

A Blessed Household

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 April 2024

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] Then we're going to begin our worship and we're singing firstly in Psalm 125, Psalm 125 in the Scottish Psalter, page 419. Today we're singing Psalm 125, 126, 127 and 128, just as a series of psalms. So 125, they in the Lord that firmly trust shall be like Zion Hill, which at no time can be removed but standeth ever still. And so on to the end of the psalm. We stand to sing if you're able to stand.

Time can be removed but standeth ever still. As round about Jerusalem, the merchants stand all way.

The Lord is full, the compass so, from henceforth and foray.

For ill men's rod upon the road, all just men shall not lie.

Lest righteous men set forth their hands unto iniquity.

[2 : 1 2] Do thou do all those that be good, thy goodness for him far.

And do thou good to those that are upright within their heart.

God shall lead for the world, even if they are iniquity. But as for such as turn aside, after their crooked way, God shall lead for the wicked men.

Let's join together now in prayer, a prayer especially for the children and for the young folks just now. Lord, our God, we thank you on this lovely bright day that we come before you as a people who worship you and to confess you as our God.

And we thank you today that this is an opportunity, Lord, for us to worship you and in the worship find further fellowship with you and knowledge of you. We thank you today that you give us these opportunities to draw aside from our normal course of activity in the world and to come together on the Lord's day to worship the Lord, to be together as his people and to share in that fellowship with him and with each other.

[4 : 0 4] Bless our children, we pray today. Lord, be with them during these times and grant to them again that they may increase in the knowledge of your own will and of your word and that they may find by your grace that they apply these things to their lives each and every day.

Remember them, we pray, from the youngest in creche through to those in Bible school, Bible class, we pray that your blessing will be with them. And we ask that they will know day by day of the power of your truth working in their lives.

And so receive our thanks, we pray. Continue to guide us and bless us and pardon our many sins for Jesus' sake. Amen. In Psalm 142, it's just for the children and young folks, Psalm 142, we find David in a cave.

He was being chased by his enemies. He found refuge in a cave. And this was a psalm that he wrote while in the cave or thought about in the cave. It's really a prayer that he made from the cave to God.

And in verse 3, he says, When my spirit faints within me, you know my way. Now there's a wonderful verse for memory for those in the Sunday school and for children always looking for verses to learn.

[5 : 27] Here's one verse you could learn. It's quite short, but it's also important. It tells us about how God looks after his people in all their situations. Even though David was in danger and hiding from his enemies, he said to God, When my spirit faints within me, in other words, when I'm really afraid, you know my way.

God's eye is upon him. God knows his way. For my recent birthday, the family got together and actually got a wonderful gift for me.

It's a bird feeder. And you might say, what's wonderful about a bird feeder? A bird feeder is available from many sources. But this bird feeder is good because it has a hidden camera in it.

And it takes videos. As soon as a bird lands on the tray, it triggers the camera. The camera takes a video as long as that bird is moving. The movement begins the camera.

When the movement stops, the camera stops. And it records it onto a little card inside the camera. And it's been absolutely wonderful to see close up these birds who have no idea they're being filmed or videoed.

[6 : 41] But you can see all the birds that land there. So far, we've seen chaffinches. Even a turtle dove the other day or a collared dove actually landed on there.

There's been green finch. There's been sparrows. Different kinds of birds over the course of these few weeks. And it reminded me about some things that are important for us in our spiritual understanding as well.

Such as the verse I've just read. Here was David saying in the cave. Nobody was seeing him there. He was safe from his enemies. He was hiding, at least, from his enemies. And yet he says, Whatever our circumstances are like, however difficult your lives may be, whatever challenges you're facing as children or young people, be thankful that God actually knows exactly where you are, exactly what you're doing.

He's seeing you all the time. You might say that although he sees you all the time, there are special occasions, especially when we have a need of really being helped.

That is, I am special. Just like the camera is triggered by the movement of the birds, so God's heart is moved when he finds us crying out to him out of circumstances that are challenging and difficult.

[8 : 05] You know, he said, my way. Now, there's another side to that as well. Well, just as that camera picks up the movement of the bird without them knowing about it, so God is watching our lives all the time.

