wanting to bring you to Himself. All His plan is that He might see reflected in you the image of the glory of God. That’s His purpose. That’s His plan. Why shouldn’t I rejoice? If God is giving me wings to bring me to Himself, why shouldn’t I rejoice? If God is manifesting His presence, if God is guaranteeing His protection, and if God is developing His people, if God is trying to teach me how to fly, why shouldn’t I sing with Moses this song?

A naturalist, who studied the things of nature, had before him a chrysalis of the Great Emperor Moth. There is a moth called the Emperor Moth that is absolutely gorgeous as it spreads its wings. And that moth, you know, goes into the chrysalis, that cocoon-like tomb where it goes through a metamorphosis and then comes out of that chrysalis to be that beautiful, glorious, glorious moth. And this naturalist, this student of nature, decided he would help this particular moth as it was trying to emerge because he could see the struggle there of that moth trying to split that chrysalis, trying to come out, to emerge. And this man took his razor-sharp penknife and he slit the chrysalis, very delicately, very carefully, so as not to touch the moth, but simply to remove the bondage. And as he did, that emerging moth came out easily, but then something strange happened. He tried to stretch his wings, he tried to lift those great wings, he tried to fly, but he couldn’t. And the wings just riffled and he died. For the God who made him and the God who had designed him, had designed him that he might have

some struggle, that he might have some difficulty, that he might know some resistance because in that resistance, he would strengthen his wings.

Conclusion

Have you been trying to get through life easily and not to know the discipline of divine disturbance? God's plan for you, dear friend, is that you might win your wings—that you might fly—that you might mount up with wings like an eagle. That's God's plan.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you Lord for your Word. It always refreshes us as we study it. And we're so grateful, Lord, that you've given things in nature to help us to understand your divine dealings with us. And I pray today, dear Lord, for those—and I know there are many who are listening to me right now who have a nest that's being stirred, and many who are listening to me right now, who are experiencing the beating of the wings—but Lord, help them—that they might make that utter abandonment, that they might have that complete confidence, that they might know that unlimited freedom and that fullness of joy that thou dost have for them, in Jesus' name, amen.

The Wings of Faith

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: September 29, 1991

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 32:9–15

Outline

Introduction

- I. A Divine Disturbance
- II. A Definite Design
 - A. Commitment
 - B. Confidence
 - C. Conquest
 - D. Communion

Conclusion

- A. Recognize His Presence
- B. Relax in His Protection
- C. Rejoice in His Purpose

Introduction

Turn in the Old Testament to the book of Deuteronomy—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and then Deuteronomy—and then go right on through until you find chapter 32, and in just a moment we’re going to begin reading in verse 9. And the title of our message: “The Wings of Faith.” And I want to show you how God is going to teach you sometimes in ways that you probably would not like, but later on will thank Him for. And, tonight, really, the lesson that we have from the Word of God is also a lesson from nature. And God made nature in such a way that nature would instruct us when we properly understand nature, because all of the created universe is the handiwork of God, and it pictures God’s dealing, so spiritual lessons are often taught. And someone has said, “There are sermons in stones, and books in brooks, and God in everything.”

Now God said that His dealings with His Old Testament people were very much like the dealing of a parent eagle with an eaglet or baby eagle. You’ll catch that as we begin to read here in verse 9. Look at it: *“For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”* Now, you see, God rejoices in us. We are His inheritance. We are His riches. And, oh, dear friend, thank God that He does value us. But notice in verse 10: *“He found him”—*that is, Jacob; that is, His people—*“in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad*

her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: butter of kine,”—that is, of cows—“and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.” (Deuteronomy 32:9–15)

Now what God is doing here is giving us a wonderful illustration out of nature of how God sometimes has to deal with a man named Adrian, and whatever your name is. And God sees us sometimes as the mother eagle sees the little eaglet. Now the mother eagle prepares a nest, and puts that egg in that nest. And then the egg is hatched, and the little eaglet begins to develop and grow. And the mother eagle will go and find lizards and snakes and mice and grubs and worms, and feed that open mouth of that baby eagle. And the baby eagle will eat from its mother’s talons, and from its mother’s beak, and will ingest all of these things. And the baby eagle just loves that nest. Everything that the baby eagle seems to need or could ever want is in that nest. And the circumference of that nest is just about the circumference of his life and of his world.

There is a vast world out there. There are vast skies and mountain ranges and incredible adventures and thermographs, but the little eaglet knows nothing about that. He’s so comfortable. He’s so secure in that nest. But there comes a time when the mother eagle knows that it’s time for her baby to learn how to fly. So she does what the Bible says here. She stirs her nest. That is, she gets there upon that nest, and she begins to beat on that baby eagle.

Now those wings have been protection. Those wings have been security. Those wings are the wings that brought to that baby eagle provision. And now she flutters over the nest. That is, she beats the nest. She stirs the nest. And everything in this little baby eagle’s world is turning topsy-turvy. “What is this? What has gotten into mother? What is happening in my world?” And after a while, the baby says, “Well, it’s not as good here as I used to think it was.” And he perches up on a limb. And then the mother eagle moves close. And this time he hops right over on her back just where she wanted him to be. And then she spreads those pinions, those wings out, and down she goes for just a moment. And then up and up. And this little eagle is holding onto his mother’s back. All the way up she goes. And then at the right moment she dives out from under him, and he begins to fall and fall, and scream and fall, and scream and fall, and flutter his little wings. And he’s going down to the rocks, and he cannot figure, “Why did Mama do this to me? I thought she loved me.”

