

God's Word to Children and Fathers

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[0 : 00] Chapter 6, and this morning we'll be considering verses 1-4. If you were here last week, you would have heard in the sermon how the instruction that God gave to wives and husbands was unusual for the time in which those instructions were given.

And this morning, I think what we will see is, as we continue our series in the letter of Ephesians, that the instructions that God gives to children and fathers are equally surprising.

So please follow along as I read Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1-4. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor your father and mother. This is the first commandment with a promise, that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

[1 : 36] Let's pray. Father, we pause once again because we need your help to hear your word and to heed your word.

Lord, would you give us a fresh measure of your spirit this morning, that we may be postured to hear your word and then to obey your word.

Lord, I especially ask that you would grant me grace, that I may speak in particular to children and fathers standing on and within the four corners of your word.

Lord, use your word to bless children. And use your word to bless fathers and indeed to bless families.

For the glory of your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Let me consider these four verses.

[2 : 47] Here's what I believe we can summarize them to say. God calls children to obey their parents in the Lord and fathers to raise their children in the Lord.

He calls children to obey their parents in the Lord. And he calls fathers to raise their children in the Lord.

And hopefully you've seen that the governing words in each case are in the Lord.

Two simple points this morning. First, God's word to children. We see it in verses 1 to 3.

And then God's word to fathers. We see that in verse 4. So first, God's word to children. I want to follow the pattern of the Apostle Paul by first addressing children and then addressing fathers.

[4 : 00] So children, you especially want to be attentive for this particular part of the sermon. And it's quite interesting that we don't get this experience a whole lot in Scripture where God's word directly addresses a group of people.

And in particular, the group that he addresses now is children. But for all of us, before we speak specifically to the children, I think we should not miss a very important point that is being made by the fact that Paul addresses children.

Paul addresses children in the context of the local church. He doesn't address parents and say, go and tell your children. He addresses children directly. And he starts with, children, this is what you are to do.

And what the clear implication of that is, is that children were a part of the community. Children were a part of the congregation. And I think it helps us to see that we are to take the faith of children seriously.

God saves children. And when he saves children, we are to receive them as a part of the community of believers and take their faith seriously.

[5 : 27] And encourage them and nurture them and guide them in their faith. Now let's consider what God says to children in verses 1 through 3.

And God's word to them is in the form of two commands and one promise. First, he calls children to obey their parents in the Lord.

Notice the children are not just called to obey. But he calls them to obey their parents in the Lord. And to appreciate this command, it would be helpful for us to know how children were viewed in the ancient world.

Children were not viewed very highly in the ancient world. They were not regarded. They were tolerated at best. Children were actually in a weaker position than women.

More vulnerable. And we heard the condition that women were in in the ancient world. Children were more likely to be mistreated and abused than women.

[6 : 45] In the Roman world, which the political and the cultural context was the context of the Ephesian church, children were property.

They were subject to the all-powerful father who could kill them at birth by simply leaving them exposed. And just leaving them to die.

William Barclay writes this about Roman fathers. He writes, He could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands.

And punish as he liked. He could even inflict the death penalty on his child. Such was the Roman world. And although mothers would not have had this same kind of authority that fathers had, I think we all know that because of the fall, because of the fall, we have this tendency to mistreat those who are under our authority.

Not that we always do it, but we do have this tendency where those under our authority tend to be abused.

[8 : 23] And interestingly, you would think that a person who is abused will not abuse people under them. But it almost seems like it's like that's their outlet because they abuse, well, they abuse someone else who's underneath them.

You've probably seen the joke about the father who comes home and abuses the wife, and the wife abuses the child. And what does the child do? He abuses the dog because you can get away with abusing the dog.

And so, the child would have faced mistreatment also at the hands of mothers.

Even in Jewish culture, children had little value. And I think we can see it from this account in Mark chapter 10. I'll go ahead and read it.

Mark chapter 10, verses 13 to 16. Mark records, and they were bringing children to him, to Jesus, that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them.

[9 : 31] But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and he was angry. And he said to them, let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms.

and blessed them, laying his hands on them. Here we read about one of the few times Jesus was angry. And why was he angry?

He was angry because children were being devalued. And part of the other reason that Jesus was angry was he had just taught them and told them how they were to treat children just a little while before in chapter 9.

Jesus, in teaching them, took a little child and set the child in the midst of them and he said to them, whoever's going to receive the kingdom, or he says to them, whoever receives me, receives this little child, receives me.

