

Confirmation Sunday

May 22, 2016

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you have committed to your Church the task of making disciples of all nations. Enlighten with your wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship and serve you from generation to generation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia! Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory. Alleluia! (Isaiah 6:3)

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 24-25

Ever realize how much your child learns from you? Your toddler puts his cup and plate in the dishwasher because he watches you do it. Your grade-schooler might grab a sponge to help you wash the car. Your teenager balances her savings account in the same manner she has seen you balance your bank books. Your child imitates you because they are learning from you. They study your behavior, hear your words, see your actions, and then try to be like you.

Those might be some of the proudest moments you ever experience as a parent. They also might be one of the scariest moments you face. Maybe your toddler repeats the four-letter words you said. You stand in horror as you watch your child push, shove, and yell just like you do. Children imitate not just your good behavior, but also your bad behavior. Painfully reminded of your own shortcomings, you teach them that your words and actions were wrong and that you were the bad example.

Is that not what parents are supposed to do? Impress, talk, teach, and raise their children? If that is the case, then what does your child learn about Jesus from you?

That question rests dearly on the heart of God. He so passionately desires that all people know the saving love he so richly poured out on the world ([1 Timothy 2:3-4](#)).

That is why Moses, thousands of years ago, stands in front of this massive group God commanded him to lead and preaches: **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”** Forty years earlier, the nation of Israel were slaves in Egypt. No freedom to visit the

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 24-25

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates...
²⁴ The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. ²⁵ And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.”

city or go shopping. No hope that life would get better. Just long days filled with grueling, backbreaking work.

Then God rescued them. He pours out miraculous plagues to terrify the Egyptian pharaoh. His powerful hand rips open the Red Sea for them to cross through, and later rains down bread and meat for each day's meals. His dominant Word gives the Israelite nation victory against every enemy.

Moses stresses and pleads to remember these events. He does not merely want the people to stand astounded at miracles or excitedly fist-pump at God's power or simply know that God exists. The only reason God rescued Israel from Egypt was so they could live in their own nation, continue having children, and finally be the ancestors to the Savior. Even though these millions of Israelites would never see Jesus with their own eyes, they trusted God's promise was as good as done. By continuing to worship God, by continuing to trust his promise for a Savior, by continuing to look forward to that first Christmas Day, they would see Jesus with their own eyes in heaven.

Yet, Moses knows how easy it is to lose sight of this eternal race. So, he stresses: **"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children."**

So, do you? As parents, grandparents, godparents, spiritual leaders— does the next generation clearly see the love you have for God? Do your children see worship as important? Do they watch you wake up Sunday mornings— even though you worked 40, 50, or 60 hours a week— but still see you get up Sunday mornings to come here because worship is that important? Do they understand that time with God takes the first priority— even though it means being a little late for a Sunday ballgame? Do you wake them up to join you at worship? Or is there some other object, some person, some hobby, some sport, something that is allowed to be loved more than God Almighty?

You face all sorts of temptations to not impress your faith on your child. In fact, you will hear the greatest lie out there right now: Insisting that your child attend catechism class or wake up Sunday morning to join you here is "forcing your beliefs on your child." Is that what Christian education class is all about? You "forcing" your beliefs on your child? That after today your parental teaching ends and now your teenager can choose to join another church-denomination which does not agree to the Bible-based teachings they were taught?

The world would praise you for that. God would not. He never says: "Raise your child and then let them go off to worship Molech, the pagan god of child sacrifice" or "Let them go to the prostitutes in the temple of Baal." God tells you, parents, grandparents, godparents, spiritual parents: **IMPRESS THESE WORDS** (all of them!) **IN YOUR HEART**— and in the heart of your children! So, what does your child learn about Jesus from you?

