

Children, Obey Your Parents In the Lord

Ephesians 6:1-3

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, March 14, 2021

Good morning, everyone. If you would, please open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians chapter five. If you've been with us for a while you'll know this morning we are coming to the new part of the book of Ephesians. We're coming to the final chapter. We are in the homestretch here and I would just like to read it to you before we get started. Read with me starting in chapter 5 verse 22. It says this:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also as the head of the church, He Himself being the savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is great, but I'm speaking with reference to Christ in the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise) "so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."

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

We'll end the reading there. I've told you before that the book of Ephesians is about our salvation. That's the theme of the book; the main idea. It tells us about the great change that occurs in us when we're saved, when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, some scholars have summarized the book this way, they said that it's about practicing your position in Christ. They put it into that nice little phrase, "practicing your position," because the first part is about your position. It's about who you are in Christ. And the second part of the book, chapters four through six is about practicing or living it out in certain areas of life. As we just read, the greatest place you can do that is in the home. The greatest place you can live out your salvation is with your family. As Paul starts with the wives in verse 22, and then he goes to the husbands in verse 25, and then on into the children to say that no matter what's going on in the world, you still have a duty here. No matter what, no matter what's going on with the pandemic and the restrictions and the government, you still have an obligation to your family. A lot of Christians are forgetting that today. A lot of people are neglecting that because they have their mind so caught up in the chaos right now, don't they? They've got their attention, so distracted with all of this crazy stuff going on. But Paul says you can't do that. You can't be so distracted with those things that you forget about this. The

Christian life is lived out first and foremost with your family. That's your number one priority as a Christian, your number one duty goes to them. And since we've already talked about the husbands and wives here, I'm not going to say more on that subject. But if you look in chapter six, verse one, again, it says this: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

I'm going to explain this to you in a moment and walk through this passage together, but the word for children here in Greek is *teknon*, which referred to a child of any age, a child at any stage of life, young or old, in the home or outside of it. The Greek language had a word for little children and had a word for infants and toddlers. But that's not this word. This word refers to a child, really, of any age, no matter what it is. And its significance is that this refers to all of us here because we're all a *teknon* of somebody, we're all a child of somebody. We're not all married, and we talked about that last week. We don't all have a husband or a wife. Some of us are single. So those passages don't necessarily apply to all of us, but this one does.

This is a command for everyone in the church to follow because we all have parents. Some of you have good parents. Some of you have parents that know the Lord and walk with the Lord and so this is an easy passage for you to follow. But some of you don't. Some of you have really, really hard parents to follow, which would have been something Paul's original audience would have identified with. This would have been something the Ephesians would have understood because none of them had Christian parents. This is a first-generation church. And so all of them came from pagan backgrounds. To make it even worse, the first century had some really bizarre ideas about parenting because the Romans, for instance, had a custom known as *Patria potestas*, which means "the power of the Father", which said that a father had ultimate authority over their child, they had ultimate power over their lives, so that they could hit them or beat them or kill them if they wanted to. They could capture them and sell them into slavery at any point, at any stage of life. Nobody could stop them. They even had a ritual where when the child was born, they would place it at the father's feet. And if the father wanted it, he would still stoop down and pick it up. But if he didn't want the child, he didn't care about it, he would just walk over it. And they would take the kid and kill him, or they would put him out on the street for someone to pick up. And when these people became a Christian, for the first time they saw the horrors of all that. When the Ephesians came to faith in Christ, for the first time they saw how degrading that was and they rejected it. But at the same time, Paul told them, You have to do this, you still have to honor your parents.

You can imagine how hard it would have been to hear that. Imagine how difficult it would be to honor someone who acted that way and behave like that. But Paul says you still have to do it because God gave them to you. God gave you this mother and this father and you have to acknowledge that. One commentator says it this way, he says, "This is a very difficult command to follow. It's not easy to do, for parents do not always live up to the expectations of their children. Sometimes your parents let you down. For example, sometimes the father is an alcoholic and a drunk. Sometimes the mother is a liar and a thief. And what's the child supposed to do then? Paul says here he is to honor them."

I mentioned this because we tend to ignore this command in the Bible, don't we? We tend to overlook it because our parents often do this, they often fail to meet our expectations. And we think it gives us a pass on this. We think it gives us the freedom to ignore it but Paul says it doesn't. He says you can't ignore this at all because the command still holds.