And then at the last moment the mother eagle sweeps under that little eaglet. And

he lands on mother's back, and in go those talons. He says, "I'm safe!" But up she goes again—up and up and up and up and up and up and up—and then again out from under him she goes, and down he tumbles, screaming and pleading, and screaming and tumbling, and stretching his little wings. And he finds a little buoyancy there he didn't know. "What is this?" But she catches him again, until finally he discovers what she wanted him to know: that he can fly! And she teaches him something that she could teach him no other way. She teaches him to fly.

Now God had acted toward His people like a mother eagle. His people had settled down in the land of Egypt, and they were quite comfortable in Egypt. I mean, they had homes there, and they had their lives there. They were doing quite well in Egypt. But it wasn't God's plan for them to stay in Egypt. God had a far better plan than Egypt for them. So God began to stir the nest. And He sent persecution and difficulties and heartaches and trials in the land of Egypt. And, finally, one day they said, "I don't like this nest anymore. I want out!" And God led them on eagles' wings to a promised land, something that was far, far better.

Now that's the illustration right here in the Word of God. And I want us to take that and apply it to our own hearts. Look at it again—verse 11: *"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttering over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him"*—that is, Jacob.

I. A Divine Disturbance

The first thing I want to talk to you tonight about is what I want to call divine disturbance. Now there's not a one of us that does not from time to time have trouble and difficulty and disturbance. And there are quite a few who are listening to me, either by radio, or listening here, or perhaps will listen later, who are going through a great upheaval in your life. It may be in your dating life. It may be in your business life. It may be with your health. It may be with your family. It may be with a neighbor. But there is in your life turmoil, and you may be blaming it on the devil. And, indeed, the devil sometimes does send turmoil. But do you know, dear friend, it just may be God who is stirring your nest? Not because He doesn't love you, but because He does love you, and He wants to teach you how to fly on the wings of faith.

Now not a one of us ever like to be disturbed. "Come weal or come woe, our status is quo." I mean, we like it. Sometimes we get everything just fixed just right. We used to sing a song years ago: "We'll build a sweet little nest somewhere in the west, and let the rest of the world go by." Well, I don't see why you'd want to build it in the west, when you could build it in Florida, but that's what a lot of people want to do: just build a sweet

little nest somewhere, and just settle down. I think old Job had that idea. Job said, in Job 29:18, *“I shall die in my nest.”* God doesn’t want you to die in your nest. He’s got a bigger world for you. And maybe you have everything just right, and you don’t want God to bother you at all. But I know one great preacher who prayed a pray like this—and I think it’s a good prayer. He said, “Lord, if I am building a nest, put a thorn in it!”

God doesn’t want us to settle down. I think one of the biggest cults in America is the “cult of the comfortable.” Somebody said that “the job of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” We sometimes just want to get all comfortable in our little nest. That great Baptist preacher, George W. Truett, who preceded Dr. W. A. Criswell at the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, said this—and I want to quote directly from him. He said, “If you have imagined that the ideal life is ease and rest and quiet, your imagination has been a vain one. The ideal life...”—now, listen—the ideal life is marked by struggle, change, conflict, and upheaval.” Well, most of us would think it’s just the opposite.

Now, why does God have to stir our nest? Well, because, my dear friend, we never would get out of it, if God didn’t stir it. I’m going to show you later on that we learn to trust God in difficulty. The Bible says, *“Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.”* (Psalm 4:1) You never trust God until you have to. That’s just a strange thing. You never trust God until you have to. If you don’t have to, you’ll just simply depend upon yourself.

Now the little eaglet, all he’s ever known is the nest. He knows nothing of that great world beyond. His world is so circumscribed. And God has so much for him. But there’s always the fear of the unknown. It’s in me. It’s in you. We’re fearful to launch out, but God sometimes is going to make certain that we do.

You know, in the book of Acts you read about the early church. They were there in Jerusalem, and there was revival that began in Jerusalem, and yet God’s plan was what? *“Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8) But they were all settled down in Jerusalem. And yet there was that Great Commission to take the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. And then the Bible says, in Acts 8:4, that a persecution arose in the church, and they were scattered abroad. That is, God said to this little early church, “I’m going to stir your nest.” And then the church was scattered abroad.

Now they didn’t see God’s greater plan, but God surely had a plan in that. I remember reading in the Bible in the Old Testament about Elijah. And God took Elijah down by the brook and fed Elijah there, and fed him with ravens. And he was there at the brook. The brook supplied his water. And yet there came a time of drought, and the brook dried up.

Maybe your brook is dried up. You lost your job. You say, “The devil did this to me.” Maybe. But it just could be that God dried up your brook. As a matter of fact, we know that the brook dried up because of Elijah’s prayer. He was praying that God would judge the land. And God did judge the land. But, you see, God dried up the brook. That is, God disturbed Elijah’s life, because He had something higher and greater and more wonderful for him. God just has a way of stirring our nest.