[10 : 46] And in so doing, he was placing value on the little child by saying, if you reject me, or you reject this little child, you are essentially rejecting me.

Jesus aligned himself with that weak, undervalued, mistreated child of his time. He said, you receive the child, you receive me, you reject this child, you also reject me.

But just a short while later, his disciples had it so ingrained in them that they were mistreating children, pushing them away, saying, Jesus is too busy, he needs to teach, he needs to heal, and he has no time for you.

And Jesus, again, angry, teaches them the value of little children by saying to them that this little child exhibits the kind of trust that is necessary for those who will receive the kingdom of God.

But this time, he goes even further. Mark tells us that Jesus takes the time to take each one of these little children into his hands and bless them and lay his hands on them.

[12:00] Each one. He didn't herd them up in a group. He didn't say, come let me pray for you. No, he took time with each one of them, showing them their unique and individual value in a culture where they were nothing.

And he demonstrates the value that is to be put on children. They were as important as going to teach, they were as important as going to perform a miracle.

He took time with them, and in taking time with them, he spoke volumes about how children were to be valued.

Now, when we consider these instructions to children in Ephesians chapter 6, I think it's clear that these are not instructions to toddlers.

These are not instructions to little children. These are instructions to children who could understand and who could willfully obey or willfully disobey.

[13:06] And I think we all know that it is only human to resent those who mistreat us. You find someone who has the ability not to resent those who mistreat them, you find someone who is near to God.

It is natural in all of us to resent mistreatment, and we resent those who are the means of that mistreatment.

And so, these are children who can understand. These are children who can obey. And these are children who live in a culture where they're not valued and they are mistreated.

And it didn't matter that this was the church, because I think we all have lived long enough to know that not just because we carry the name Christian does it necessarily mean that much of the world and so many things that are wrong still mark our lives.

And so, undoubtedly, some of these children who were being called to obey their parents were being mistreated by their parents, and they had reason to resent their parents.

[14:21] But here in this passage, in a generic way, in a broad way, God's Word comes to them and says to them, you are to obey your parents in the Lord.

You're in the church. You are in the community of God. You are to obey them in the Lord. Not in a vacuum, but in the Lord.

Why? Because it is right. It is right that children who are under the authority of their parents should obey them.

And ultimately, this is not about the parents. This is about the Lord. The obedience is in the Lord. The obedience is having the Lord in view.

It is consistent with the difference that the gospel makes. And so while children outside of the church could seek to disobey their parents, children in the church are to obey their parents in the Lord.

[15:34] And again, for the child who asks, why? It is right. That's why. And why is it right? Because God, the creator of the universe, the one who sets the rules, he says, this is right.

And he is all wise. And he is perfect in all of his ways. Now when we think of obedience, the obedience that is in view is biblical obedience.

And biblical obedience has two very important elements. And children, I want you to hear this. Two very important elements mark biblical obedience.

The first is, biblical obedience is prompt obedience. It's not delayed obedience. Biblical obedience is not acting or responding when you are good and ready.

Biblical obedience is promptly carrying out the instruction that's been given to you by your parents. And then second, biblical obedience is complete obedience.

[16:53] It's not partial obedience. It's not eyesight obedience. It is not doing enough to get by, to pull the wool, to swing your parents.

Biblical obedience is complete obedience. It is doing all that you've been instructed to do. Nothing more, nothing less. And so, for example, your mom or dad might say, go and clean your room. And you know, you can go in the room and throw things under the bed, dump some things in the closet, really make the room what we call ship shape or something like that. And, to the appearance, you know, the room is clean.

But deep down, you know, you didn't clean the room. You just made it appear as if you cleaned the room. Biblical obedience is to be prompt in obeying, but it's also to be complete in obeying.

And here, it's important to know that it's not perfect obedience either. It's not perfect obedience because a child may go in and do his or her best to clean that room or to carry out the instruction

given.

[18:10] And then a parent comes along and is saying, well, do that, do this. But the child did his or her best. But it doesn't mean that because they did not do the task to perfection that it wasn't complete obedience.

It was complete as best as they were able to do it. They did not knowingly just not do the whole thing to their best of ability. And so sometimes our best efforts fall short, but that doesn't mean that we were disobedient.

So that's the first command he gives. Children, obey your parents in the Lord because it's right. It's right.

And when the God of the universe says it's right, it's beautiful, it's right. Anything less is not right. It's not beautiful, it's not good. The second command is in verse 2.