And as well as being really comforting for us to know that God is looking over us when we have difficulties in our lives, it's also a challenge for us to know that God is looking in on our lives at every time.

Whatever we're doing, God sees it. And that should be a means of keeping us from doing things which are wrong, keeping us from even thinking wrong thoughts.

God sees into our minds. And as he sees into our minds, the Bible reminds us that he reads our minds. He knows our thoughts. So I hope today that that little bird table and its camera are a symbol for you or a picture for you of something very, very comforting, very assuring, that God watches over us when we place our trust in him, but also that God looks in on our lives just to actually see what we're doing from day to day, from moment to moment, every time he's looking in on us.

So there's a very important verse for us to remember. When my spirit faints within me, you know my way. So practice that through the day to day.

[9 : 33] And as you do so, let that word, let that verse sink into your mind and use it in your life so that when you have a difficulty, you'll turn to God and say, Lord, I'm thankful that you know my way, that you know my circumstances.

So now let's say the Lord's Prayer once again together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Now we're going to sing again. This time we're singing Psalm 126.

Again, it's on page 419. When Zion's bondage God turned back, as men had dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

[10 : 40] And you can see in this psalm that even people who don't follow the Lord can actually know and see when the Lord has blessed his people. It says there in verse 3, among the heathen, they said the Lord great things for them has wrought.

In other words, the world, people who watch us all the time, can see when God has blessed our lives and we tell them about how God has been good to us. So Psalm 126, When Zion's bondage God turned back.

When Zion's bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

They among the heathen said the Lord, great things for them hath brought.

The Lord hath done great things for us, when joy to us is brought.

[12 : 07] As streams of water in the sun, our bondage Lord recall, whose soul in tears and reeping time, of joy in joy they shall.

that man who bare in precious seed, in going forth the poor, he does bring him back his sheep, rejoice in shall return.

Our reading of God's Word this morning is from 2 Samuel, the second book of Samuel, and chapter 6.

And we're reading from the beginning. That's the second book of Samuel, and chapter 6, it's around about page 310 or so, in your church Bibles, if you're using these.

So we'll read verses 1 to 19. David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000, and David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baljudea to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, who sits enthroned on the cherubim.

[13 : 50] And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God.

And Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.

And David was angry because the Lord had burst forth against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez Uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, How can the ark of the Lord come to me?

So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David, but David took it aside to the house of Obadedum the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obadedum the Gittite for three months.

[15 : 05] And the Lord blessed Obadedum and all his household. And it was told King David, The Lord has blessed the household of Obadedum, and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God.

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obadedum to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an oxen and a fattened animal.

And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn.

As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord. And she despised him in her heart.

And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in his place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

[16 : 08] And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts and distributed among all the people the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one.

Then all the people departed, each to his own house. May God again follow with his blessing of reading that portion of his word.

Let's again engage in prayer. We do give thanks, O Lord, again for your word and for every portion of it, for we recognize your own hand as the one who has authored and produced this word for us and caused it to be put into writing in a language that we ourselves can understand.

We thank you today, Lord, for the value that's placed upon your word by your people now and having been the same throughout all generations. We thank you for the liberty that we have to read your word in peace, the liberty we have to hear it explained, to find it for ourselves, a word that speaks to us of our own lives personally and of the world in which we live.

It speaks to us of things past in history and things to come in your prophecy. We bless you, O Lord, that every aspect of your word remains the truth, however much things may change from one generation to another.

[17 : 39] We bless you for your unchanging word today. We thank you for its relevance to our own situation today. We bless you that it never loses its relevance. And we thank you, Lord, that however many may turn aside from it or cast it aside, we pray, O Lord, for grace to retain your word with relish and with love in our hearts.

That we might be like the psalmist to hid your word in his heart, to hide it not only in a way that treasured it there, but also so that it might be seen through in the life that he lived in accordance with your word.

We ask, Lord, that you would give us an increased burden for this in our own lives. And for we need a world in which your people are shown to be a people of your word, a people in which your word shines out, and a people who come to speak of that word approvingly to the generation they belong to.