The deacons gave me a birthday party, and it was a very wonderful party. And they reviewed my life in various epochs and episodes in my life. And one of the things they did, they had a table there that represented various churches that I have served. And one was the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island. And there was an article that was done about the church, very similar to the article that was in the paper today—a different article, but it was in the Sunday supplement. And they had a picture of this preacher in our church building, standing on the stairs of the fellowship mall or hall that we had there. And under the picture it said this: “Rev. Rogers and His Island in the Sun.” That was the article. And this man had interviewed me, and he said to me, “Rev. Rogers, do you ever intend to leave Merritt Island?” I said, “Oh, no. No, sir.” I said, “I expect to go to heaven from Merritt Island.”

And right after that—I mean, just a matter of days—Joyce and I took a trip, and the Bellevue Pulpit Committee intercepted our vacation, and ruined a perfectly good vacation, and began to talk with me. Now I didn’t know much about Memphis, Tennessee. I had come through here on one occasion. That’s all. I’d driven through and actually spent the night in West Memphis—didn’t even spend the night in Memphis, but drove through and spent the night in West Memphis. I knew that Dr. Robert G. Lee pastored here, but Memphis, Tennessee was just some place on a map to me, and I really wasn’t quite certain where it was. I just thought it was a place that God put here to stick the world together, and that was all—just, you know, some place out there called Memphis, Tennessee. I did not have, in the foggiest, any idea that ever I would be anywhere except right where I felt that God had placed me.

And we had the sweetest church. I mean, I loved those people. And they loved me. I had been there eight years. And they built us a nice home in a grapefruit grove right near the Indian River, where I had a little sailboat down there. I would come out and sail in the evening, watch the mullet jump and the dolphin play in the sunset. I preached to people. We saw souls saved. And I thought, “You know, this is just what God called me to do right here. And I’m so happy.” And, you know, God was blessing. We had such wonderful plans. And then God just kind of began to stir my nest.

Now these folks talked to me, and they said, “We believe it’s God’s will that you come to Memphis, Tennessee.” I mean, when they first talked to me, I said—and very

frankly—“Thanks, but no thanks. No way. There’s no way. I’m just exactly where I ought to be.” But I wasn’t! I wasn’t! This is where I ought to be. But I didn’t know it then. But God had to just kind of stir my nest. I cannot tell you how. I had to agonize and pray and seek the face of God and fast. And, finally, God said to me, “Adrian, this is my will.” But I said, “Lord, I don’t know anything about that church. I don’t know anything about those people. I don’t know anything about Tennessee.” I was Florida-born and Florida-bred, and when I died, I wanted to be Florida-dead. And I said, “Lord, I don’t know anything. I don’t even know whether folks can be saved in Tennessee.” I really doubted it. But the Lord just said to my heart, “Adrian, you’re to go to Memphis, Tennessee.”

It was the strangest thing. And I can remember—and Joyce, who is here tonight, will confirm it—as we left Merritt Island, started over the 520 Causeway that went over to Cocoa, and began to drive up here to Memphis, Tennessee, I stopped, I looked back over my shoulder, and I cried like a baby—just wept. I could not believe that I was really doing such a thing, that God wanted me out of that nest. But, friend, I could never, never in my wildest imagination ever dream the blessings that God had for me here with you dear people. I am infinitely glad that God did what He did. I couldn’t see it. I didn’t know that God was going to give to me a people like you are. This is not to take anything away from those dear people there. They’re the dearest, finest people on earth. But I could not have imagined in my wildest imagination the goodness of God, the plans of God that God had for me, and for you, and for us together. I’m so glad sometimes God doesn’t let us stay in our nests. I’m glad He doesn’t.

God didn’t want the people of Israel to stay in the land of Goshen there in Egypt, where they had settled down, and thought that they had it made—but they did not have it made. And so, what I want you to see is, first of all, a divine disturbance—a divine disturbance. Notice here—verse 11: “*As an eagle stirreth up her nest...*”—verse 12—“*so the LORD...did lead him.*” Sometimes, folks, that’s the only way God’s going to lead us. He’s just going to bring into our lives disturbance, and we’re going to think everything has gone wrong, when it hasn’t gone wrong. It hasn’t. God is over it all.

II. A Definite Design

Now, there is a divine disturbance. And there is a definite design. What is God’s definite design? What is God doing, when He sends disturbance to us?

A. Commitment

Well, first of all, He is trying to get commitment out of us. He’s trying to get us to trust Him and Him alone. Look, if you will, in verse 12: “*So the LORD*”—what?—“*alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.*”

Now, down in Egypt there were a lot of strange gods. And these people, well, I think they could have been tempted to trust in those strange gods of Egypt. But God said, “Now I’m going to get you out of this nest, and I’m going to teach you to be committed to me completely and totally.” You know, when a little eagle finally lets go and begins to fly, folks, that is commitment. I mean, he has committed himself. And in order for us to do what God wants us to do, there has to come a time when we’re totally, utterly committed to God and Him alone.

B. Confidence

And that commitment turns to confidence. And that’s the second thing. Look, if you will, here in verse 13. Look at it: “*He made him ride on the high places of the earth.*” That little eagle never dreamt that he could ride upon the high places of the earth, that he could soar on thermo drafts. But our Lord is teaching him how to trust. Now he may never learn to fly, unless he was forced to. And I can tell you, friend, that I have been forced sometimes to trust God. The word in the Old Testament for “trust” is rooted in a word that means “to be face down on the ground.” It has the idea of being completely helpless.