I also mentioned this because, as Christians, sometimes we go further than that, we take it a step further, we don't speak to our parents at all. We don't have any interaction with them because they don't agree with our newfound faith. They don't agree with our Christian principles. We become angry and we start to resent them for that. Paul says you can't do that either. You can't resent your parents because God put them into your life for a reason. And you need to see His hand and all this and submit to His sovereignty. God gave you the wife He did, God gave you the husband He did and God gave you the parents that He did for His own choosing. And you have to learn to rest in that. That's His sovereign grace in controlling your life.

To say it another way, speaking to the little children here, speaking to the kids who might be listening to this sermon, this is especially important for you, because you need to make your faith your own. You need to believe it for yourself. So many Christian, or children from Christian families, fall into the trap of thinking that they're saved just because their parents are. They fall into the trap of thinking that they're going to heaven and they're right with God because mom and dad are. But it doesn't. That's not the way it works. You don't get into heaven that way. It's been said that God has children, but he has no grandchildren. So it's great if your parents believed; it's wonderful if they're born again, but you must believe; you must be born again if you want to see the kingdom of heaven.

It has to be a personal thing for you. You get into heaven one at a time you don't get in as a whole family. The way you see if it's real or not, one way you see that you have embraced this faith is that you obey your parents. You obey the passage that says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." And obviously you can't do this, if you're not in the Lord. You can't do what this is talking about if you're not in a saving relationship with Him. So it all starts here, you need to trust in Christ for yourself. I remember talking to a young man several years ago who told me that he grew up in a Christian home. He grew up in a Christian family where he went to Sunday school, he went to a youth group, he was even baptized...all those things, but he never believed. He never meant it and was just faking it the entire time. And so when he got older, he left the church all together. When he got older and left his house, his mom and dad's house, he turned his back on God. And friends, I want to tell you, you don't want to do that today. Whether you're in the home, or even if you're out of it, you don't want to get to the point where you turn your back on God, you want to be sincere. Now, you want to mean it today and that's what we're going to talk about this morning.

And so if you're taking notes in Ephesians chapter 6, we're going to look at three responsibilities for a Christian child in the home. We're going to do this because if you're failing any way, if we're failing anywhere in the church today, I think it's here. If we're blowing in anywhere with our homes and our families, it's in this, we simply don't tell our children that they're responsible enough. We don't tell them that they have an obligation in the home to believe for themselves because we act like we can believe on their behalf. We act like we can do it all for them. I mean, we're safe, so they must be Christians, like they're grandfathered in; like they're strung along with us. And that's not the way it works. It didn't work that way with you. It didn't work that way with your salvation, it doesn't work that way with theirs. It takes more than that. They have to do it. They have to believe in Christ for themselves. And if they do it, this is what it will look like. They'll honor their parents. When a child believes, when they're born again, this is how they start to behave, they hold them in high esteem. Because you can't fake this, you can't make this kind of stuff up. This is the real thing. And that's what we're going to talk about today by looking at three responsibilities for a Christian child in the home.

The first one is this: you need to obey your parents. Very simple. It's a very direct command. But we're going right along with the text here. The first responsibility for a Christian child in the home is that you need to obey your parents, which means you need to follow what they say. You need to submit to their authority. Submission is probably the hardest thing you do in the world. Because we all have a heart that doesn't want to do that. But that's how Paul starts this off. He's pretty direct here because there's a time to be direct. And if you had read starting back up in chapter 5 v.28, he says, "So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. And for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I'm speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also has to love his own wife, even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

I started reading way back up in the text there just to give you a feel for this and see how strange it is to put verse one in here. This is very strange to the ancient audience, because again, children were not considered to be worth much in the ancient world. They were not given a very high priority to the people back then. Our world is very child-centered. Today it is very child focused because we have lots of books on parenting. We have lots of movies and TV shows for that. We have schools. The ancient world didn't have a lot of that. It was very different back then because they did not value children the way we do. They didn't receive much attention. And over against that way of thinking Paul addresses the children directly here.

The first word in the verse is the word "children". Attention would have perked up at this. And he tells them to obey your parents. That's the command here. The action is to obey your parents and follow them; it means to respect their authority. Listen to them, those types of things. And if you're wondering how far to take that, as you read this verse, you might be wondering, well, how far do I go with that? Well, he says that you are to do it in the Lord. That's very helpful because you can't follow your parents into sin. You don't follow them into evil. That could have been a big deal for the Ephesians.