We ask, Lord, as a people, as a congregation, that we may indeed be, as Paul would say to the Philippians, holding forth the word of life, so that we may hold it forth for our own use and for the knowledge of those around us.

Lord, help us never to be ashamed of your word. Help us never to be in a frame of mind that would doubt the veracity, the truthfulness, or the authority of your word.

[19 : 03] Help us always to be sure that your word is superior to every human ideology, every human source of knowledge that we have. We thank you, Lord, for all that we come to learn during the course of our years, and yet we pray that your word may continue to be fundamental and foundational to our thoughts and our conclusions and our way of life.

And so, blessed to us, we pray today, as we gather once again here to hear what the Lord God would say to us. Bless us, we pray, that we may speak in your name and hear in your name, that we may come together to realize, O Lord, that this itself is such an important occasion because it is so intimately connected to eternity and to our meeting with you at last.

And we pray that your word may continue to prepare us for that great eventuality, for we know that after we leave this world, we will not have the opportunity of having your word declared to us or preached to us or read for ourselves.

We thank you for the opportunities we have through life to know you in word and in providence. Lord, we pray that you, by your Holy Spirit, enable us to profit from those great opportunities we have.

Bless us, we pray, in the world in which we are set. Bless us in our life as a congregation. We ask, O Lord, that you would be pleased to once again continue to provide for us.

[20 : 35] Provide for us, we pray, spiritually, morally, financially. Provide for us, Lord, encouragement that would strengthen us from day to day. Provide for us in the teaching of our children.

We ask, Lord, when the Sunday School requires more resources in terms of those who would teach our young people, Lord, we ask that you would lay this upon the hearts of those you would want to come and help out with the teaching of the children.

And we ask, Lord, that in the search for suitable teachers for the Sunday School, you would help those who presently serve, grant to them, Lord, that they may know that we value them and that they are so precious to us as they give off their time so readily to this important work.

And we ask that those who are taught will come themselves one day to take the place of teachers, Lord, over young people yet to be born. And we pray that you would continue to provide for us as a people so that through the gospel, not only may our own lives flourish, but that of our community as well as we come under your blessing as we pray.

And so we ask your blessing now for all of our number today who are in specific needs. We think of those who are ill and ask that you would bless them, some in hospitals, some in care homes, some in their own homes.

[21 : 57] We pray your blessing upon them, lay your good hand upon them for their healing if it please you. And grant, Lord, we pray to those too who have mental health issues and struggle at times through the course of life.

Be pleased, Lord, we pray to help them. We ask for any, O Lord, today who have troubles with addictions of various kinds. We ask that you bless the efforts made to help them.

And we pray that you would release them, Lord, from such addiction if it please you. And we ask that the help they receive may truly be of benefit to them. and we ask that you would bless all who help in that way.

We pray that you would bless our health centers, bless our hospital and our hospice and our care homes. Lord, we ask that you would be pleased to continue to bless us and to provide resources for us in regard to this important aspect of our life in this community.

Remember those who are in authority over us today. Bless them here locally in the Corlea. Bless them also nationally in Edinburgh and in London and Westminster.

[23 : 08] Gracious Lord, we know from your providence that we live in tumultuous times, times when we can look back upon a great shift of thinking, a great shift in those things that are regarded as priorities compared to past ages.

Lord, we pray that you would provide for us. And we pray when there is so much uncertainty and indeed at times turmoil amongst those who rule over us. We pray that you would bring stability through the gospel, that you would turn people to yourself, that those who exercise government over us and high office in our land, O Lord, our God, that they may come to be guided by your truth and set in your ways and come to commend you to the people over whom you have set them.

Graciously, Lord, hear us as we pray for them. We know that it is our privilege as well as the instruction of your word to pray for those who are in authority over us.

Lord, we do so willingly today. We ask your blessing to be with the world in which we live. We extend our prayers today, Lord, to this world and to its many, many troubles.

We pray for places where there is today war and the threat of terror, loss of life, different places in the world where we find this constantly before us in your news reports.

[24 : 32] Lord, we pray that all the efforts made for peace might truly prove successful, but we pray especially for the peace that only you can create, the peace of Christ, the peace that comes through the gospel.