I’ll give you an ugly picture of what it means—but it’s a graphic picture. Suppose you’re in a convenience store, and you stop in for a half a gallon of milk at 12:30 in the morning, and suddenly a car comes up, somebody gets out and points a pistol at you and the clerk, and says, “Both of you get down on the floor.” Then he says, “Put your face on the floor.” Then he says, “Spread out your hands. Spread out your legs, and keep your face on the floor.” You got the picture? You’ve already seen that gun. That’s the idea that is rooted in the word *trust*. It means “face down on the ground with no means of support.” There’s nothing you can do when your face is down there like that, but just pray, “Dear God, don’t let him pull that trigger.” I mean, you’re helpless.

And, friend, God sometimes will put you in a place like that where you’ve been working. You’re a conniver. You’ve always been able to figure things out. And you’re not going to be able to. You’ve always been able, perhaps with brute strength, to do something. And you’re not going to be able to. God will sometimes put you in a place where you are face down with no hope and no help if God doesn’t help you. And do you know what you do when you get in a place like that? You just trust Him. And do you know what He does? He sees you through. He sees you through. But He has to bring you to a place like that sometimes. You’ll never come to that place until God puts you there.

Now what God was doing with these people was bringing them to commitment: “*the LORD alone,*” none of the gods of Egypt. And when He brought them to commitment, He brought them to confidence. They learned to trust God. It’s a strange thing to fly.

You know, an eagle has no visible means of support. I mean, just the air is out there. That's all there is. And he learns to fly.

C. Conquest

Now God wants to, first of all, give to you commitment—stir up the nest. You're not going to be able to look to anyone else. And then confidence. And then, after that, conquest. God's not being mean to you. Look in verse 13: *"He made him ride upon the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."* God had so much for these people. God wanted to bless them. What a magnificent world God had for them! It wasn't Egypt; it was Canaan that God wanted for them.

D. Communion

Commitment. Confidence. Conquest. And, oh, dear friend, here's the main thing: communion—communion. Look in verse 10: *"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."*

Have you ever heard anybody say, "That little boy is the apple of his daddy's eye?" We don't even know what that means: "the apple of his eye." What does that mean? What is the apple of your eye? It's your eyeball. The word *apple* means "an orb, something round"—"the apple of his eye." Now, if you come stick your finger in my eye, or look like you're going to, I'm going to protect it—protect my eyes. That's a basic instinct. God says, "Just as a man protects the apple of his eye, God protects His children." He keeps them. He loves them. As a man loves and protects his eyesight: that's what he's talking about here, that God is bringing us to Himself.

When our lives are disturbed, we need to learn that God is not cruel. It's a part of His wonderful plan that all things work together for good to those who love Him. (Romans 8:28) Do you know what this passage that we're reading literally is? It is a song. It is a Bible song. It is a hymn of praise, and a hymn of joy, written by Moses to tell what God had done for His people. It's not just historical; it is poetic. It is a song. And it is a song of joy.

Now there's a corresponding verse that you might put in your margin, if I've not already given it to you on another occasion—and it would be Exodus chapter 19 and verse 4. Just put it down there, and I'll read it to you, and you can look it up later on. Here's what God said: *"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."* (Exodus 19:4) You see, what He was doing was just bringing them to Himself. See, God's plan in all of this, in this disturbance, was that there might be their commitment, that they have to learn to trust.

And when there's this commitment, then there comes this confidence. They learn, "Hey, I can fly." And then, when there comes this confidence, there comes this conquest. They ride upon their high places. And then all of it just redounds back again to communion. God said, "I took you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to myself."

Conclusion

Now, bottom-line conclusion: If God is stirring up your nest, let me suggest three things for you—and we'll be finished tonight, okay? Three things.

A. Recognize His Presence

Number one, my dear friend: Recognize His presence. See God in your difficulties. Recognize His presence. God is never nearer than when your faith is on trial. And if your nest goes, the nest builder is still there—the Lord. Just recognize His presence. Look in verse 12. That speaks of His presence: "*The LORD alone did lead him.*"

B. Relax in His Protection

Number two: Relax in His protection. Look at it again, in verse 11: "*As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them...*" Friend, you may think you're falling, and you may feel yourself in a free fall, but I'll tell you what. The Lord knows when to spread His wings under you. So, relax in His protection. He cannot, He will not, fail you.

Colonel F. J. Miles has said this: "Here is a revelation of the God who bears. For when these little eaglets assay to fly, and fail, and the bottom seems to fall out of everything, and they drop down, down, down, then, swifter than the little eaglet's fall is the sweep and swoop of the parent bird. She, diving beneath, catches the eaglet on her broad back and beareth it beneath her pinions, carries it to the safety and shelter of the ledge. And so the game goes on and on until the eaglet learns to fly. Never, never once in the whole world's story, has it ever been placed on record that a little eaglet, in learning to fly, has been permitted to fall to its destruction by the parent bird—ever!" And then he says, "As the eagle, so the Lord."

C. Rejoice in His Purpose

Recognize His presence. Relax in His protection. Rejoice in His purpose, for He just may have something bigger and better for you than you ever could dream of. Look in verse 13: "*He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields.*"

Are you ready to try your wings? "Oh," you say, "I'd like to." Yeah, I know you would, but I don't think you will, until God stirs your nest. And so, when He does, just trust.