Also, your loyalty to God comes first. But if they don't tell you to sin, if your parents don't tell you to do evil things, then as far as it depends on you, you need to obey them. You need to acknowledge that you are under their authority. It doesn't mean there may not be times you disagree with them. It doesn't mean there may be times when you have to work things out. But this is the role you have in the home. Obviously, this changes somewhat when a child leaves the home. Obviously, this looks different when a child leaves the household, gets married, starts their own family. Because at that point, you need to establish your own household, you need to establish your own rules and raise your own children. But even at that point, you still need to have a high view of your parents. That's the idea here. Even at that point, you need to have a high view of who they are. And as Paul goes on in the text here, he gives you the reason for that. Here's the reason you should have a high view of your parents. He says, "For this is right." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." That means it's right in the eyes of God. It's right in the eyes of heaven. God could have created the world any way he wanted to; He could have created it any way He chose. He chose to do it this way, by giving you parents.

This also means that this is right in the eyes of the world. It's right in the eyes of nature, because it's a fundamental law of nature that children do this. It's a fundamental law of science. You see this all throughout the natural world, you see it with animals. You know, baby bear follows its mama bear. You see it with the birds. Little Eagles

follow big eagles. You see with fish and bugs and insects and so forth. Everywhere you look, you see children following their parents. Everywhere you look, you see them obeying. It's an instinctive thing. It's primal. You don't have to teach it to them, they just do it. You don't have to show it to them or explain it. It just comes natural. It's the same way here. That's what Paul is saying here. This is just the right thing. You know, we've all been at the mall or out of the store, or at the cereal aisle at the grocery store and we've seen children act up; we've seen them throw a tantrum and what do we say? We say that's not right. That's wrong. You don't have to explain it to somebody, you don't have to show it to him. It's obvious. This is why Paul is being so blunt here. That's why he's being so direct. Because there's really nothing more to say after that. There's really nothing more to add to it because this is something that's been built into the fabric of our society. It's been built into the fabric of our DNA. Which is why it's so tragic. A lot of times today when you see it unraveling, when you see children taking over the home, it's so unnatural, so aberrant. That's not the way it's supposed to be.

Here are several ways to apply this to our lives. You know, for one thing this reminds us that the first place that a person sins is always in the home. It occurs there before it occurs anywhere else. It happens here before it happens elsewhere. This is the first sin that everyone commits. This is the first evil act they do: they disobey their parents. They rebel against their authority. Why is this such a big deal? Because this is where it all begins. A lot of our people I mentioned a moment ago, a lot of our folks in our church have young children. We have a lot of young families and all the young parents will tell you that you don't have to teach a child to disobey. You don't have to teach a child to say the word "No", you have to teach them to say the word "Yes", you have to teach them to say the word "okay" because no comes naturally to them. This is the first place where our depravity shows up. Children are wonderful. They're beautiful. They are made in the image of God and they're so precious, but at the same time, they have the heart of a rebel. They have the heart of a sinner. When you see a murderer on death row, you think how terrible, but I promise you it started here. I promise you, whatever they did, it started in the home. And to add to that, friends, make no mistake, children don't disobey their parents because their parents are mean and nasty. That's a lie coming from the world today. They don't disobey their parents because they're always cruel and harsh or something like that. They do it because they want to. They disobey their parents because it's in their nature. It's who they are. And you have to address that with them. You have to realize that we tend to minimize this sin and we tend to downplay it because it's so common. You see it everywhere. But the Bible doesn't do that. In fact, if you look up some of the worst sins in the Bible, some of the worst lists of sins, you always see this one in there. The sin of disobeying your parents, I just want to read some of these to you just so you get a feel for this. 2 Timothy 3:1-2 says,

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful...

That's interesting and pretty significant because when you think of the last days, when you think of the final times, the end times, all the evil stuff that happens. This one doesn't come to mind does it? You wouldn't put this one in the list, but God does. He says before the Lord returns, before Jesus comes back, this is what you'll see. The evilness of men will be unleashed and people will be disobedient to their parents. Man's evil heart will run amok and as a result, they will dishonor them.

