

Baptism Sermon - The Importance Of Training Children

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[0 : 00] Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it. Now as you know, this book, the book of Proverbs, is a book that is full of great principles and great truths for us to live our lives upon.

One, God wants us to have the fear of God within our heart and we know that the Bible tells us that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. And God wants us to live wisely and well throughout this life that we are given.

Because every day we face challenges, every day we are making decisions, every day there are things that we are not sure how to deal with or what way we ought to go.

And that is one of the great things about the Bible is that the Lord has given us in his word so many truths, so many principles, so many things to guide us and to lead us and to teach us in the way to go.

And the verse that we are looking at today, this verse here, is a verse that has been a blessing to many a parent over the years. It is a verse that carries with it a huge responsibility, but also tremendous privilege.

[1 : 20] Because we are told that for those who teach their children in the way that they should go, teach them when they are young in the particular way in which they will go, that when they are old they will not depart from that way.

And many a person has seen that happen, many a parent. Sometimes parents will teach children and bring their children up in the ways of the Lord and instruct them as best they can and teach them the best they can.

And sometimes these children grow up to go another way and make their own road through this world, forgetting it would appear what they were taught when they were young.

But it is amazing how often, as the years go on, that the teaching of early years will come back. Something happens in their life and all of a sudden they remember.

And that is why it is so important to instruct and to teach in the way in which we should go. Now it is very clear from God's word that God is a huge place for the teaching of the children.

[2 : 35] It is right from the very beginning. If we go to God's dealing by way of covenant with Abraham, the blessings that God was giving to Abraham, who was the father of the faithful, that these blessings in covenant were not just for Abraham, but they were for his seed, for his children, for all successive generations.

And we of faith, those who are of the household of faith, those who follow and accept and believe, are included within that. God had said of Abraham, this is what it says, For I have chosen him, that is Abraham, that he may command his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.

And what the Lord is saying here, he expects Abraham, yes, by instruction, by teaching, by prayer, but also by example, to teach righteous, to live in a righteous way and in a just way.

And remember last week we were looking at King Uzziah. And one of the things we saw in the life of King Uzziah was that he followed in the footsteps of his father.

Where his father went wrong, later in life he did exactly the same. And we made the point that very often our children mirror us. It's not that, I'm sure, teenage youngsters would say, last person, sometimes you go through these years and the last person you want to mirror are your parents.

[4 : 19] And you say, I'm me, I'm myself, I'll do my thing. But irrespective of how a person actually thinks, through the genes, through the characteristics that are passed on.

But not just that, where you often see mannerisms and the way people speak and all these things are so mirroring their parents, but also sometimes the things that they do.

Sometimes they're good things, and sometimes they're not so good things. And these things are often, and we saw that with Uzziah, who was a good man, and yet he mirrored the mistakes his father had made as well.

Solomon, who was a good man, he mirrored the mistakes that his father David had made. So this is what the Lord is saying of Abraham. And he says, I know that he will teach his family.

I know that he will teach his children, and that not only will the teaching be verbal, orally, but by his own lifestyle, by his own practice, where he will deal in a right way, and in a just way with people.

[5 : 29] And that's very important. And that's incredibly important within the Christian faith.

Christian faith isn't simply about saying, well, you know, I follow the Lord. If we follow the Lord, then we ought to live like the Lord lived.

And we have to be right, and just in our dealings with people. And so it's very, very important that we set out that pattern.

And of course, that, of course, is a huge, it's a big pressure on parents. Because you're always aware that, which none of us perfect, and we're always aware that the things that we do that are wrong, that if we see our children mirroring it, we feel this guilt, that is this me?

Is this my fault? Am I responsible for what they're doing? So these are always challenging things.

But as we're saying, God set out the structure in the Bible so that children will learn.

For instance, some of the great events, like the Passover. Remember that night when God delivered Israel out of slavery in Egypt? And they were required every year to remember.

[6 : 40] They had to have a Passover meal every year. There was a time of the Passover and where they followed all the rituals that were connected with the Passover.

It was instituted as part of their life. But God says, the children will ask you, what is it that you are doing?

And you tell them, it's a sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. And you explain to them how the Lord delivered you out of Egypt. Do you see what God is doing?

As you have the Passover meal, this was with the Israelites, as you're having this, the children are going to be saying, what's all this about? Why do you do this? And it's an opportunity for you to instruct them and to tell them something of their history and something of how God had worked in our lives.

It was the same when Israel entered into the promised land, when they crossed the Jordan. God said, take out 12 huge stones from the riverbed, because God had dried up the water, same as the Red Sea, and put these big stones by the riverbank.