What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out

By Adrian Rogers

Sermon Date: July 24, 1983

Main Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 32:9–14

Outline

Introduction

- I. Recognize God's Dealings
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Introduction

I want you to be finding, please, Deuteronomy chapter 32, and I want us to begin our reading tonight in verse 9. And I want you to remember the title of the message:

“What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out.” And the bottom has a way of falling out, even for the children of God.

I heard about a man the other day who said he had so many troubles that, if something else happens to him, it will be two weeks before he has time to worry about it. And then there's the country song that says, “If it weren't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all.”

Maybe you feel that way. Maybe you just feel like things are going wrong for you; and every time you seem to get things just the way you want them, something happens, and it just all goes awry.

Now what you may need to understand is that God may be doing that to you. I mean, that may be God's plan for you, and that it is God who is throwing the monkey wrench into the works, that it is God who is disturbing your life, that it is God who is sending all that upheaval, and that it is God that seems to be jerking the rug out from beneath your feet. So, tonight, we are going to be studying the principle, “What to Do

When the Bottom Falls Out.”

Look, if you will, in verse 9: *“For the LORD’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape”* (Deuteronomy 21:9–14).

Now spiritual lessons are often taught through nature. As a matter of fact, there is a correspondence theory that says that everything in the spiritual realm has its own corresponding reflection in the natural realm. And I think, perhaps, that indeed may be true. Now this passage of Scripture deals with a natural phenomenon, but it has a spiritual application. I’ve just read to you of God’s dealing with the nation Israel, and God compares His dealing with the nation Israel as with the dealing of a mother eagle with the little eaglet. And what God is saying that He did to them was the same thing that an eagle does with her baby eaglets. Now Moses, who wrote this passage of Scripture, knew the ways of nature. As a matter of fact, he spent forty years as a shepherd; and many times, I can imagine, he watched this phenomenon that I’m going to describe to you take place.

Now what happens is that the mother eagle knows that one day the little eagle—the eaglet—is going to have to learn how to fly. And so for a long time that baby eagle stays in the nest, and the mother will come with bits of food that she catches, and feed the baby eagle. And it may be anything from a worm to a tender mouse, to anything else—a fish, or whatever it is—that will stay the appetite of that little baby eagle. But the time comes when he must fend for himself; he must learn how to fly. And so what she does is to try to coax him out of the nest and to get him to try his little wings, because, by nature, the eagle is a tremendous flyer. But, of course, the little baby eagle has no desire to fly. He’s never known what flying is; he doesn’t know that he can fly. So if the mother eagle cannot coax the baby eagle out of the nest, what she does is she forces him out of the nest. Those wings that the baby eagle has rested under and found security under, that he thinks are there merely for his protection and for his comfort and warmth, now seem to be a mortal enemy to him, because what the mother eagle will do is to come in the huge nest and spread those great pinions—those great wings of hers—out, and then she begins to beat on the nest.

As the Scripture says, she flutters over it; she stirs up the nest; and she puts everything into pandemonium. And the little eagle cannot stay there in the nest, and she is just beating him this way and that way. And, literally, what she does is, she so turns the nest into an upheaval and puts his life into such consternation that he finds himself literally wanting to get out of there, and to get away from his mother, and to get away from the relentless beating of her wings. He hops out of the nest, and he begins to fall; and the poor little eaglet falls—tumbling, screaming, pleading, falling, flopping—and he falls and falls. And he thinks he’s falling to the rocks.

But the mother eagle knows exactly what she’s doing. She spreads her broad wings, and she flies down and circles him as he falls, and she watches him. And when it looks like that all hope is gone, she swoops beneath him, and he lands right on her shoulders, right between her wings; and she just soars up, and goes right back up to the nest and deposits the baby eagle. He thinks it’s all over, but it’s not all over, because, again, she’ll do the same thing; and he flitters out of the nest and begins to fall, screaming and pleading, frightened. But after a while he takes his little wings and puts them out, and he feels something—a sensation that he’s never felt before: it’s the air that’s beneath him. And he feels the flow of the wind, and he feels that buoyancy, and he feels that lift. And the first thing you know, he’s flying. And it’s a new experience. But the only way that the mother eagle could get that little eaglet to fly is to take that place of security, and that place of comfort, and that place of safety that he had, and stir it up, and force him out of the nest.

Now, look again at verse 11: *“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him”* (Deuteronomy 32:11–12). This is God’s way for His people so often.

Now I want to ask you three questions, if you’re having trouble. First of all, are you recognizing His dealings? Secondly, are you responding to His dealings? And, thirdly, are you rejoicing in His dealings?

I. Recognize God’s Dealings

Now, first of all, it’s important that we recognize God’s dealings. A lot of what we think the devil may be doing to us, the Lord may be doing to us. The Lord Himself is the One who may be bringing into our lives what I would call the discipline of divine disturbance. All of us who are Christians like to settle down; all of us who are Christians like it easy. We don’t want any conflict; we don’t want any difficulty. We can identify with that man who said, “I’d like to build a sweet little nest somewhere in the West, and let the rest of the world go by.” But God doesn’t want us to settle down, and God doesn’t want us to

spend forever in the nest. He has better things for us.

Job said, “*I shall die in my nest*” (Job 29:18). But God had another plan for Job, and I’m glad that He did. God allowed Job to have some trouble, and even what the devil did to Job, the devil could not have done unless the Lord had allowed it. And so, in a sense, behind the devil’s activity on Job was the omniscient and omnipotent providential power of Almighty God. We like it in the nest, don’t we?