The book of Romans mentions this sin as well. If you would, turn to Romans chapter one. It says that when God gave men over to the lusts of their heart, this is what you see. You saw that they were filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed and evil, full of envy, murder, strife; you see malice, gossip, slander, haters of

God, insolent, arrogant, disobedient to their parents, and ignorant. That's very telling as well. Because in that list, Paul puts this sin right in between arrogance and ignorance. He puts disobeying your parents right in there between pride and stupidity, because that's what it is. It's stupid. It is a stupid thing to disobey your parents. You think they don't know more than you do? Especially when you're little. But that's what sin does to us. What it does to our hearts, it makes us stupid and foolish.

This leads us to another application and that is that the first place a person needs the gospel is in the home. If the first place you sin is in the home, the first place you need salvation is in the home. It's the first place. You need to hear about grace and mercy. You don't need to hear it out there, you need to hear it in here. You don't need to hear it first at church and first with your pastor and first with your elders and Sunday school teachers. The first place you need to hear it is with your parents. It's the job of mom and dad to tell the kids the gospel because that's where their sin comes out the most. That's where they do the worst things. They don't do it at church. I'll tell you that. We don't see them at their worst here because they're sweet little angels in church. You guys do a great job of cleaning them up. But I know they're not like that at home so you need to give them the gospel there too. You need to tell them what Jesus did on the cross to save them and the mercy that He offers. It needs to be a constant topic of conversation. It doesn't need to be just law, law law all the time. Your home doesn't need to just be about rules, rules, rules. That didn't save you and it won't save your child. That didn't bring you salvation, it won't bring it to them. You need to have some grace in there as well.

I mentioned this because I've had parents come to see me in my office. They come to visit and then they said their child is rebellious and disobedient. And before I even bring the child in to talk, I always ask the parents first. "Well tell me what are you saying to them after you correct it? What are you saying to the child after you address this sin? Do you just tell them that they're bad? Do you just tell them that they're wrong, and they're doing evil things?" Because if you do that they're going to rebel, I promise you, if that's all you say to them, they're going to lash out because nobody wants to hear that all the time. Nobody wants to hear just bad news. You need to give some good news to them as well, you need to tell them what God has done to save them. I heard one pastor say that if you want to raise a pharisee, then there's a very simple way to do it. Just tell them to keep the law, tell your kids to be perfect and tell them to hide it when they aren't perfect. That will turn them into a pharisee and you don't want to do that today. You want to have a very different response to your children.

The story was told one time that a little boy said to his mother, "Can I go outside and help daddy put the snow chains on the on the car?" And his mother said, "Well, why you never asked that before? Why do you want to do that?" And the boy said, "Well, because I know all the right words. I know how to turn red in the face and yell and holler like dad does so I said I think I can help him."

Friends, it needs to be a chilling reminder that we all need grace. We all need forgiveness. We've all messed up. We've all blown it with God. Our kids are no different. They're the same way and we need to be gentle with them just as God has been gentle with us in our mistakes.

And that leads to another point to consider this morning, another responsibility for a Christian child in the home. The first one is to obey your parents, which means you need to follow what they say. And you need to submit to their authority, but you need to do it while at the same time remembering the gospel. You need to do it remembering that at the same time nobody's perfect. We all make mistakes, but that's why Jesus has come. It's

why God sent His Son. And it brings us to another point to consider, another responsibility for a Christian child in the home. And that is that you need to honor your parents as well.

A second responsibility for a Christian child in the home is that you need to honor your parents, which means you need to hold them in high esteem. You need to treat them with respect. Now Paul says not only should you obey your parents outwardly, but you should do it inwardly as well. Not only should you obey them with your words, your actions and your deeds, but you need to do it with your heart. And if you read on in verse one, it says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise." As you go on in this passage, I just told you that it's rather odd that Paul starts off talking to children here because you would think he would start talking to the parents, you think he would start off talking to the adults. But if you look back and chapter five, verse 21, it says we are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. In other words, as he gets into the subject of the family, as he's talking about the home, he's doing all of this with the umbrella of submission. All of this with the idea of being subject to one another. And he starts with the children here because they're the ones who would have to do this the most. They're the ones that would have to submit the most. And so it begins with them. And he tells the children here to Honor your father and mother. As you look at that phrase, it is capitalized in most of your Bibles because it's a quotation from the 10 commandments. It's a summary of the fifth commandment which says, "Honor your father and mother, just as the Lord your God commanded you." Here, Paul says it's the first commandment with a promise, which could mean a couple of things, you could interpret that a couple of ways. For one, it could mean that this is the first commandment related to the family with the promise, this is the first commandment related to the home, because there are other commandments that had promises with them. If you read the 10 commandments, there's other ones that have blessings attached to them. But this was the first one related to the family. And you could also interpret this to mean that this is the first one you need to teach your children. This is the first commandment you should give your kids in the home. Because everything else fails, if they don't get this. Everything else fails, if your kids don't learn to honor their parents, because if they don't do that, you can't tell them anything. They don't learn to honor you, then they won't listen to anything you say.