[7 : 54] And that's what Israel were instructed to do. And there was a reason for that. It was again for the instruction of the children. Because the Lord is saying, in time to come, the children are going to ask their parents, what are these stones?

Who put these stones there? We know we have the Kalanis stones in our island. And it's incredible the number of people who come to look at them. People are curious. What was their original function?

Who put them there? There's all kinds of questions people want to see them. Well, there were these stones on the banks of the Jordan. And it was put there so that the children, in time to come, would say to their parents, who put these stones there?

Why were these stones put there? And this is what the Lord says, in time to come, when your children ask their fathers, who put the stones there? You tell them what God did for his people.

So again, you see, God's concern, God's interest, in the young. The instruction of the young. And so, it's so important.

[9 : 07] And as we know, childhood is a time for training and learning. That's a time when our minds retain things. That's when habits are formed. And you and I know that the older we get, the harder it is to learn.

We can hardly, not only can we hardly learn anything, we can hardly remember anything by now.

But when you're young, your minds are sharp. And it's natural to take on board and stuff to go in.

And so the Lord is saying, set out the pattern for them. Patterns for their lives when they are young.

And it is quite extraordinary how that teaching gets embedded right within us.

And the first few years of a child's life are incredibly important. These are the key years in teaching them in the way to go. And with regard to the Christian faith, it is absolutely key, first and foremost, to teach them about God and to teach them the fear of God.

Now when I say the fear of God, that doesn't mean that we live in a way where we're absolutely terrified. Although there is such a thing as the terror of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is not a slavish fear, but a fear of awe and of reverence and a fear of love.

[10:27] And to teach them the greatness of God. To teach them to take them out. I remember my, I've said this before, I remember it's one of the earliest recollections I have.

I remember my mother one night pointing me when I was just a wee, wee, wee fellow. Still quite wee, but I was a lot weir then. And pointing up to the stars and she was telling me, you know, she said God made them all.

He made all of them. And you know, the Bible tells us not only did he make them, but he counts the number. He knows and he names them every one. Psalms tell us that. Now that's mind-blowing. It's mind-blowing to our little child. It's mind-blowing to us still today. But it's important to instill this kind of knowledge into the young lives, into the young minds, so that there is this awareness of the greatness, the majesty, the glory, the authority, the power of God, who he is.

But not only that, to teach us that this great God is a God who has an interest in us. That he didn't just make this world and abandon everything, but that he is still concerned.

[11:36] And his greatest love, the greatest demonstration of love was that he sent his own son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world to deal with what we couldn't deal with ourselves.

Because we've all gone, as the Bible says, we've all gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way. Like sheep, we've all wandered away.

Right from the very beginning, in the fall, we wandered away from God. We turned out back unto God. We're on the run from God. That's how everybody is by nature. We're on the run from God and we don't want God.

But God wants us. And that's why God sent his son into the world. To draw us back. To take us. To take us back to himself.

That's at the very beginning when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. God went after them. Adam, where are you? It would have been awful if God had left Adam and Eve alone, but he didn't. He went after them.

[12:38] And that's God's great display of love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And so, the Bible teaches us what a lot of people don't want to know is that by nature we sin against God.

See, this is what we don't understand and we don't understand it naturally because you know when, and everybody in here is a decent person, we can all say everybody's a decent person, but that isn't good enough for God because God is so holy and so pure.

He requires of a standards we can't meet and that's a big problem because so often what we say is wrong, what we do is wrong and what we think, well that's often a mess.

If all our thoughts were to be exposed, the way we think about issues and people and all these sort of things, we would, imagine if all of us, you know in the comics you see bubbles coming out and there's the thoughts coming out of people.

Well imagine, imagine if all of a sudden that was to happen in our lives and everybody could see what we're thinking. I don't think we'd come out of the house, we'd be too embarrassed, too ashamed, but God sees all that and so that's why God sent his son to take upon himself the punishment that our son deserves and that's what it's all about and all he asks us to do is to believe in his son, to accept, to trust and so this is all part of the teaching that we have to teach our young people.

[14:17] It's vital because this is the very heartbeat of the Christian faith and then it is vital in order to teach them that we read to them.

We give out Bible story books just now in the baptism. It's important when they're of age to understand that you read these Bible stories.

There's so many amazing stories and God has set a particular history of his people down in the Bible and God wants us to look at these lives because he says that they're there.

We're told in the New Testament that these lives are there and these experiences that they go through are there for our good, for our benefit, for our understanding, for our learning and so it's

vital that we do this.

Read the great stories of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Jacob and of Isaac and Rebecca and Daniel and Elijah and David and all these great characters in the Bible full of teaching, full of lessons.