One preacher who had a fine job and security, and everything was going fine, prayed a very good prayer; and I think every pastor, every Christian worker, and every Christian, for that matter, ought to be able to pray the same kind of a prayer: “Lord, if I’m building a nest, put a thorn in it.” One of the greatest cults in America is the cult of the comfortable, where we just want to settle down and stay in the nest. Someone has well said that, while preachers and Christians ought to comfort the afflicted, we also need to afflict the comfortable.

George Truett was a Baptist preacher, and George Truett said this: “If you have imagined that the ideal life is ease and rest and quiet, your imagination has been a vain one. The ideal life is marked by struggle, change, conflict, and upheaval.”

Now, why is this disturbance necessary? Why doesn’t God just let us alone? Why can’t God just let us live a happy life, and have a peaceful old age, and a serene death? Why does God just keep stirring things up? Well, let’s go back to this little baby eagle for a while. Why does the mother eagle stir up the nest of the baby eagle? Well, I’ll tell you.

A. To Know More Than Just the Nest

For one reason, the only thing in his entire life that little baby eagle has ever known has been the nest, and he doesn’t know anything of the great world beyond. And if the mother eagle did not stir up the nest, he never would learn. His world has just been the confines of that nest. And, friend, when God begins to bring disturbance into your life, He wants to expand you, and He wants to educate you. He wants to teach you some things that you could know no other way. Dr. Theodore Cuyler wrote these words: “God sees that you and I are all the time determined to nestle down among our creature comforts. We build these earthly nests for ourselves, and we fix our affection on them; and then we settle down in them.” “Well,” God says, “there’s more, and I want you to learn it.”

B. To Cure the Fear of Change

I’ll tell you another reason that the Lord so often stirs our nest. It is the same reason that the mother eagle stirs the little eagle’s nest: that is, all of us have a natural fear of change. Once we settle down, we don’t like to be disturbed. Isn’t that right? We don’t

like to be disturbed. We go to a restaurant and order the same thing. I mean, why change? Why do anything different? I feel like the man who had a dresser drawer full of neckties but pulls the same ones out every time. Do you fellows do it that way—just the same ones? You get used to things, and you just don't like to change. We resist change, and we're fearful of the unknown. And so God wants us to expand our lives. And sometimes He just has to come right in and disturb everything.

C. To Discover the Wings of Faith

Now God has a purpose for us not to be secure in the nest. He wants us to discover the wings of faith that are going to bring us to a fuller life. I want to quote George W. Truett again. George Truett said, "You were not made to grovel in the dust. You were made for the high hills. You were made for the vast firmament. You are not muckrakers. You are not to wallow, grovel, and grope like the beast of the field or of the stall. You were made to fly. And the very meaning of every event, every task, every experience, every cloud, and every struggle is to teach you to fly. So God has to bring trouble."

You can read the story of the early church. For a while things were going fine in the early church. They were having revival in Jerusalem, and souls were being saved; and there was great joy and miracles, and they were eating bread and fellowshiping from house to house. They were fine; but God had more for them, and God brought a disturbance, God brought a persecution, to that early church that I am certain that many people thought was the work of the devil. And, in a sense, it was the work of the devil. But it was God stirring the nest.

Would you turn to Acts chapter 8 and look at verses 1 to 4 for a moment? "*And Saul was consenting unto his death.*" That is, the death of Stephen: "*And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*" It was a terrible time, but notice, in verse 4: "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word*" (Acts 8:1–4).

It's very obvious what God did to that early church that was smug and comfortable. They might not have been doing anything wrong; they were doing everything right. But God sent persecution, and God just tore that nest to smithereens; and God shoved them out. He'd already given them the Great Commission. They were to go into the entire world, but it took the tearing up of the nest, it took persecution, to cause those that were scattered abroad to go everywhere preaching the Word. That's just the way

God does things. God just knows when everything is going right, seemingly, to bring disturbance, because He has something better.

Back in 1966, I followed the call of God, together with my family, to the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, Florida, and God immediately began to bless that work from the first Sunday. The first Sunday I preached, I gave the invitation, and there was a veritable flood of people coming forward to give their hearts to Christ. I believe that first Sunday we had thirty-four additions to that little church, and that was a harbinger of things to come. God blessed in a marvelous way. We took the little church that was running 300 or so in Sunday School, watched it grow from 300 to 400, to 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1,000, 1,200, 1,300, 1,400, 1,500—attendances of over 2,000 in Sunday School. We saw so many people saved. We were able to lead the entire Southern Baptist Convention one year in the number of people saved and baptized. And I thought, “Well, this is it. I like this.”

We had a little—I say, a *little*—house. It was a lovely house the church built for us. It was in the middle of a grapefruit grove. We had beautiful home. I had a little sailboat right there alongside the house. We were right there on the Indian River, where the mullet jumped and the porpoise played. And in the evening after I would work, I’d come home and get in that little sailboat, and shove it out in the Indian River, and sail around and watch the world go by.