Oftentimes, when parents are having problems with their kids, is because this has broken down the relationships broken down in the area of honor. So every time they try to give them instruction, it's like hitting a wall. It's like bumping your head up against some bricks. So you have to win this back. It all starts here. You know, I came across a statistic recently about this. They kind of surprised me. It threw me for a loop because it said out of the last 27 School shooters in the United States, 26 of them had no fathers. 26 of them had no male figures in the home, and that doesn't mean their fathers are to blame for that. It doesn't mean that the fathers are responsible for the violence. But there's a pattern in there. There's a consistent theme. And that is, look, if you don't learn honour here, you don't learn it anywhere. If you don't learn it from your father, or in your house, you'll never learn it because this is how God designed it to be.

In fact, as you read this passage, there's a progression to what Paul says here. We teach our children to do this because it's right. We are to teach them to obey because it's a fundamental law of nature. But here in verse two, we should do it because it's a law of God according to the way He designed it. This law goes all the way back to the Old Testament, it goes all the way back to the 10 commandments. We need to honour our father and mother that means you need to value them. You need to hold them in high esteem. Paul puts this in here because this is what God really wants us to do in the home. This is what he really wants us to do. He wants us to value our parents. He wants us to see them as the treasure that they are and for all they've done for us.

It's a very ungrateful thing to treat your parents with disrespect and it's shameful. They put the clothes on your back, they gave you food on your table, they gave you a place to live. Some of you they put you through school. They did everything they could to make life good for you. You know if you think about it, you can obey your parents without honouring them. People do it all the time because they say yes ma'am and no, ma'am. They say Yes, sir and no sir, while at the same time hating their parents in their heart, despising them, muttering under their breath. So Paul kicks it up a notch. He said you can't do that because that's a sin too. You can't do that because that's evil in the eyes of God as well.

One author said this, "Parents stand in the gap so to speak between a child and God while the children are too young to have a full relationship with him. Parents are God's stewards who are given the opportunity to speak the Word of God into their life when they are too small to take advantage of it and when a believing child thinks about the fact that their parents have had such an awesome responsibility, carried it on their behalf. It should make them grateful." We should appreciate our parents for all they have done.

To be honest, as you think about that, some of you read that you're struggling with that this morning, you're finding this hard, because maybe your parents haven't been the best. Your parents have made some mistakes, they've committed a lot of sins, like we've already talked about. So as you read this, you're thinking, "Well, how do I honor someone who's not honorable? How do I honour my parents when they've done the wrong things?" And I think that's a common question. And one way to handle that is this: just find something your parents do well and think about that. If you're reading this text and wondering how do I do this and you're struggling with it, just find something they do that's pleasing to God, something they do that's right and dwell on that, stew on that, fixate on that. Don't worry about those other things right now. Don't dwell on those other things because you're gonna go crazy. Focus on the one thing they do that's well in the eyes of God, and that'll help you do this. Even the worst parents do something right, don't they? Even the worst of parents have some good qualities about them, and remembering that will help you keep this command.

And all that brings us to one more point to consider this morning, one more responsibility for a Christian child in the home. And just to review these other ones. The first one is to obey your parents. That means you need to follow what they say. You need to submit to them. And then a second, you need to honour your parents or hold them in high esteem and treat them with respect. This is why only a Christian can do this. This is why only a believing child can fully obey this command because this is an internal thing for you. You need to truly and deeply from the bottom of your heart cherish your parents. Unbelievers can't do that without a regenerated heart. They can't do that without a renewed soul. And you have that as a Christian. Even when you have bad parents. A believing wife can still honour her unbelieving husband. A believing husband can honour or love his unbelieving wife. You can do the same for your parents if you're a Christian.