[19:17] Honor your father and mother. And notice that the first command to obey is an outward behavior.

You are to do something. You are called to obey. But now this one, this command to honor your parents, it speaks about an inward attitude. And what does it mean to honor?

What does it mean to honor? This word to honor is a very pregnant word. It means to, first of all, ascribe weight.

And then it means to ascribe value. So children, honoring your parents, when you honor your parents, it means that you see them as heavy weight.

You don't see them as lightweight. You know, featherweight. When we were growing up, we would say to someone who we felt we could beat, man, he's a featherweight.

[20:27] But we knew when the heavy weight came. Heavy weight, you respect the heavy weight, say good morning, you try to get along, because that's heavy weight. That's the way. You ascribe weight to your parents.

You honor them. that's what the Lord says. You consider them as having gravity in your eyes.

And honoring them also means valuing them, seeing them as precious, seeing them with high worth and esteem. And children, this is not optional.

the God of the universe, the one who spoke and this world came into being, he says to children, you are not just to obey your parents, you are not just to do what they tell you to do, when you do that, you are to have honor in your heart.

You need to give weight to them, and you need to place value upon them. You need to esteem them as worthy and as precious. And children, you don't get to be the judge over whether your parents are worthy of honor or not.

[21:50] There's one qualification for parents to receive honor from you, and that is, they're your parents. It's the only qualification.

you don't get to decide if they're worthy of honor. God has already decided that. And he has decided that because they're your parents, you give weight to them.

You place value and esteem upon them. And this is especially true because all of it is in the Lord. And this doesn't mean that this honor and even the obedience don't belong to unbelieving parents. There's no qualification here that says you give it to believing parents, but you don't give it to unbelieving parents.

The reality is in that church there were children who had a father or mother who was a believer and a father or mother who was not a believer. I mean, Timothy himself, that was his experience.

[23:00] His mother was a believer, but his father was not a believer. And so it would not have been uncommon for them to have these mixed situations. Probably would not have been uncommon even in some situations for both parents to not be believers.

But that's not a concern for children. The only thing that is of a concern for children is they are your parents. God calls you to obey them in the Lord. He calls you to honor them.

And I think we should notice that although both of these are commandments in Ephesians chapter 6, when we go to the Old Testament, only one was a commandment that God included in the Ten Commandments.

In the Ten Commandments, there is no command to obey your parents. There is the command to honor your parents. And here's why there's no need to put a command to obey your parents.

If you truly honor your parents, you will obey your parents. If you truly place weight on your parents, if you truly place value on your parents, and you esteem your parents as precious, you will obey

them.

[24 : 18] And it's not enough to say it with your lips, and then your life is saying something else. And so the Fifth Commandment that calls children to honor their parents has enveloped in it, has included in it the idea that out of honor will flow obedience.

And again, so if you dismiss your parents, you don't honor them, obedience is light years away. And it's important to understand what's at stake.

It's important to understand that you're not dealing with your parents because it's not your parents who said, obey me. It's not your parents who said, honor me. The God of the universe says, obey them and honor them.

The God who gave you breath and who can take it away says, you are to obey them and you are to honor them.

And to disobey that command, you're getting in the face of a holy God. And there's no small thing. It is no small thing.

[25 : 38] parents may overlook disobedience, but the God of the universe doesn't. And I would add that not only does this include unbelieving parents, this also includes step-parents.

And it should be obvious that the term parents would include step-parents because parents are those who are in your life. They are those who are there to guide you, to nurture you, to care for you, to direct you into adulthood.

That's the role of parents. And we all know so well that it doesn't require biology to do that. If it did, many would be in trouble.

There are many step-parents parents who have done for their non-biological children what many biological parents have not done for them.

And so in view of these words, also, we step-parents. The children, notice that God takes this command so seriously.

[27 : 01] He does something for you that He doesn't do in the other commandments. He gives you an incentive to obey this. He attaches a promise to it.

The God who cannot lie gives you a promise that if you will honor your parents, it will go well with you and you will live long in the land that He is giving you.

When you take that into the context of what He was giving, the command that He was giving to the Israelites, they were going into a land that other people were being dispossessed of because the God who owned it had the right to eject them out of it.

And He is saying if you will honor your parents when you go in this land, you will live long in it. You won't be ejected. You'll be able to prosper in this land and things will go well with you.

And children, one of the greatest sins that you can ever commit is to dishonor your parents.