We were just so happy, just so thrilled. The newspaper wanted to do a feature article—a Sunday interview of me, a supplement—so they sent a reporter, and he lived with me and followed me around for several days. And then they wrote the article. On the front page of the Sunday supplement was a picture of myself inside the beautiful mall area of that church. I was standing on the steps with a Bible, and, underneath, it said this: “Reverend Rogers and His Island in the Sun.” That was the title of the article on the front page of the Sunday supplement.

And they said, “Do you intend to go anywhere else?” I said, “Oh, no; no sir. As a matter of fact, I expect to go to heaven from Merritt Island.” That was in the paper. That was a few days—just a few days—before the Bellevue Pulpit Committee interfered with our vacation. And I had stopped to call home from Atlanta, Georgia, and we were on our way up to New England. We had bought a motor home with some other friends. It was my turn to use it. I was headed up to New England, and, for the first time in my life, almost, I had a few extra dollars in my pocket; and I had nowhere to go—just nowhere I wanted to go, really. I had my wife, and so forth, and we were in that little motor home, traveling up to New England.

I came to Atlanta, and just stopped to call home and check up on my children; and they said, “Daddy, there are some people who have been trying to contact you, and

you're supposed to call *thus-and-such a number*." When I called *thus-and-such a number*, it was a friend who said, "It's the Pulpit Committee from Bellevue Baptist Church, and they want to talk to you about coming to be their pastor." I told Joyce, "I don't want to talk to them. I don't want to talk to anybody about that." And she said, "Why?" I said, "There's no reason to talk to them about it. God has me right in the middle of everything that's good and wonderful: I couldn't be happier." And Memphis was to the left, and so I turned to the right, took that motor home, and just started off in the other direction. Joyce said, "Well, Adrian, you've got to return the call. You can't not—that would be impolite." I said, "Well, maybe, after a few days, I'll call them," and we just kept on going.

Finally, my conscience made me call one Sunday afternoon. I talked to a man named Roland Maddox. Roland said, "Dr. Rogers, we've been listening to you preach, and been talking about you; and we want—our pulpit committee wants—to talk to you." I said, "Well, thanks, but no thanks. I'm honored, really, that you'd want me to be the pastor of your church; but, honestly, it's not God's will that we go anywhere else. We're just right where God wants us." And he said, "Well, we've already had a bunch of people down in your church listening to you." I said, "You mean you came all the way from Memphis, Tennessee down there, and you spent all that money?" He said, "Yes, we've been spending a lot of money on airplane tickets, following you around." I said "Well, I wish you hadn't done that. That's a big waste of money." I said, "Why didn't you ask me first?" They said, "Well, that's not the way you do it. You're supposed to stalk a man." And I said, "Well, this is frustrating; and, really, it is, because I have no inclination—no inclination—to go anywhere else." They said, "Well, won't you at least talk with us?" I said, "Well, I'm on vacation. I've got nothing else to do, really. I guess I'll talk."

The rest of it is history: that you people, with your love and your prayers, did something; and God, in you, and through you, started some strange upheaval in my heart, some of the worst feelings that I have ever had. And it was as though I was in a nest, and the Lord was just beating it, and beating it, and beating that nest. And I wanted to say, "Lord, I like where I am. Why don't you just leave me alone? We are doing a wonderful work, and everything is fine." But the Lord would just keep this upheaval going. Joyce and I would fast, and pray, and seek the face of the Lord. Finally, your committee said, "Well, will you just come up and preach?" I said, "Yes, I'll come up and preach." They said, "You know, Bellevue has never had a person preach a trial sermon, and whatever the pulpit committee recommends the church will most likely approve." I said, "Well, maybe so; but I've got to go up there and preach." They said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I couldn't take a church without preaching in it anymore than I

could marry a girl without kissing her first.” And I just have to go up there and preach, to find out what it’s like.

I didn’t even know whether folks could be saved in Tennessee, or not. I really wasn’t sure. I came up here and preached, and you were so gracious. God was here that Sunday. Do you remember that Sunday? Some of you were here. God was all over this place. Never in my life have I felt the presence of the Lord in a building stronger and more real. And it wasn’t sentimentality, and it wasn’t imagination. God, in His glory, was hovering over this place. We excused ourselves. Your committee reported. And then you unanimously voted and asked us to come and be your pastor and wife and family.

I wasn’t prepared for what you were about to do; but you brought me out here, and I stood here. And Al Childress, who is here tonight, said, “Well, we just voted to ask you to be our pastor.” Well, I was just coming up to preach. I didn’t know you were going to vote at that time. There was nothing said about that. We were just going to preach and then talk some, but you fellows jumped the gun. And he said, “We’re extending you a call to be our minister.” And I could not have told you at that moment what I would have said until that moment. I said, “Well, all right; I’ll come.” I couldn’t believe that was me talking. It sounded like someone else was speaking, because I wasn’t prepared to say that. Joyce and I had not even talked it over. I mean, we talked and talked, but she didn’t say, “Adrian, what are you going to say if they call you?” Or, I didn’t say, “Joyce, what are you thinking?” We always do things together. But I said, “I’ll come.”

And, folks, when I said that, right afterward, I went back to that study. Dr. Pollard had taken his books and things out, and the study was more or less bare; but it was the place they gave me to kind of get my things together. And we were going out to eat, and the pulpit committee was going to take us out to lunch afterward. Some of them were getting in the car, but I went back to that study and put my face in the carpet—literally, put my face in the carpet—and wept. I said, “My God, what have I done?” I’ll tell you how I felt. I felt like a man who had been unfaithful to his wife. I thought, “What will my people in Florida think? I mean, what will they think when they hear I’m not going to be their pastor? I’ve told another church I’ll be their pastor.” I couldn’t imagine it. I thought, “Was that really me saying that?” And I felt like coming back out here and saying, “Folks, I didn’t mean it: I take it back.”

