

Tough Love

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- [0 : 0 0] May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O my Lord. I hate you, Dad.
- These can be hard words, can't they? There can be hard words for a parent to hear that from one of their children.
- But the nature of parenting, as most of you know here, is to say things to children that they don't necessarily want to hear.
- Now that can be about an aspect of their attitude towards study.
- Or it can be about, let me see, housework. It can be about just anything really.
- [1 : 1 0] Anything that a parent thinks that the child would benefit from in the long term. And it's about setting boundaries, isn't it?
- It's about setting boundaries, healthy boundaries, and then dealing with the consequences of those boundaries when they're broken. So there was a story of a parent.
- And the rule in the house was that there should be no mobiles in bedrooms. No mobiles at all in bedrooms.
- It was quite a simple rule. And you'd think, yeah, that's fairly reasonable. You know this. It was really hard to keep.
- And what used to happen is that one of the parents would go from room to room, checking whether mobiles were plugged in to charge overnight.
- [2 : 1 9] And one night, they couldn't find this particular child's phone. So the usual way of finding a phone, as you know, is to dial it.
- And hey, presto, the pillow that the child was sleeping on suddenly started to ring. The phone was found.
- It was confiscated. And there was a 24-hour phone ban imposed. Totally reasonable if you're a parent.
- If you're not a parent, it would be totally unreasonable. However, it was what it is. But confiscating that phone didn't really make the parent popular.
- They didn't enjoy doing it. But loving their child meant that they had to help.
- [3 : 2 9] They had to help with that child's growth in healthy habits. And it's a form of tough love. Which is what the whole theme of today's service is about.
- So when Jesus began preaching, Israel had become kind of inward looking. It looked inside to itself.
- It had become isolated from other nations. And it wasn't fulfilling its God-given mission. To be a blessing to other nations around them.
- Now I suppose you could say that recent events in America could be seen as a continuation of that. Looking inward.
- Looking to self. As a nation. But in the reading that Cami read to us earlier. Jesus himself.

- [4 : 35] Read. From the scriptures. In the synagogue. He then declared that they had been fulfilled. And then he declares himself a prophet.
- That's quite a lot to do in such a short space of time. And then he started to tell all the folks about him. That stories.
- The stories of Elijah and Alicia. And how they helped outsiders. Not just their own people. And that's what really tipped the people off.
- It was going against what they thought should be the right way. And they responded by trying to throw him off a cliff. But our Lord and Saviour being who he is.
- He just calmly walked through them. And went on his own way. Now I'm sure that if I was to sit down after the service.
- [5 : 39] And ask you. If you could remember parts of your life. Where you've been the recipient. Of tough love. We would have quite a long conversation.
- And not necessarily from members. Of your own family. Let me give you an example of my life. Now when I was an ag student.
- In Aberdeen. To supplement the grant I got at the time. I had to work at the weekend. And I'd done quite a lot of.
- Varied work on farms. And at the time. I'd just finished a placement on a dairy farm. So I knew I could. I could milk cows. So I used to.
- Make myself available to contract. Milk. Agencies that I was available. So. One. Sunday morning.
- [6 : 41] I was coming home. To Aberdeen. From having milked. 200 cows. Somewhere out by New Deer. I can't remember. And at that time.
- I used to drive. A Morris Marina. Now some of you will remember. What they were like. It was my first car. And my father helped me buy it. And the only reason.
- That we got a Morris Marina. Is because he won. A raffle. In the Navy. And the Marina was it. Okay. It was his last trip. Back in a. An aircraft carrier.
- And. He won a Morris Marina. Second prize was a Ford Escort. I said. Why couldn't you have won that? Anyway. But anyway. He thought they were great cars. So. And. So. I was coming back through Aberdeen.
- I just got onto King Street. And. There's two going along. Not exactly. Breaking any world speed records. Or anything like that. And then I noticed it.
- [7 : 37] In my rear view mirror. A Ford Granada John sandwich. A Ford. A Ford. So. Here we go. So. They pulled me over.
- And. I had to have a walk around the vehicle. And they couldn't find anything wrong with it. At all. Nothing wrong with it at all. I wasn't speeding. All my tyres were.
- Remarkably not bald. Everything was fine. All the lights worked. So they couldn't. They couldn't bring anything to me. Now if you remember. Back in the day.
- When a policeman. Used to turn up. And pull you over. You had to. Everything wasn't digitised. In those days. So. If a man.
- If a policeman asked you for his. For your MOT. Or your driving licence. You didn't have to give it there and then. You still don't. You've got seven days to do that. But now.
- [8 : 36] They can turn up. They can look on their phones. And they can tell you. Exactly. What's going on. MOT's up to date. You're all insured. Everything else.
- You've got a current driving licence. But in those days. You had seven days. So I was instructed. To. Show me documents. To the nearest police station. Within seven days.

So I got back to my flat. And I would eat. And I always had. A little folder. With anything related to the vehicle. But I was tired. I thought. Right. I'll just. I'll just grab this folder. And I took myself off.

To the nearest police station. So I told the man behind the desk. The policeman behind the desk. I had to show my documents. And. Oh yes. Let's have a look at them. So he was going through them.

And then. I have a particular skill. Of being able to read upside down. It's called. Years of dealing with farmers. And dealing opposite them. On the kitchen table. So. You know.

[9 : 33] So I noticed. Oh no. My MOT is out of date. And the policeman noticed as well. And. Um. So I didn't have an MOT.

So he charged me. Charged me for failing to have an MOT. Everything else was fine. MOT I didn't have. So. Um.

That was fine. I thought. Right. What am I going to do about this? Two days later. He came to see me in the house. In the flat. And. He told me. He dropped all charges. Because he realised.

I'd gone and got the car. Sorted. And MOT. And all this stuff. But. It was a form of tough love. Because to that date.

I'd never ever had an out of date MOT. I can tell you. Never ever had. Still got the folder with everything in it. And. I have to say. It was probably.

[10 : 32] Traditional. And old fashioned policing. Through love. Okay. That guy wanted to teach me a lesson. And. He did. For those two days.

Before he came to the flat. I was getting pretty worried. I can tell you. But. It was a form of him. Teaching me. Where my boundaries were. Not to be quite so cocky.

So. God. Calls us to be loving. To others. Doesn't he? Sometimes that means. Showing tough love.

At the same time. And it sometimes means. Speaking the truth. Whether they. Whether folks want to hear it. Or not.

God. Jesus. Lists. Examples. Of. God's grace. That. Can we read to us. Experienced by.

[11 : 31] Foreigners. Outsiders. But his audience. But his audience. Rioted. And want to come. It's because. They didn't want. To hear the truth.

And right through. Jesus's ministry. We see him. Unafraid. Unafraid. To say. Difficult things. Difficult things.

To the people. Of God. He was. Never. Afraid. To do that. And similarly. As we get. Deeper. And deeper.

Into a relationship. With God. And Jesus. Through our quiet times. Through. Reading the Bible. Sometimes.

There will be. A passage. There. We don't. Agree with. We don't. Think. It's right. It's a hard. Thing. To hear.

[12 : 27] It impacts. Us. Personally. But. Jesus. Is talking. To us. And he's doing. It. Out of love. And that's.

Why he's doing it. Because his love. Is so great. For us. That he can't. He can't. Leave us. Sit. In our ways. That will hurt. Us.

Or others. Somewhere. In the future. So. That's my message. This morning. Sometimes.

We're called. To deliver. Tough love. Sometimes. We have to receive it. As well. It's a continuing.

Thing. But if we're brave. We'll hear this message. And we will be changed. And changed.
For better.

[13 : 22] Amen. Amen.