And all that brings us to one more point to consider, one more responsibility for a Christian child in the home. And that is that you need to obey and honour while remembering the blessings. You need to remember all the good things that God will give you if you do what this says, if you comply with it. Read with me in verse one, it says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."

Just to say a few words about this one, as Paul writes, verse three, he does something that's very characteristic of his writing here, he does something that was very common, because not only does he give you a command, but he gives you some incentive to obey it. I mean, not only does he give you the order here, to honor and obey, but he gives you some motivation for it. He knew this would be hard for you. He knew it wasn't easy. So to help you with that, he puts this at the end. And as you read it, you can tell it's also capitalized in your Bibles. This is another quotation from the fifth commandment. And the point is that this is why you should keep the commandment; it's a causal thing. Here's the result, or here's what will happen: so that it may be well with you. That means it may be well with your soul and maybe well with your conscience. Disobeying your parents all the time is hard on your conscience. You know that's wrong. You need to do this so that it may be well on that level.

And it also says so that you may live long on the earth. And that's not a literal promise here. It's not a literal guarantee. As Paul was saying, if you do this, you'll live forever. You know, if you do this, you'll live 100 years. But what he's saying is that if you do this, it will prepare you for that. If you do what this is saying, if you obey this command, he will get you ready to live a very long life. Because we've all known people who forgot this. They didn't keep this command and as a result, they died early, didn't they? As a result, they died young because they got involved in drugs or alcohol or something bad. Or on the flip side, on the other hand, we've known people who maybe they didn't experience the bad, they didn't die early. But they might as well have because their lives were miserable. They were like a train wreck. And it all came back to this. This is where this sin began, it began with how you treat your parents. It's why this is so ugly. It's why this sin is so nasty. And this is how you avoid all that as a Christian. Paul says, this is how you stay away from going down that road. You need to honor and obey your parents.

In fact, the Old Testament had a very interesting comment and perspective on this because the Old Testament told the Jews to stone a child who didn't do this. The law said to kill a child who was disobedient to their parents on an ongoing basis. I mean, not just one time, but if they had a pattern of that. Let me just read this to you from Deuteronomy 21. From the law says,

If any person has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not listen to them, then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city, at the gateway of his home... then all the men of the city shall stone him to death; so you shall eliminate the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear about it and fear.

When I first read that years ago, when I first got saved, I was blown away with that, because I thought of all the sins you're going to kill somebody for, you would have thought it would be something else, right? You'd think it would be murder, or adultery or something bad. Moses told the Jews, God told the Jews to do it for this in. And not only were they to stone him, but they were to stone him in front of the elders, that means in front of their leaders, and every man was to have a part in it. Every man in the city was to pick up a stone and to be involved. Because it was so dangerous, it was so deadly to the community that they had to nip it in the bud. They had to stop it before the infection spread. The Jews understood that in order to keep the other children from thinking that was okay to disobey their parents, they had to do this. They understood that if you lose a child at a young age, you could lose them forever.

You may never get them back. They understood that if you don't catch them early, you may never catch them at all. We've all known kids who went the wrong direction early in life, and they never got back. They never turned it around. We've all seen teenagers do that. It is a tragic thing when I see a teenager running with the wrong crowd, and getting involved in deep, dark sins, because they often stay that way forever. So the time Paul says the time to teach them is now. The time to get their attention is today before it's too late. And this is something that our children need to hear today. This is something that the children of our church need to learn. And that is that the things that you do now will influence your life forever. The things you do now as a child, as a teenager, as a young adult, will impact who you are for all eternity, because you're not going to wake up one day and become somebody else. It doesn't work that way. Life doesn't work that way. You're not going to wake up 10 years, 20 years, 30 years down the road and become a different person. That's a lie. That's a deception. The things you do now stay with you for life. They stick with you like glue. You need to realize that and take it to heart.

