

John 17:6-19 | “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

John 17:6-19 | Parents as Mediators of Blessing

This summer we’re moving through a series on the Christian Home. It’s a sort of sequel to last summer’s series on marriage because we of course must talk about what marriage produces, which is ordinarily children. Families are where people come from and this is a glorious part of God’s good design for the world.

Although family has been corrupted by sin, God’s response to this is not to abandon the family but to restore it to the position of function. And the position of function for family has these glorious outcomes associated. In fact the position of function of the family is not merely reproduction but a support structure to call us to our highest joys in God himself through Jesus Christ.

The majority of instruction in scripture for the proper shaping of the family is from parents to children. Therefore that is the shape our sermon series is taking. And we are looking at how parents are to serve as prophets, priests, and kings in the home. We’ve seen how parents are supposed to act as prophets in telling our children the truths of God especially the gospel. Last week we began to explore the priestly function of parents. The summary of last weeks sermon was simply this, pray for your children. This week we are looking at how parents are to be mediators of blessing to children. The priests are mediators of blessing. When God established the priestly line of Aaron, he instructed Moses this way,

Numbers 6:22-27 | The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The Lord bless you and keep you;
²⁵ the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
²⁶ the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
²⁷ “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

The Lord describes this blessing as putting his name upon the people of Israel, and he says that through this blessing he will bless them. Bless, keep, shine, graciousness, a pleased face, peace. This is what God command his priests to speak over his people and he says that by their proclamation of it he will do it. Parents as priests ought to mediate divine blessing. How are parents meant then to be mediators of divine blessing? Well in one sense we should follow the pattern of the Aaronic priesthood and proclaim the blessing of the Lord upon our children. But of course, this sounds like the prophet role. And the roles all blend together a bit because they are perspectives on Christ which are analogous to parenting.

In the short little book Blake Arensdorf recommended to me, *A Man as Priest in His Home* by Samuel E. Waldron, Waldron says this,

“In one sense there is nothing very mysterious about how we are
 mediators of divine blessing to our families. The force of our parental
 example, character, and life bring that blessing.” - Samuel E. Waldron, *A
 Man as Priest in His Home*

So as the message of the last sermon was as simple as pray for your children, the message of this sermon is as simple as, be a blessing to your children. Let’s look at how Jesus is a blessing to his people. We can see it in Christ’s High Priestly prayer he prays for his people before heading to the cross. Three models, we see, Christ receives his children as a blessing, he keeps his children in the blessing, and he offers his children to the Lord.

1. Receive your Children as a blessing

John 17:6-7 | “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave
 me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they
 have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have
 given me is from you.

In Christ’s high priestly prayer, he understands the disciples and those who believe in him to be gifts from God. That is his church is a gift given to him by the father. He understands that they belong to the Father and have been given to him. Those whom he seeks to bless he first understands to be a blessing. Parents this must be our disposition. Our children are a blessing to us and a gift of God to us.

Psalm 127:3 | Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
 the fruit of the womb a reward.

One of the greatest ways we can bless our children is to treat them as a blessing. They are not in the way of true blessing. They are themselves a blessing. They are not in the way of happiness, they are opportunities for happiness. Your children should know that you are blessed by them. That when you see them you are seeing a gift of the Lord.

Consider the Aaronic blessing again. How can you pronounce the blessing upon your children that God's face might shine upon them if your face doesn't shine upon them? You should light up when you see your children. If you don't light up when you see your children, start lighting up when you see your children. Just see what happens. Look at the blessing you will bring into your home.

This lighting up will be different for the boys and girls. God commands that husbands love their wives and wives should respect their husbands. Partly that means daughters want to be loved and sons want to be respected. That's why little girls flirt and little boys show you how fast they are. Your sons should hear you say, "you're the man." Your daughters should hear you say you're beautiful. Wow you are fast. You're a beautiful dancer.

You must delight in your children to mediate the blessing of God's delight in them. They must know that they belong to God and God is not burdened by them, and you can mediate this blessing to your children as you show that they belong to you and you are not burdened by them. Jesus says of his disciples, "I am glorified in them." Be Glorified in your children.

2. Guard the blessing

John 17:12 | While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Jesus kept all of his disciples, except the one who was determined from the beginning to fall away. Jesus kept his disciples who had been given to him by the father in the name of the father. He did this because he guarded them. Jesus says, I have guarded them. To mediate the blessing parents must defend against the curse. The curse is to be outside the father, the blessing is to be kept in the name of the father.

Consider the Aaronic blessing again, May the Lord bless you and.... Keep you. You should be like Jesus to your children and keep them in the blessing of being in the father's name. This means you should have the zeal of priests like Phineas for your children. Who when he witnessed brazen disregard for the commands of God in public display, grabbed a spear and struck dead the two offenders, thus bringing an end to the plague upon the people. This is good. This is loving and priestly. You should be extremely jealous of the influences in your kids lives. You should not think of your children in terms of other

peoples children. There is a mode of thinking that if other people can't offer this resource for their children you shouldn't offer it for yours. That's absurd. You should be jealous for your children.

There is a narrative myth in our culture which does not pan out in the data. The narrative is that children who are brought up in religious homes are primed for bad outcomes and rebellion. This is false. Children who are brought up in non-religious homes have worse outcomes.

Therefore you must understand the nature of your children's enemies. The world, the flesh and the devil. The devil is conquered by the word of God, the flesh is conquered by grace, the world is conquered by love of God.

3. Offer the blessing back to the Lord

John 17:14-15 | I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

But Jesus does not keep those who are his in order to remove them from danger. He keeps them so that they might be sent into the very danger which he was sent into and experience it in the same way. Part of keeping your children by sharing the word of God with them and protecting them from wicked influences is not so that they will have safety in the world it is that they will have the right danger.

If you filled them with the values of the world you would make them friends of the world and they would not have enemies to be sent out to. The world loves sin, and the celebration of sin. The world hates righteousness. So you give them the world and this means they will be hated. You are keeping them so that they might be prepared for the adventure they are being sent out on. The keeping of our children is not so they may be forever locked away it is so they may be sent out.

John 17:17-19 | Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Our children are given to us so that they might be finally given back to the Lord. Our priestly role for our children therefore requires us giving ourselves to the Lord. Setting ourselves apart into his promises. Entrusting ourselves to Jesus as our high priest so that our children might understand what it is to be set apart by us.

In this way we mediate to them the highest blessing, that they might be kept by the God who smiles upon them and their lives might be blessed.