Lord, we pray that you bless every evangelistic endeavor, even in these very difficult circumstances in these places in the world. Bless your word there too, we pray, and bless your believing people as they continue and struggle against so many different types of adversity to hold true to your word and, Lord, to know your blessing, keeping them and guiding them and blessing them.

And so we pray now that your blessing will continue with us here. Hear us in our prayer and cleanse us from our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll sing once more to God's praise this time, Psalm 127, before we turn to a verse or two in 2 Samuel where we read.

Psalm 127, page 171, and sing the whole of that psalm again from verse 1. Unless the Lord builds up the house, its builders toil in vain.

Unless he keeps the city safe, they vainly watch, maintain. in vain you rise before the dawn and late hours vainly keep, that you may toil for food to eat.

[25 : 58] He gives his loved ones sleep. Psalm 127, Unless the Lord builds up the house. unless the Lord builds up the house, its builders toil in vain, unless he keeps the city safe, the city safe, they vainly watch, maintain.

In vain you rise before the dawn and late hours and late hours vainly keep, that you may toil for food to eat.

He gives his loved ones sleep. Sons are a precious heritage, a blessing from the Lord.

The children that are born to us are truly his reward.

like arrows in a warrior's hand, our children of one's youth, the man who's quivered full of them is blessed by God in truth.

[28 : 17] Such men will not be poor to shame, that will not be their fate, when they condemn against their foes, who face them in the gate.

Well, please turn with me now to 2 Samuel chapter 6. Reading again at verse 11, 2 Samuel 6 at verse 11. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obadedam the Gittite for three months.

And the Lord blessed Obadedam and all his household. And it was told King David, the Lord has blessed the household of Obadedam and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God.

I want to take these two verses under the heading today of a blessed household.

We've seen a massive shift in Western civilization over many years now, sadly, in terms of what are set out as principles and values that people hold to in their society.

[29 : 48] And that massive shift has meant that as the Bible has been rejected increasingly, so what we call moral absolutes, in other words, absolute truth, the truth of God has set out for us in the Bible as that has been discarded increasingly or set aside, so other things have followed where throughout society you can see a great shift in people's thinking as to what is important, what should be foundational for individual life, for communal life, for national life, indeed.

The more the Bible has been set aside and replaced with human ideologies and other ideologies of different kinds, so the more we've seen that massive shift in value in terms of principles and what is important for our way of life.

And that's had a drastic effect, that redefinition of such things as truth itself. Ask anybody in the street today what they think truth is, and you're very seldom going to get them saying, well, truth is especially what God has set out for us in Holy Scripture.

Truth is, in many ways, people's thinking of truth is truth is what you make of it. Truth is what works for you. Truth is what is really maybe the view of a majority as to what ought to be the principles and values of society.

And it's not just that. It's been a time of redefining not just truth, but redefining other things follow on from that, redefining marriage, for example, redefining gender, and the whole concept of what a family is is part of that great shift part of that great change, part of that thinking.

[31 : 43] And that's what I want to focus on today, how you get from these verses things which are important in our thinking of what is a family, what is a family for, what are the benefits of family life, what should be the starting point for family life, and of course that has to be Scripture.

That's why we're going to Scripture, where we're going to these verses today. What does God say about the family, what constitutes a family, and what other things are related to the concept of a family as far as the Bible is concerned?

So we're looking at that under the heading of a blessed household, because that's what this household became and was due to the ark, as David was told here in verse 12, the Lord has blessed the household of Obidadum, and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.

I will look more into what that means, the ark of God, what that signified, and why it's especially related to the blessing of Obidadum's house. First of all, I want to look at this word household itself.

A blessed household. There isn't any single word in the Old Testament for family, and not as the equivalent at least of the word family as we use it.

[33 : 03] The nearest thing to it is this word household. You find that often, of course, in the Old Testament, also in the New Testament. The word household encapsulates what the Bible means by family and by family life.

And it means, when you use the word household, and you find it this way in the Bible, it actually means all who live in one home or under one roof. And of course, in those days, and even to this day, it means more than just a father and mother and children.