[15 : 23] Then when they get a little older, begin to teach some verses from the Bible. I am the way, the truth and the life, Jesus says. As we quoted earlier, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. Isn't that a beautiful verse? The Lord says, it doesn't matter who you are, come to me and I will never close the door on you.

I will never push you away. I will never shut you out. Just come to me and I'll accept you. That's what it says. Whoever him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

So it's important that these verses be taught from the time that they're very young. Teach them to pray when they're old enough to realize that we have this amazing privilege where we can speak to God at any time.

Don't need to come to church, although I'm going to say that in a moment how important it is to come to church. But we can pray anywhere, 24-7. We can pray in our beds, we can pray in our cars, we can pray at work, we can pray in our time of leisure.

[16 : 33] It doesn't matter where we are, it doesn't matter what we're doing, it doesn't matter what we need. There's nothing too great, too small to bring to God. We're taught in everything, by prayer, we are to come to the Lord.

So it's important to teach the children that God is a prayer hearing and a prayer answering God. That doesn't mean that God is going to answer every prayer in the way that we want.

Prayer isn't just a shopping list where we go to God and we say, right, here my request today, I want this, this, this, this, and that. That's not the way it is. The greatest thing, and as they will come to know, is that the more we come to the Lord in prayer, the more we get to know Him.

And that's what the Lord wants us to do. So God hears our prayer and we hear God in the word.

And then again, it's so important to use this day well, this one day in seven that God has given to us.

And you know, it's one of the great blessings that God has given is the Lord's day. I know, I know a lot of people today, they want rid of this day. Well, when God made this world, the seventh day He set apart.

[17 : 46] And He blessed this day, He sanctified it, He set it apart as His own day. But He gave it to us for our, not only our spiritual good, but our physical good and our mental good.

And society is a loser when we take away this one day where we're able to relax body and relax mind and come to know more of the Lord.

That's what God wants. And He has promised blessing to us. When we, when we follow His way. Just on Wednesday in the prayer meeting we were looking at that or we mentioned that.

One of the blessings that God has promised to His people in the land when they entered in is that if they followed Him He would cause them to dwell safely in the land.

Isn't that beautiful? Now thank the Lord we are in a place, we're in a community where we dwell safely. You know, you often can go out and you don't bother locking the doors.

[18 : 47] I know we should and so on. And I know that, I know that things can happen now and again. But by and large we are still in such a safe community.

But you know, when you look into our nation today, at night so many people, whole areas, they're prisoners in their own homes. They can't go out. They're terrified. because there's terror on the streets.

Because there's, there's just, the streets aren't safe. And that is part of what happens when people turn their back upon God.

The Bible tells us that. Because God says, I will hand, what happens is this, when people want God, rid of God, God says, okay, I'll give you what you want.

I'll withdraw, I'll withdraw, I will withdraw my presence, my influence, and I'll just leave you to your shelves. You make your own decisions, your own laws, go your own way.

[19 : 44] I won't influence you at all. And very often what the result of that is, growing chaos. And the blessings of security and peace that God promises, these blessings have been taken away more and more.

Again, it is vital that we take our children to God's house. Just as we're doing today as we come to worship the Lord. Take them from the youngest age.

And it's wonderful to see. People say, ah, they'll get, they'll be bored, they'll get fed up. Well, we know that we try and make so many provisions within Sunday school and creche and tweenies and there's so many different groups to the youth fellowship and youth club and campaigners and all these things which are all geared for the young people.

But it's also important to come to God's house because this is where the good seed is being sown. And if our young people aren't where the good seed is being sown, they're missing out.

I've said it before, I was only three and a half when I remember the first and it's just because my mother was telling me. I remember I lived in, I was born in this place and my parents were from here but we moved around a bit and we lived born in this place Ardell near Kayden where it's Elandonen Castle you see the photo there.

[21 : 12] And this tramp came into the church, huge big beard and a sack. And he just walked in and I remember he stood kind of below the pulpit and he was staring up. And it was Ivor Martin who was here before James.

It was his father, Murder Martin, who was preaching because it was at communion. I was only three and a half. And I remember it. And I remember that he said something, the minister, about a bottomless pit which when I went home I kept asking what that was.

So we sometimes think, ah children, three, four, they're far too young to, but it's amazing what goes in. Sometimes kids will take on board more than the parents will.

It's amazing what they take up. So it's important that we bring them under the word. And again as we said, this is the time to do it.

Train them up. I think I may have told you before, I knew a man, it was quite a long time since he died, and he was brought up in a Christian home and as the years went on he just turned his back and for 65 years he hadn't been in church bar at a at a wedding and the odd funeral.