Because when you dishonor your parents, you ultimately are disobeying the Lord.

[28 : 21] You're not dissing your parents. You're dissing God who says you honor them. And when you think about it, really, this is not even something parents can enforce.

Parents cannot enforce honor because it's the attitude of the heart. Only God knows that. The God who knows and who sees every heart is able to see whether children are honoring their parents. because it is an inward attitude. Parents can see the disobedience and oftentimes they don't see all of the disobedience but the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-present God, he knows it all and he sees it all.

And so again, it's not parents that we disregard, we are ultimately disregarding God as lightweight. God has no value who is not worthy of your obedience.

I want to say to you this morning, children, and I believe that many of us in this room who are adults can testify to this, the sober reality is that the outcome of so many children's lives is in large measure connected to how they have obeyed or disobeyed or honored or dishonored their parents.

[30 : 04] In large measure. Now, I'm not standing here this morning saying to you that this is an absolute rule, but this is a principle that is true.

It is pervasively true that God promises that those who honor their parents, things will go well with them.

There will be a kind of blessing and stability that marks their lives because they have honored their parents. Education won't do that.

other good fortune and life won't do that, but God will do that as children obey His Word.

And I think in our setting today, because there are so many adult children who are at home, I think it's appropriate for adult children to think about how should these words land on my heirs as I'm living at home.

[31 : 17] And I think we all know that as it relates to obedience, so obedience, that's going to change over time. When a child turns 18 and is responsible for him or herself, maybe when they were minors, the parents can say, don't be friends with those people, don't watch that kind of movie, don't wear those clothes.

Parents do that, and they do it for your good. Whether they are absolutely right in the guidance or whatever else, the motivation behind that is for your good.

And then children get to the age where they can make those decisions for themselves. They can choose whether they will have these friends, even their parents may not approve of it, or they'll wear certain clothes and their parents don't approve of it, and they watch certain things and their parents don't approve of it.

And so obedience changes over time. But here's one thing that doesn't change. Honor never changes. Honor, as a matter of fact, let me take that back, honor does change.

They are to be seen with more heavy weight in your eyes. They are to be valued. And hopefully they are, because as we grow and as we mature, our eyes are open and we come to appreciate things that we didn't appreciate before.

[32 : 50] And so while obedience will go in another direction where you can do your own thing, honor should be going in another direction, in a higher direction, where you are more mature and you have come to a place where you can honor your parents in your heart.

And this is true even if we are children who have left home. And it's doubly true if you are at home. It's doubly true if you are at home in your parents' home.

You want to be honoring them. And again, this is not just advice to say, show gratitude.

No, this is the God who created all things, who says, this is the way it's done. This is right.

This is the proper thing to do. And so, children, when you think of these words of God to you in verses 1 through 3, how are you doing?

[34 : 08] When you think of this command to obey your parents in the Lord because it is right, when you think of this command to honor them, to consider them heavyweight in your life, to esteem them, to value them, to consider them precious, how are you doing?

Is your life marked by obedience and honor in your relationship to your parents? Or is it more marked by disobedience and dishonor?

Is it marked by you showing yourself to be wise in your own eyes and thereby showing that you are a fool? The Bible says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And that we fear the Lord. The most basic way is we obey the Lord. Wherever you find yourself this morning thinking that your life is more marked by obedience and honor and disobedience, and dishonor, or maybe the opposite, you would confess and acknowledge, no, my life is more marked by disobedience, more marked by dishonor.

I pray that you hear God's word. For some, this is just a call to grow, for some, it's a call to repent. repent. And in particular, if you're convicted by God's word to you this morning, calling you to obey your parents, calling you to honor your parents, you're mindful that you've not done that, I encourage you, have a conversation with your parents.

[36 : 24] If your heart is truly convicted, if you're truly repentant, then have a conversation with your parents and confess to them, I've not obeyed you as I ought to have.

I've not honored you as I ought to have. And if you believe that your parents have tempted you, your parents have put stumbling blocks in front of you and made it difficult for you to obey and to honor them, and we know this is real, sometimes we as parents can make it difficult for our children to obey and to honor us.

Don't deflect on that and justify your behavior, but seek permission that you may share those things with them as well.

But this brings me to my second and final point, and I promise you that the second point is not as long as the first. God's word to fathers. It's in a single verse, in verse four.

And it may be summarized this way, fathers, raise your children in the Lord. More specifically, God's word to fathers in verse four is in the form of two commands, one negative and one positive.