It also means servants, relatives. In the Old Testament days, there were especially well-off families like Abraham's family, for example. He had a steward, somebody who looked after the household, who was charged with managing the household.

And they became part of the household. And also, you had other servants or slaves in the household as well. So, all that came under that one roof are regarded as the household.

They are the family in the extended sense, you might say. And that carries into the New Testament as well. You remember, perhaps, in Acts chapter 2, sorry, Acts chapter 10 and verse 2, the household there of Cornelius.

- [34 : 22] There was a man in Caesarea, a centurion, a devout man who feared God with all his household. And it describes later on how that household was brought together to hear the preaching of God's Word from Peter and how that household comprised not just Cornelius and his immediate family but his servants and all those who comprised that group of people known as his household.

So, a household is somebody, is everybody really living under the one roof, the immediate family, and those others in connection with that family.

That's what you say is the meaning of household in the Old Testament. Now, I'm not going to go into this in terms of applying it to the church, but you realize that, you know yourselves, that the description, the household of God is actually used for the church.

The household of God. In other words, it is the dwelling place of God, but in that dwelling place, the church is the home, if you like, of God where all his people also live together or are gathered.

That, of course, is a spiritual meaning of household. But the household, literally, is like Obadadum here. The household of Obadadum was himself, his immediate family, servants, all others who lived under that roof.

- [35 : 47] And secondly, let's think of that household as the basic unit in human society. The basic unit in human society.

Around the household of Obadadum were other households. And together, all of these households made up that community of which the household of Obadadum was a part.

And every household, as it forms part of a community, that household is itself a basic unit of that wider structure.

And you can apply that, really, to the whole of human society. Now, let me just take you back to Genesis, to the beginning of things, to the creation of human households, beginning with the creation of marriage.

Genesis 2 and from verse 18. Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. That was Adam. I will make a helper fit or suitable for him.

- [36 : 50] So out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field, every bird of the heavens, brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And you read down through there until he discovered or Adam proclaimed there was nobody like himself.

Until he actually found this woman that God had created. He took one of his ribs, closed up its place with flesh. He made into a woman. He brought her to the man and the man said, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore, see the next thing, therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

What's happening there? Well, it says there's a man leaving his father and mother. There is the household he belongs to and in order to have a marriage and to cleave to his wife, he leaves that household he belonged to and he sets up another one.

Another household beginning with the marriage of himself and his wife. And then, of course, as you go through the book of Genesis, you'll find children born to that couple and therefore becomes a household in the sense of having husband, wife, children and eventually servants as well.

[38 : 12] So, the ideal in a family is father, mother, children. That is, you might say, the nuclear family. The nucleus of the wider household is in the marriage relationship and the children that are born to them in that marriage.

Ideal is the father, the mother, the children and others then are added on to that household. Now, you have blameless, I'm calling it blameless exceptions and the Bible takes account of these and these blameless exceptions are, for example, singleness where there is no marriage.

That's not a dishonorable situation. That's not a dishonorable thing in the eyes of God. In fact, when you go to Paul's writings, he actually says that being single and unmarried has great advantages spiritually and certainly in terms of serving the Lord.

It's not far from being despised, far from something that makes you of a lower status. It actually gives you many advantages rather than have a household where there's a marriage where you look after your children where that takes up your time and your resources.

However, that's, you might say, a blameless exception. The other blameless exception that comes to mind is a marriage where there are no children, children, where children can be adopted, of course, but what I mean is where there are no natural children.

[39 : 38] That, again, is not to be seen in any way negatively as if God was cursing that relationship. It's not to be seen as other than just with God's arrangement. And it brings its own challenges but also its own benefits as well.

But then we live in a fallen world. And while there are these blameless exceptions, we know very well ourselves that there are other exceptions where sin, the sin that is in each one of us, the sin that came into the world and set about destroying relationships and destroying individuals in their own lives too, where that is set in as we live in a fallen world.

So we've seen exceptions to the family as God's ideal over the years that set in from the time of the fall of Adam onwards.

In other words, an increase in such things as divorce, cohabitation, and same-sex relationships, and especially in our own day, those things have been multiplied sadly more so than at other times.