If we are truly honest with ourselves, we have never loved God with a completely undivided heart, mind, and soul. For that reason alone is why you **Impress these Words in Your Heart!**

Moses gives you the reason why you want to take every opportunity, set aside time, circle it on your calendar to meet here. *In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" tell him: **The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.***

God's commandments are not rules that take all the fun out of life. God's commandments unveil his high standards. He expects you to love him so much that you gladly hear his Word, that you continue gathering around it, and that you continue sharing this Word with your children.

For every single time that we dreaded hearing the voice of God or considered worship "boring" Jesus meets God's expectations. The Son of God always worships in the synagogue because it is his custom. He hears God's Word at church and then puts that Word into his life Monday through Saturday! Since God is his most priceless treasure he shares this life-saving message with his disciples, crowds, and even little children!

Jesus loves the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, and soul so that he can be your righteousness. Jesus is the reason God looks down from his throne and calls you "right" in his sight. No longer do you expect to hear God's disappointment. Instead, you hear Jesus call you forgiven, innocent, "righteous" before God!

This promise gives you eternal life! So, **IMPRESS THESE WORDS IN YOUR HEART!** The Hebrew word for "impress" shares the meaning "*to sharpen.*" Warriors would sharpen their swords and arrows for battle. You needed sharp weapons because you needed to defend your life. If you were lazy and stopped caring about the shape of your weapons, you could die in battle!

So, Moses tells you "*sharpen your heart by studying God's Word.*" Think of why Moses would say that. He knows you can forget Bible teachings or memory passages. Your conscience can grow dull. You can call "wrong" "right" and "right" "wrong." You can forget about Jesus— and the life he gave for you. Your heart can choke out love for God ([Matthew 13:18-22](#)). Your faith can be snuffed out.

That means two years of catechism training is not all you need for Christian living. (That would be like sharpening one table knife today and never sharpening it again; it would be too dull to ever cut anything again! It would be worthless!) Instead, continue sharpening your faith and do so by remaining in the Word; continue impressing these Bible teachings on your children.

Because if you do not influence them in the teachings of God, then who will influence them? You know, the Israelite nation traveled far from Egypt and made it to the outskirts of their new land. The people of Israel agreed that they would do everything the Lord commanded them ([Deuteronomy 5:27](#)). Yet, in only two generations— so from grandparent to grandchild— the parents failed to share the great things of God with the next generation ([Judges 2:10](#)). Many died in unbelief. They went to hell. They will not see

their grandparents in heaven. Instead, those believers will look down from heaven and see their family in hell!

That is absolutely terrifying; that is heart-wrenching! If it makes us mad, then what is the remedy to this?

Impress [these commandments] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home. When you are not in worship, from Monday through Saturday, give credit to God for everything you have. Acknowledge that God gives you a paycheck. Express your confidence in him to deliver you from trouble. Tell of the many ways God has blessed you each day!

[Talk about them] when you walk along the road... When you are in the car to work or school, or simply walking in the busy-ness of your day. Remind each other to make use of the blessings and talents God has gifted you. When you leave worship, share some main thought or point from the service. Explain what it means to you. Discuss how it finds a place in your life.

[Talk about them] when you lie down and when you get up. Have home devotions, family prayers; share these Bible teachings with your spouse, your child (who might have grown up and moved away). Pray thanks to God for his protection, his blessings, and his continual deliverance. When you wake up, thank God for protecting you, your family, and your possessions from destruction throughout the night. Thank him for opening your eyes to see another day. Thank him for the opportunity you have to serve him. Ask for his continual blessings.

Children learn lots through their parents. Your child imitates you because they are learning from you. They study your behavior, hear your words, see your actions, and then try to be like you. Sometimes that means you will teach them that your words and actions were wrong and that you were the bad example.

Yet, the most precious thing God gives you to teach is his very own Word. Embrace this role with great eagerness! **IMPRESS THESE WORDS IN YOUR HEART** because you have eternal life through them. As you **IMPRESS THESE WORDS IN YOUR HEART**, impress them in the hearts of your family. Because your child will always look at you. What will they learn about Jesus from you?