[22 : 30] And it was a Sunday afternoon and he was sitting by the fire. He was 85 years of old, 85 years of age. And the radio was on and the Gaelic service came on and he was hearing the singing and he was drifting off.

But then all of a sudden something came that went right into his heart and like a flood everything that he had been taught as a youngster came back flooding into his mind.

And he began to pray to the Lord and ask the Lord's forgiveness for how he had abandoned and turned his back upon the Lord.

And the Lord heard his cry and he saved him at 85 years of age. That's a classic example of someone train up a child and the way he will go when he's old he will not depart from it.

And one last thing that I would say with regard to the training is protect them in the early years. Because some people will say it's important that they get exposed to everything.

[23 : 38] That's the kind of world we live in. There's just, there's everything. I know there's everything. And it won't be long until they will be exposed to everything. If you plant a garden and you're supposing it's a vegetable garden or a flower garden you will attend to that garden very carefully at the very beginning.

You will water it. You will weed it. You will watch carefully until everything is established. Once everything has taken root then you don't need to care for it just quite so much.

But in the early time it is, nobody would say I'm going to plant a garden in. Ah well, whatever will be will be. No, you look after it. And so it is with your children. There's soon going to be exposed to everything.

There's nothing you can do about it. But in these early years teach them in the right way. Protect them as much as you can. Show them what is right and show them what is wrong.

But you might be saying to yourself, oh, this is a huge ask. But it is. First of all, you need total commitment. You have to say to yourself, right, this is what I've got to do.

[24 : 52] Because we always want the best for our children. And if we're including the best then it means that we have to teach them the Bible and the ways of the truth.

We also need patience. Because there will be days you'll feel like doing it and there will be other days you can't be bothered. Which is an awful thing to say but is it not true?

And that's where you need and you need to say to yourself, you know, I have to do this over and over again. But you also need grace. You can't do this on your own. You need God's help. You

need God's strength.

You need God's grace. So that you will be able to do this. We close with the great example of what we're talking about is the life of Moses.

You remember little baby Moses and there was an order that all male children, all Israelite children had to be put to death when they were born. And remember Moses' parents, they hid him in a wee basket floating in the river and Moses' older sister Miriam was watching.

[25 : 55] Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river with her attendants, saw the little baby, said, ah, I want to take this baby home. Miriam comes out and she says, do you want somebody to nurse and look after the baby for the first few years?

The princess says, yes, but this baby is going to be mine, but yes, that's great. So for the first, few years, first, I don't know how many years, but not many, Moses was brought up in his own home and he was taught the way of God as an Israelite.

And then eventually, Pharaoh's daughter took him, when he was a little older, to the palace. And Pharaoh grew up learning all the ways of the Egyptians, all the ways of the world, where the God of heaven and earth wasn't known or worshipped.

And for 40 years, up to the age of 40, to all appearances, Moses was an Egyptian. And then there came a day of a test.

He had to make a decision. Was he an Egyptian or was he an Israelite? Was he going to stay in Egypt and side with the Egyptians and live that life?

[27 : 09] Or was he going to join with God's people, even although it was a life of suffering. And he chose to go with God's people because he couldn't turn us back.

You see, he had been taught that teaching in the young years had stayed with him. You invest in your children. You'll never regret it.

Let us pray. Lord our God, we pray to bless us and ask that you will now do us good. We pray that us, the mums will just be coming in just now with a little baby.

You will bless them all. Bless all the families here today. We give thanks for opportunities and moments like this. Take away from us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. We're going to sing and as we sing the Sunday school and creche will come in and also the mothers with the children. We're going to sing in Psalm number 34.

[28 : 06] Psalm number 34. This is from Sing Psalms. Psalm 34 from Sing Psalms and the tune is Jackson.

And you'll find that on page 40. Verses 5 to 13. They look to him and shine with joy.

They are not put to shame. This suffering man cried to the Lord. From him deliverance came. The angel of the Lord surrounds and guards continually all those who fear and honor him.

He sets his people free. Come taste and see the Lord is good. Who trusts in him is blessed. Oh fear the Lord. You saints with need. You will not be oppressed.

Young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food. But those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any good. Come here my children gather round and listen to my word.

[29 : 09] I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord. And so on to verse 13. 5 to 13. They look to him and shine with joy.

They look to him and shine with joy. they are not good to see.

This suffering man cried to the Lord. From him deliverance came.

The angel of the Lord's Aaron's and guards continually all who appeared and on him he sets his cripple free.

Come taste and see the Lord is good who trusts in him is blessed.

[30 : 39] Oh fear the Lord you saints with me you will not be oppressed.

Young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food but those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any good.

Come to the Lord