Joyce and I went home. The news had already preceded us. Some lowdown, no good—no, he’s really a fine man, I’m sure—but somebody in this town who knew somebody in that town who was one of my deacons called in a few minutes and said, “Guess what? You’ve lost your preacher.” The news had preceded me. We got back home, and all kinds of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and Joyce and I, when we started across that bridge—there’s a bridge that goes over Merritt Island, and

we had our things packed; and you sent Tom Joyce and the moving people to come get us—and when we started across that bridge, I thought, “I’ve done pretty good up until that time.” Joyce had done good. But when we started across that bridge, and I looked back at that town, and those people—most all of them in the church I had seen come to Christ and baptized, or else united with us from a transfer from another church; they had all come into the church family; I was the only pastor many of them knew—somehow God just broke my heart. And when we went over that expanse—over the Indian River—we blubbered and cried.

I didn’t know what God was going to do here. I really didn’t know. I was scared to death. I got here, and on Monday morning, I went down to the pastor’s conference. I had never seen so many preachers. The pastor’s conference meets every Monday. Did you know that? Baptist preachers. Memphis, Tennessee has more Baptist preachers than Carter has liver pills. They were all in there; they all looked alike: all had blue suits, red ties, black Bibles. I said, “Lord, what do you need me here for? I don’t belong here. I’m not from Tennessee. What do you want me here for? There are enough preachers in this place.” And little did I know what God had in store for my life.

I don’t want you to tell the folks at Merritt Island this, because I love them dearly; but these past eleven years now, almost, have been the greatest years of my life. I could not have possibly dreamed what God had in mind for us—for me. And had God given me the choice—I mean, had God not just picked me up by the nape of the neck and drug me along, had God just let me sanely and calmly make up my mind, I would have easily said, “No, it’s not God’s will.”

But the Lord knows how to stir the nest. The Lord knows how to bring these upheavals and these troubles into your heart and into your life. And it’s not because He doesn’t love you; it’s because He does love you. There is so much more that He has for you. But sometimes we want to settle down on our island in the sun, but God doesn’t want us to.

II. Respond to God’s Dealings

Now, number one: We must recognize God’s dealings. And, second, we must respond to His dealings. Now, how do you learn how to fly? Would you like to learn how to fly?

A. Commitment

Well, first of all, there must be this commitment. What a baby eagle does is, he spreads his wings, and he commits himself to the air. I mean, there’s nothing else to perch on. There’s nothing else to stand on. When you step out on faith, it is abandonment. That’s the way to fly.

B. Confidence

But not only must there be, first of all, this commitment; but then, after the commitment, there comes the confidence. As you step out on what seems to be nothing, as you have no visible means of support—it seems like the bottom falls out—there comes a confidence; you begin to feel the lift of the wind, and God is there. Now you may fall, you may falter, but the Lord just swoops underneath. And though you're cast down, you don't utterly fall.

C. Conquest

And after that commitment, and after the confidence, then comes that conquest, where you begin, then, to soar. Look what he says here in verses 13 and 14: *“He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape”* (Deuteronomy 32:13–14). How many blessings God has for us when we respond to His dealings! First of all, that commitment: we just jump out of the nest. Then comes the confidence that we can indeed fly. And then comes that conquest, as we absorb and assimilate the blessings that our Lord has for us.

III. Rejoice in God's Dealings

Now one other little thing, and I'll be finished. I want to ask you a hard question, and it is this: not only, are you recognizing His dealings? and not only, are you responding to His dealings by commitment and confidence? but are you really rejoicing in His dealings? You see, God wants you really to rejoice. This passage of Scripture that I have read to you right now is really a song; it is a hymn of praise, and it's a praise song—a song of joy. And it's because God had been so good to His people.

Now, how can I rejoice in disturbance? Well, I want to give you a verse for your margin, and it's Exodus 19, verse 4—and here's what it says: *“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself”* (Exodus 19:4). What the Lord was doing for these people when He was stirring up the nest is just simply bringing them to Himself.

So why should I rejoice in His dealings? Well, first of all, God is manifesting Himself to you. Notice verse 10: *“He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye”* (Deuteronomy 32:10). Now in trouble, it might seem that the bottom is falling out and you're going down, but Colonel F. J. Miles said this: “Here is a revelation of God, who

bears you up. For when these little eaglets assay to fly and fail, and the bottom seems to fall out of everything, and they drop down, down, down, then, swifter than the little eaglet's fall is the sweep and swoop of the parent bird. She, diving beneath, catches the eaglet on her broad back, and, burying it beneath her pinions, carries it to the safety and shelter of the ledge. And so the game goes on until the eaglet learns to fly." And then I want you to hear what this man has to say: "Never, never, once in the whole world's story, has it ever been placed on record that a little eaglet, in learning to fly, has been permitted to fall to its destruction by the parent bird. Never, never, never. As the eagle, so the Lord."

Conclusion

Now if God's bringing trouble into your life, just write over it Romans 8:28: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*