I'll never forget about the time one of my professors in seminary was talking to us about this issue. And he said this, he said, "What you will be, you are now becoming." In other words, what you will be down the road you are turning into right now. What you will be 10 years, 20 years, 50 years down the line you're changing into today. So are you happy with that person now? Are you pleased with what you're turning into this moment? Because if not, you need to do something about it. I mean, if not, you need to change. That's the whole point of this final passage here: so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

This all leaves me to ask the question this morning for the young people in this room, for the children and the teenagers: how would you answer my professor's question? How would you answer that statement? Are you pleased with the person you're becoming right now? Are you happy with the man or the woman that you're turning out to be? I mean, when you look into the mirror, when you look at yourself in light of this passage, and how you respond to your parents, and how you treat them, and how you talk to them, and how you think about them, do you like what you see? Are you satisfied with that? And more importantly, do you think God is? Do you think God is satisfied with the way you act towards your parents? I asked you that because if not, you need to remember what this says. It says that the time to change that is today, the time to do something about that is right now, so that it may be well with you. That's the point here so that you can have a blessing in life. Some of our young people, you may be having a hard time in life because you're ignoring this. The time to stop that is today.

And to ask this another way for the adults in this room, to those who are older, do you realize as an adult that you have a duty in this area as an older person who has parents, do you realize that you have a responsibility as well to honour your parents too? It's not just for the kids, this is for the adults. It may look a little different for you but this is something like I said, for everybody. So how are you doing with this? How are you doing? Before you point your fingers at your kids, before we get in their kitchen, let's get in your kitchen. Do you treat your parents well? When you see them for holidays, when you see them for the weekends, when you see them for Christmas, do you talk highly of them? Do you build them up in the eyes of others? Do you cover their faults in love and magnify their virtues? I ask you that because it could be that your children are having a hard time with this because you are. It could be that your children are failing in this area and sinning and doing evil things because you're doing the same. You're teaching them how to do it. And if that's the case, I have the same advice for you. You need to change. You need to repent now. Don't procrastinate, don't put it off. And the good news is that you can do that by the grace of God. You can repent with His help if you would call out to Him today. He is a God of mercy and He will hear you. Listen, friends, God put this passage in the Bible because He knows we can keep it.

With a new life in Christ with a new nature and with a new soul, you can keep this command. It's not too hard by His grace.

In my studies this week I came across a story of the time an author from Reader's Digest visited an Amish village, one of those remote places, and she remarked how well behaved the children were. She said, "You know, they never yell and they never scream." To that someone replied, "Well, have you ever heard an Amish parent yell? Have you ever heard an Amish adult scream?" And there's a lesson in there for us, there's a principle, and that is this. Parents have a duty to teach this to their children. We have a duty to model this for them, set an example for them to follow. We can't just say Do what I say but don't do what I do." It has to be deeper than that. We have to show them what it means to honour their parents by honoring our own. Will you do that today? Will you show your children how?

Let me pray that you would and ask for God's grace in this area. Let's close in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank You, Lord for this beautiful day that we've had. Just to stand outside, preach a sermon, think of the things of eternity and, and particularly think of a very practical subject. And that is, how to treat our parents. God, even as I preach this this morning and thought about our congregation, I thought of all the stories I've heard of heartbreak, of the relationship some of our families have on this level. So God, I pray for an extra measure of grace. For all of us today that we would be able to keep this command and have wisdom in order to do it. Well, we thank you for the parents you've given us. We thank you for the men and women that we are today because of them. We wouldn't be who we are if it were not for our mom and dad, and Lord, for those who are moms and dads today, Father, I pray you would help them to raise their children and bring them up and at the same time preaching the gospel to them, teaching them about Christ, and what He's done to save sinners. Father, we thank you that we have a Bible that covers every area of life and doesn't leave anything out. It covers the home, it covers the family and it covers everything outside of it, Lord, and we're so grateful for that. Would you change our families today as a result of what we've read? Would you change our families as a result of what we've learned? We thank you for Christ and how He comes into our hearts and invades every square inch of us. Would He invade this one as well? Lord Jesus, would you take over our homes? Thank you for what we've learned. Lord, thank you for the book of Ephesians and all the wonderful things it teaches us as we go even deeper in the weeks to come. Would you be glorified?! We pray this in Christ's name, and for His glory. Amen.

Thank you for joining us for this morning. That concludes our service. If you would like to learn more about us you can find us online at gracefellowshipchilliwack.com or you can find us on our YouTube channel, just type in Grace Fellowship Chilliwack and all our material will show up there. May the Lord bless you and have a wonderful day.