We live in that fallen world and are susceptible to all of these breakdowns in marriage and homes and families and households and we're very much aware of that in our own day.

[41 : 02] So you see, the household is no longer regarded widely as the basic unit in human society because the redefinition of family has really redefined household as well.

We're living in times when people say, well, you know, you should get rid of this idea of the nuclear family of father, mother, and children if God blesses them with children or father and mother, husband and wife.

These things are outdated. We need something new for this century we belong to. We need something new, something fresh, something different to what the Bible actually says, something different to these Old Testament ideas or New Testament ideas.

You need to redefine things. Come on, keep up with the times. That's not what people want nowadays, so we need to reject all of these previous models or ideals of family life of what a household is like and what it's for.

Way back in 1980, nearly a quarter of a century ago, a book came out called *Who Needs the Family?* Written by a man called Olaf R. Johnston.

[42 : 10] And in that book he says as follows, the family chronicles of Genesis 11 to 50, verses, that's chapters 11 to 50, are packed to the very end of the book with intense personal records of family life, jealousy, hatred, betrayal, revenge, scheming, and deception, as well as forgiveness, faithfulness, and joy.

And he went on to say, few can fail to sense the utter modernity of this ancient account full of deep perception of the dynamics of family relationships.

It is no mere modern discovery that the family can be the focus of destructive urges, a place of damage and despair, as well as of love and security.

Scripture constantly warns about the way human sin can turn the source of great blessing into the source of greatest damage and torment.

that was 1980. How much more is it the case that his words are true in the generation that we actually belong to, where the household, where the basic, where the nuclear unit of the family has been so redefined and indeed in many places so despised.

[43 : 37] You, friends, have the benefit of knowing the gospel, of having your Bibles, of knowing the teaching of your Bibles. You live in a society that's largely discarding those things, that's shedding the influence of that truth day by day.

You have the benefit of knowing what your Bible teaches you about family life, about what a family consists of, what a household is and what it's for. And we have to express our thankfulness to God that we are in this privileged position, but we have to do it by living out the ideals of God in a family setting, in family life.

Because the household remains the basic unit of human society, even if we find it largely discarded as an ideal. For us as Christians, for us who follow the gospel, for us who value the truth of God, it must remain this way.

And the more you see the family broken up, the more you see the ideal of the family discarded, the more fractured human society will become. You can see that in the generation we belong to.

It's not the only reason, but one of the main reasons why you find so much of a breakdown, so much in society of fractures, of tensions, all of the things that follow on from a family unit being broken up.

[45 : 06] And the ideal of the family at the center of society being discarded. Friends, we have to counter that with our own family lives. Here's the challenge for us today as we live as husbands, wives, children, that we follow the ideal that God has given us in His Word where the household is to be the basic unit of human society.

And where the more that's the case, and especially the more like the household of Obidadum, was blessed by God where there's a blessed household due to the presence of God as we'll see in a minute, that proves to be so influential in any community, in any society.

Household, what it means. People together under one roof. People in the structures that God Himself has defined for us at His creation.

Husband, wife, father, mother, children, others in the extended family. Household. The household being the basic unit of human society all the way through the Bible, you will find that in some way or other mentioned as significant.

How the household proves to be part of the gel, if you like, that holds human society together in a proper way. And the more the household disappears, the more that gel is lost and the influence is lost until the household continues to be the basic unit in human society.

[46 : 39] Thirdly and finally, what is a blessed household? Well, let me take you back to the words of our text today. The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obidadim, the Gittite, for three months and the Lord blessed Obidadim and all his household.

And it was told King David, the Lord has blessed the household of Obidadim and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God. That was the reason why the Lord blessed this household, because the ark of God was stationed there for these months.

And as long as the ark was there, the blessing of God followed. Now, what was the ark? Well, the ark, of course, you know from Exodus chapter 25 is that wooden chest made of acacia wood overlaid with gold in which Moses was instructed to make for the tabernacle.

It was one of the most important, if not the most important, article of furniture in the tabernacle where above the box, above the ark itself, was placed the mercy seat with the cherubim.