[38 : 02] In the raising of their children, fathers are called not to do something, and they are called to do something. It's quite interesting when you consider this passage that in verses one to three, children are called to obey their parents.

And you would think that verse four would be something like, and you parents, but that's not the way it begins. It says, and you fathers.

And you fathers. And I believe it's because the father has the primary responsibility in this area of parenting that is being addressed, and that is in raising the children in the Lord.

And it's an area where fathers can so easily abdicate to their wives. But it is by divine intent that fathers are addressed, and it's not commingled with parents.

Fathers are addressed because this is their primary responsibility. ability. But it's also, no doubt, in light of the cultural context that existed at the time that Paul wrote this letter.

[39 : 26] That fathers were the dominant figures in the home. The bucks stopped with them. They were the law and not the mothers.

fathers. And I think also, in light of our reality today, where about 75% of the homes in our country are headed up by single mothers, single mothers need to hear these words that are being addressed to fathers because they function as father and mother in just so many ways.

single mothers, what God says to fathers applies to you as well. And so the first command that he gives to fathers is fathers, don't provoke your children.

Don't provoke them. And if you remember the context in which these words are coming, fathers had absolute authority.

And we know the saying, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. And as Barclay said, fathers could sell them as slaves.

[40 : 54] Imagine having that threat over your life. do what I want you to do, I'll sell you in slavery. Or as some Bahamian parents have reminded their children, I brought you into this world and I can take you out.

But we just say that fathers in that day could have done that and it would have been accepted. And so fathers who are wielding that kind of authority, you can see why they need to be told, don't provoke them.

Don't you abuse your authority, don't you misuse your authority and provoke them to anger. And I think we all know that when a person is under authority at being abused, the only response we really have is what?

Get dead mad. Dead mad. mad. Moses fathers, don't do that.

Don't provoke your children to anger. Do you know that when a person provokes another person and that person may attack them or that person may destroy property, do you know when they go to court, the person who would have destroyed property or harmed the other person, do you know that the court looks on that different than if the person just went on his or her own and attacked that person or destroyed their property?

[42 : 40] When you provoke another person, there's something wrong about that. It doesn't justify the person attacking you, but it does put some context in it that the person was not going to do what they did had you not provoked them.

And that's the point that is being made here to fathers. Fathers, don't use your unbridled authority in such a way that it will bring anger and resentment in the hearts of your children.

And of course, there are other ways that fathers can provoke children to anger. For example, having a double standard. Having a don't do as I do attitude, do as I say.

And another way that fathers can provoke children to anger is by handling them unfairly in discipline or disciplining them severely.

you know there are some parents, they have one response for every infraction. Imagine living in a world where anything you did wrong, there was one punishment.

[44 : 02] But that's the way some parents, some fathers respond. And we don't teach our children the gravity of different sins when we have one simple response for every single thing that they do wrong.

There are some things that certainly merit the rod of understanding, the rod of correction on the seat of understanding. And there are some that don't.

And wise fathers, in particular, try to discern the difference. things. That's the first command, what not to do.

He says, don't provoke them. The second thing that he says that they should do, which is positive, he says, you are to, rather than provoke them, you are to raise them in the Lord, raise them in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord.

the Lord. Not this how my family is run, this is what we do and I know. You raise them in the discipline and in the instruction of the Lord.

[45 : 21] The whole idea is that the way you are to be raising your children is to be informed by God, informed by God's word. We may fall short of that, but that needs to be the aim, that needs to be the attempt that we are making, that we are trying as best we can to allow God's word to inform how we raise our children.

And really, the role of a father is not one of ultimate authority. The role of a father is one of representative authority. He is representing God.

And so even when the father brings discipline, he is bringing discipline on behalf of God. And that discipline, as best we can, needs to represent God and not misrepresent God.

And so we don't want to find ourselves where we are overlooking what God says not to overlook, or we're disciplining what God doesn't discipline. You know, just to make a very small illustration, if a child goes up to a table, maybe a child who's just learning how to walk and feeling out the environment, and the child pulls something down off the table, that's no reason to beat the child. It's not wrong to do that. It should help us to see, well, okay, I need to be more aware of this child because the child is experimenting, the child is growing, and we try to make the house safer for the child.

[46 : 58] But a lot of parents will go and beat the child because of that. And the child did nothing wrong. And then sadly, when the child does go and misbehave, because it's cute, they laugh, they overlook that, which should be instead corrected.

