

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

04 June 2023

Enemies of the Family

We are in the midst of sermons on family.

The Theme Being: The Christian Family: Living for Christ in the present.

Today's text: "Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." *Eph. 5:15-16*

You might say: Walking the walk as we talk the talk.

How do Christians Walk?

We, as followers of "The Way", walk in the Love of Christ.

Our example and source of strength being Jesus himself, raised from the dead and sitting beside God.

With the counsel and power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Jesus taught his followers to walk in love that served the other person.

It is a high calling for anyone who desires to live as Jesus lived, loving as he loved.

This high calling is exactly what the Lord Jesus expects of his people.

When we fail, he is willing to work with us; he knows how to forgive.

But know that you know, God wants us to grow continually in the fullness of life in Jesus "The Christ".

This might sound like an admonition for personal Christian living alone, but it also precedes a lengthy passage on family relationships. *Eph. 5:21-6:4*.

We should apply these truths to the family as well as to our personal lives.

A couple weeks back we identified the friends of the family; but we should be aware of the enemies of the family as well.

While it is true that certain television shows and movies along, with the influence of non-Christian minds, can be detrimental to the health of the family, these are not our primary enemies.

We cannot isolate ourselves from the world if we are to have any impact on it.

The real enemies of the family are those that arise out of our own disobedience to the Word of God.

We can name these enemies by looking carefully at our scripture passage for today.

Enemy number one is permissiveness. *Eph. 5:3-12*.

The first enemy that will destroy a family is the permissive attitude that is popularly expressed as "anything goes".

Sexual immorality, perversity, and coarse talk ought to be foreign to the people of God.

When respect for the sexuality of the family is lost and no one sets standards for family attitudes toward sex, the bond of trust that must hold families together becomes frayed and soon breaks.

Children need to be taught the discipline that comes from obedience to God.

We do not have to do all the things we want to do.

We can say no so that at the right time and in the right way we can say yes.

Young people need to know that the decisions they make now in their dating relationships will determine, to a great degree, the authority they will have as a parent to counsel their own children as to how they ought to treat their sexuality.

And grandparents can encourage their grandchildren to not fall into the trap of lust.

Parental immorality always undermines parental authority!

The Biblical example of this is the life of King David after his fall.

His family is a mess and he has no integrity to combat it.

Enemy number two is drunkenness. *Eph. 5:18.*

This warning includes not only wine, but all alcohol and drugs that alter the mental and emotional state and make us vulnerable to temptation and evil.

A family is severely frustrated when one of its members becomes a different person in the aftermath of drug abuse.

Alcohol is the worst drug problem in our world.

Adults prefer to talk about the drug problems of the young because they do not want to deal with the drug problem they have installed in their own home bars.

Pastors tend to be more vocal in their opposition to alcohol than most professionals because they so often counsel families that have been destroyed by the effects of alcohol.

As strong as peer pressure may be in the lives of young people, parents can demonstrate a consistent Christian lifestyle along with fair and loving discipline to help protect their families from this enemy.

Enemy number three is selfishness. *Eph. 5:21-22, 25, 28-29*

Sermons on this text meet with one great difficulty.

The men hear the part about how the wife should respect them and follow their leadership.

The women hear the part about how their husbands should love them as Christ loved the church.

The reason we hear the message in this way is selfishness.

We first think of ourselves and later think of the other.

We must hear both of Paul's admonitions at the same time.

In *verse 21* we have the idea: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ".

Submission in a marriage should be mutual.

First Corinthians 7:4 is a commentary on this very point.

"The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife."

In a Christian home, the wife and children should be willing to allow the husband and father to provide leadership.

He needs the respect of his family, not ridicule, if he is to be a successful leader of the family.

Good leaders are good listeners.

They are not tyrannical.

They delegate authority and respect the decisions that others make.

They are willing to provide leadership and accept the responsibility of articulating the vision for the family.

Christian husbands are willing to let God make them into good leaders.

Christian wives rejoice in helping God develop leadership in their husbands.

In a Christian home, the husband should love his wife with thoughtful attention.

He should love his wife with the kind of devotion and courage that marked Jesus' love for the church.

Jesus loved the church and gave himself up for her on the cross.

No husband has begun to love his wife as God calls him to, if he is more concerned about his own welfare, self-esteem, and future than he is about his wife's welfare, self-esteem, and future.

Jesus died to save his church.

A husband must be willing to die for his wife, to give himself away for her well-being and growth.

A wife has a right to be loved by her husband nobly, faithfully, and always.

A daily prayer of gratitude to God for the wife he has given you will strengthen your love for your wife.

Paul's admonition does not reserve respect for the husband nor love for the wife.

Marriage is a blend of lives, and both husbands and wives are to be respected and loved.

Selfishness is the enemy.

Thinking of one another and doing loving things for one another are ways to overcome this enemy.

Enemy number four is carelessness. *Eph. 6:4*

Fathers are advised not to provoke their children to anger.

This means, obviously, that discipline must be fair and just.

But it also means that fathers must not be careless of their children.

No father is so poor that he cannot pay attention to his child.

Children experience deep anger when they realize that one or both of their parents are not really interested in them.

A man once said to his pastor, "My father was an excellent carpenter, but he never showed me how to do one thing. He could have helped me so much, but he never noticed me."

Behind that complaint, the pastor was able to discern a latent anger that had blocked the son's emotional and spiritual growth for years.

Children know they have a right to be considered.

They feel deep anger, which is usually repressed, when parents do not listen or do not set boundaries, show interest, or expect excellence.

We must not be careless with our children, not only for their sakes, but also for our own.

One way or another, fathers have to pay attention to their children.

Ideally, fathers will be there to offer support to their children at the time in their lives when it can bring joy and growth.

If support comes too late to help, all that is left to do is hurt.

Enemy number five is ignorance of the Lord. *Eph. 6:4*

The greatest strength in any home is the knowledge of the Lord.

The Jewish fathers were given the high task of instructing their children about the Lord and his deliverance of their people from bondage.

Paul exhorted parents that children must be brought up "in the training and instruction" of the Lord.

If they are not taught, they are ignorant.

It is not because children are dumb or stubborn that they don't know God's way; it is because their parents have not taught them.

It is not the school's fault nor the church's fault if children are spiritually illiterate; spiritual knowledge is the responsibility of the parents.

We cannot train our children in godly matters if we are not experienced.

If we are not on speaking terms with God, we will not be able to teach our children what they need to know.

Beware of the enemies that seek to destroy your family.

Ask God to help you defend against permissiveness, drunkenness, selfishness, carelessness, and ignorance.

If you must confess that you do not know the Lord well enough to teach your children, then he invites you to start to walk with him in faith that you may indeed be wise and successful in making the most of the time you have with your family. *Eph. 5:16*.