And it was there that God revealed himself, the cloud that dwelt above the mercy seat, indicating the presence of God. The ark is always associated with the presence of God.

[47 : 58] And where you find at times the people of Israel putting their trust in the ark, but not having the presence of God, having disobeyed God, having gone away, as on one occasion, fighting the Philistines, where the ark of God was captured, where the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed.

When the news came back to old Eli as he sat waiting for a report of the battle, what made him fall off backwards off his stool to his death, eventually, difficult though it was to know that his sons had died, what really struck him was the fact that the ark of God had been captured by the Philistines.

The very thing that indicated the presence of God was gone. And so, that word, Ichabod, as a name for one of the children born then, was actually given in relation to the loss of the ark.

So, the ark associated always with the presence of God, and you take that on board when you look at what these verses are saying. Verse 12, the Lord has blessed the household of Obidadim because of the ark of God.

That's, of course, fulfilled in the New Testament because the presence of God is no longer above a wooden chest like the ark. It's now in his people. He lives in their hearts.

[49 : 22] God actually comes to make a dwelling place for himself in the hearts of his people so that together they constitute the home God has made for himself. John 14, verse 23. That's the blessed household, the household that has God at its heart, the household where God lives, where God is real, where God is worshipped.

What is it, can we say, about that household that makes it special? Why is a household as the household of God so distinct and so important in this day and generation we belong to?

Well, four things, I think, at least, you can mention. We can mention other things related to that you could think of yourselves too. A blessed home has God at its heart and one of the significant elements there is parental faith, the faith of the parents or parent, the faith that actually teaches children the importance of the Word of God and the worship of God.

What has to be in our homes must begin, first of all, in our hearts. Where our hearts don't have the presence of God, our home is not going to have the presence of God. Where our hearts have God present, if this is dwelling place of God in our souls individually, in the souls of fathers and mothers, then that's passed on to the children by way of them being taught these things of God.

The fact that God is in that home makes all the difference. That's why it's wonderful to have Christian families, families who profess God as their God, who want God to be the God of their children, their grandchildren.

[51 : 10] We're blessed with having many of those families, and it's something we need to pray over. Pray for God's protection over parents who are seeking to bring up children in a way that teaches them the things of God in a generation that largely doesn't want to know, and not only doesn't want to know, but it's really against those ideas and those ideals.

Parental faith at the heart of things, first of all, and then the home benefits from that. You see many instances in the Bible where a home has benefited from the fact that the parents or a parent has had faith in God.

That brings blessedness into that home. The second thing is worship. A blessed home is a home where worship exists meaningfully, where the Word of God is read, where the Word of God is explained, where the Word of God is important, where prayer is exercised, where praise to God is exercised.

It's a miniature, really, of the life of the church. The household of God that the church has its miniature in the home as the household where father, mother, children together, and others maybe share in the Word of God with each other.

Worship in our homes is crucial. How many homes in Stornoway today have worship as a feature of their life?

[52 : 46] I'm quite sure they're in a majority compared to those that do. But as it was for Joshua, as he declared at one time in the book of Joshua chapter 24, choose this day whom you will serve, he said to the people.

As for me and my household, we will worship the Lord. We will have the Lord as our God. We will serve the Lord. That's the conviction of your heart surely today.

That's the conviction of the hearts of all today here who are parents or grandparents who want their homes to be blessed, who want their homes and their children and their relatives to be blessed. It begins in your own heart, it moves from your own heart to your practice in the home of having the Word read, having the Word explained, taking time with the children to explain it, which I know many of you do.

I'm not saying this because it's not the case. But just to reiterate the importance of those issues for ourselves today, there's parental faith, there is worship, the worship of God, and there is what I'm calling shaping of lives.

The shaping of lives, for example, in Ephesians especially, the Apostle Paul wrote to families, but he differentiated there. He gave a word firstly to husbands and wives and their marriage relationship.

[54 : 11] He then passed that on to children and then even to slaves or to servants in the home. He had instruction from the Word of God, from God, to each of those elements in a household.