So we're to be raising our children with God in view, disciplining them, instructing them with God in view.

God's ways, not my ways. And so, for example, when a child is being disciplined, one of the most helpful things we can do is to help that child to link the infraction to God's word and why discipline is needed.

The discipline is needed not because daddy's upset, and sadly, that's the only time that some of us discipline when we're angry. If it doesn't bother us, we let it slide.

But we bring discipline because this is what God says we must do. And we represent God to our children, and therefore, we must bring the discipline.

[48 : 10] And this takes time. This takes time. It takes time to instruct a child, to talk with them.

We can get outward obedience in a split second. And for many, many years, my own parenting was marked by just seeking outward obedience.

And the quicker the child got there, the better it was for me. parenting. But that short-circuiting parenting, that is missing. See, the way we are to seek obedience is through the heart.

Not just through the body, not just through the hands and through the feet, but it is to seek obedience through the heart, to bring the instruction, to seek heart change.

And this takes time. This kind of parenting that fathers are called to, this raising children in the discipline, the instruction of the Lord, this takes time.

[49 : 19] And so fathers, how does God's word to fathers land on your own heart? the command not to provoke your children, to anger, the command to raise them in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord.

Maybe there's some ways you were encouraged this morning and praise God for that. But maybe there are ways that you're convicted. And I'll say this as a father of three children, now three adult children.

One of the ways that fathers can provoke their children to anger is the refusal to acknowledge their sins and their wrongs towards their children.

They know the difference between right and wrong. And when a parent, a father in particular, has a pattern of not asking for forgiveness, not admitting wrong, fathers, we provoke our children to anger when we do that.

But when we acknowledge our wrong, what we're doing is not only are we doing what is right in God's sight, we are modeling for them what they're supposed to do when they do wrong. And truth is, we model it both ways.

[51 : 09] We model it when we do it wrongly, we model it when we do the right thing. Now, it's easy to hear all that we have shared this morning just as parenting advice.

Brothers and sisters, this is so much more than parenting advice. It is parenting advice, but it's so much more than that. God calls children to obey their parents and to honor their parents and cause fathers to raise their children in the instruction and the discipline of the Lord and not provoke them because this is the outworking of the gospel.

Paul is teasing out the implications of the gospel and he's saying, because of the gospel, children, this is the way you're supposed to live towards your parents.

And because of the gospel, fathers, this is the way you're supposed to live towards your children. Behind these instructions, which are only possible because Jesus Christ came into this world and lived and died and provided forgiveness of sins for all those who put their trust in him.

And because of that transformed life that is possible for us, this kind of parenting is also possible. This kind of relating to parents is also possible.

[52 : 50] And what this does is it puts the gospel on display? It puts the gospel on display in our homes. That those who do not know Christ, children, that your unbelieving friends will watch you obeying your parents promptly and completely.

They will watch the respect that you have for them and that beautifully adorns the gospel and they would wonder why. And same thing, fathers. We have this opportunity to adorn the gospel, to put flesh on the gospel, to put flesh on those words.

We may share the gospel with someone, but then they get to see it working out in our lives and how we relate to our children. And it becomes attractive. It becomes a beautiful thing.

And so I say to us this morning, this is more than just parenting advice. This is adorning the gospel. And God uses the adornment of the gospel to draw people and to cause them to hear and believe the gospel.

But for many, if we just gave them mere words, it's just not attractive to them. But when they see it being worked out, they can be drawn to it.

[54 : 16] And if you are present this morning or you're watching online and you're not a believer, I say to you that we're not special.

Doing these things doesn't make us special. The gospel is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And the gospel is he receives all who come to him.

And he abundantly pardons all of their sin. And he transforms their lives. Causing them to desire to please him.

Causing them to desire to do these things. Causing children to want to obey their parents. And to honor their parents, even when they fall short. And causing fathers to want to raise their children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord, even when we fall short.

And that's because of the transforming work of the gospel in our lives. And so I pray that if you don't know Christ, that you would turn to the Savior.

[55 : 27] Turn from sin. And he will abundantly pardon. Let's pray together. Father, we bow our hearts to you this morning.

Thank you for saving us. Thank you for our children who you have saved. Thank you for fathers who are seeking to be godly fathers.

Raising their children in the Lord. God, would you renew in all of our hearts the desire to grow in these things.

To obey more completely. And most of all, to bring honor to your name. So would you help us now? We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.