And you remember what he said, children, as far as children were concerned, he then said, honor your father and mother, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. In other words, these words, discipline and instruction, really mean that in this blessed home, in this godly home, the home that has God at his heart.

It's a place where children's will is shaped through training and where children's minds are shaped through teaching. Two things always go together. Where a children's will is shaped through training, through seeing the parents as an example, and the teaching they receive instructs their mind, the mind and the will, as they're shaped by the truth of God.

And that's literally what it means in that context in Ephesians. Our children are to be trained, shaped. Just like you train a plant to follow a certain direction, you train it, you shape it.

[55 : 27] That's what's needed for our lives as well. And it's the Word of God that brings that shaping to our lives. It's the Word of God that brings about that training of our lives.

So there's parental faith, there's worship, a blessed home, it's one where shaping takes place for ourselves as adults and parents, for children as well.

And fourthly, and not least, where the Lord's day is honoured. And I'm putting that in because it's something which we have to remind ourselves is a feature of a blessed home.

A home where the Lord's day is honoured. Where our children, if we have children with us, as we have today here, come to realise the value of being with others in the public worship of God, to be part of the visible church that worships God and has that privilege of worship and of rest spiritually.

It's a home where worship is a familiar feature, where the Lord's day is a familiar feature, where the Lord's day is seen to be different to the other days of the week.

[56 : 39] Not talking about legalistic observance of rules and regulations, but out of love for God, where we actually value His Word and His day and His people and His own setting of family life in His own ideals.

Now, the greatest endorsement, I think, of family life really comes from the incarnation of the Son of God, of the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, taking human nature to Himself and continuing to be God and man in His own person.

That really is the greatest endorsement, I would feel, of family life because He came to be born into a family.

I'm turning to Luke chapter 2, where you find Him there with Mary, His mother, and Joseph, her husband, regarded there as His parents as they went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And you remember when He was 12, they found Him in the temple teaching and disputing with those who were skilled in the teachings of the law. And of course, they turned back and went to look for Him.

[57 : 57] This is where they found Him. And He said to them, His mother said to them, Your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.

He said to them, Why are you looking for me? Do you not know that I must be in my father's house? And they did not understand the things that He was saying to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.

And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. You see, He spoke about His father's house, the spiritual dwelling place of God which was associated then with the temple where they found Him.

But then He went home to His own household and He was submissive to them there. The Son of God in our human nature, the Son of God being an obedient child.

At 12 years of age, He submitted Himself to the authority of His parents even though He knew they were somewhat wrong in their thinking of why He wasn't actually with them on the journey.

[59 : 02] Then you see this. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Now that's not just tacked on to the previous verses loosely or just added just by way of an added thought.

What that is telling us is that the context in which Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man was in His family home, in His family setting, and being brought up there as a child in that family that He had willingly given Himself to.

There is your great example. There is your endorsement of family and of family life. It's stamped by the Son of God in His incarnation as the central, important, instructive unit in human society.

Today we belong to a household. Today we find the household as the basic unit of human society. Even today that's still the case.

And today we find a blessed household as a household where the presence of God is known, where God is worshipped, where His truth shapes our lives, and where the Lord's day is an important feature of it.

[60 : 29] And may God bless these thoughts to us today. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 128, 128, page 172.

How blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk the way that He has shown. Success and blessing will be yours. You will eat the fruit that you have grown. Your wife will be a fruitful vine, and round your table will be placed.

Your children, like young olive shoots, thus he who fears the Lord is blessed. May you behold Jerusalem's good. From Zion may God's blessing flow. Your children's children may you see.

May God on Israel peace bestow. We'll stand to sing these verses. How blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk the way that He has shown.

Success and blessing will be yours. You will eat the fruit that you have grown.

[61 : 50] Your wife will be a fruitful vine, and round your table will be placed.

Your children, like young olive shoots, thus he who fears, the Lord is blessed.

may you behold Jerusalem's good. From Zion may God's blessing flow.

Your children's children may you see. May God on Israel Israel peace bestow.

This morning I'll go to the door here to my left. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

[63 : 08] Amen. Thank you so much.

I hope you wonderful for all your time. All my time I should tohida Him, to shepherd him Melanna