

Wednesday Night 11/05/25

Text: Various

Sermon Title: "Hope For The Prodigals...What's A Parent To Do?"

Every Christian parent dreams that their children will love and serve the Lord. Yet, some of the deepest sorrow a believing parent can experience is seeing their adult child reject the faith they were raised to believe.

The Bible makes clear that in the "last days," family relationships will be strained, and truth will divide households. But this doesn't mean hope is lost.

God's Word gives wisdom, endurance, and love to parents walking this painful road. Turn with me to

2 Timothy 3:1-5.

The Dangers of the Last Days

“1 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

What's the point? What's A Parent To Do?

Point # 1. Recognize the Reality—but Don't Lose Heart

Paul warned Timothy that the last days would be full of rebellion, self-centeredness, and disobedience (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

Turn with me to Matthew 10:34-37

Jesus Himself told us that the gospel would divide families in Matthew 10:34–37, **34 “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. 35 ‘I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 Your enemies will be right in your own household!’ 37 “If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine.”**

If you experience this in your own home please understand that what you’re seeing isn’t a sign that God has abandoned you or your family—it’s a sign that His Word is true.

That’s why Jesus tells us this in advance so we can be prepared.

The prophetic description of sin's spread doesn't destroy hope; it reminds us that God saw this day coming and is still sovereign over it.

What's A Parent To Do?

When you see your children walking away from God, **remind yourself: this is not the end of the story.** God's Word has already prepared you for this season.

Never Give Up Hope:

Romans 8:24-25, **"24 We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. 25 But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)"**

Point # 2. Keep Your Love Warm When the World Grows Cold

Romans 5:20 (NKJV), **“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,”**

Story of interview between Billy Graham and Larry King... If you had a gay son would you still love him? Reverend Graham answered without hesitation, “I’d probably love him more”. Why, Larry King, who was visibly puzzled by the answer? Billy Graham continued, “Because obviously, based on his choice he needs more love to understand who God is and why His Word is true regarding our identity.”

Jesus warned in Matthew 24:12, **“Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.”**

If your child rejects your faith or mocks your convictions, the temptation is to withdraw—to protect your heart. But God calls parents to bear witness to His steadfast love, even when

rejected.

Instead of protecting your heart, ask God to help you **“live with your heart wide open”**

When Paul was stoned for his testimony in Lystra in Acts 14:19-20... Paul got up and went right back into the city. Truth never backs down.

1 John 4 teaches us that **“There is no fear in love...”** Parents who give in to their children's threats are not being loving but the exact opposite. They are compromising their true convictions.

1 John 4:18-19, **“18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first.”**

Never back down from the truth...

Say something like, “I am sorry you feel that

way... hopefully God will use me and my life to show you a better way.” (Paul said boldly... be imitators of me as I am of Christ).

Think of the father that we read about in the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He didn't chase his son into sin, but he also didn't harden his heart. He waited with compassion, his eyes still fixed on the horizon. Love doesn't mean compromise—but it does mean staying open, prayerful, and ready to forgive.

Imagine the father each day... praying, hoping against hope (we don't hope for what we see we hope for what we don't see)

This dad lived each day leaving the light on in hopes his son would come home

Story of “Leave The Light On...”

A young man grew up in a small town but became rebellious and left home, breaking his parents' hearts. After years of poor choices, he found himself alone, ashamed, and wanting to

come home—but he wasn't sure his family would want him back.

He wrote to his mother, saying:

“Mom, if you can forgive me and still want me to come home, leave a light burning in the window. When I ride the train through town, if it's on I'll see it. If it's dark, I'll just keep going.” The day came, and as the train neared his hometown, he grew too nervous to look. He asked another passenger to look for him.

“Tell me if there's a light in the window of the little white house by the tracks,” he said. The passenger looked out the window and became emotional.

“Son,” he said, “there's not just one light in the window—the whole house is lit up. And not only that, every house in town has their lights on”

The story ends with the son stepping off the train and finding his mother standing in the doorway of their home, arms open wide with all

the lights shining bright—a symbol of unconditional love and forgiveness.

What's A Parent To Do?

1 Peter 4:8, “8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.”

Keep showing tangible love. Send the message, “You are always welcome; I love you deeply, but I cannot abandon what is true.”

Love doesn’t require agreement—it requires faithfulness.

I will always love you even if I don’t agree with you. But please don’t ask me to be unfaithful to God by compromising what I have come to believe what is true.

Point # 3. Speak Truth Wisely, Live It Consistently

You cannot nag, argue, or guilt your grown

children into heaven. Salvation is always the work of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is God's work. We cannot save anyone, only Jesus can!

But you can be consistent, living testimony of what it means to walk with Christ. Peter counsels believers to have a “gentle and respectful” answer, seasoned with hope in 1 Peter 3:15-16, **“15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.”**

Sometimes your most powerful gospel message isn't another conversation—it's the quiet endurance of faith, joy, and peace in a parent's heart that refuses to give up.

What's A Parent To Do?

When the door for verbal witness closes, keep the door of relationship open. Pray that your life becomes the sermon they cannot ignore.

I remember an old quote, **“Their walk was so loud I couldn’t hear them speak”**

From the Cross Jesus cried out in His suffering... “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”

Luke 23:32-34, **“32 Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. 33 When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.”**

The soldier at the Cross looked up and said, “surely this IS the son of God”

Luke 23:47-48, **“47 When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, “Surely this man was innocent.” 48 And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow.”**

Remember Jesus words, **“Let your light so shine before men...”**

Jeremiah reminds us, **“I have loved you with an everlasting love...With lovingkindness I have drawn you...”**

Story: Once there was a young man who loved his wife dearly. She was beautiful, clever, and charming—but within her heart burned a deep jealousy. She could not bear the thought that her husband loved his mother more than her.

One evening, as they sat together, she looked into his eyes and said softly,

“If you truly love me, prove it. Bring me your mother’s heart.”

The young man was horrified. At first, he refused. But her tears and her angry silence wore down his will. At last—blinded by his desperate love—he crept into his mother’s home. She greeted him with kindness, as always. And there, under the shadow of night, he fulfilled his wife’s terrible demand.

Holding his mother’s heart in trembling hands, he fled through the darkness toward his home. But as he ran, still weeping, he stumbled on a stone. The heart slipped from his grasp and rolled onto the ground.

And then—he heard his mother’s voice as the heart spoke.

“Are you hurt, my child?” The heart said gently.”

Point # 4. Put Your Hope In God

Parents often feel unbearable guilt—“Where did I fail?”

Salvation never depended on our performance as parents; salvation depends entirely on God’s grace!

If you failed as a parent you can bring that failure to God and find grace, and love and forgiveness.

1 John 1:9, “**9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness**”

There is only one perfect parent and you are not it! Our Father in Heaven is the perfect parent.

Let your heart rest in who God is:

1. He is patient 2 Peter 3:9, “**9 The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient**

for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent”

2. He draws people in His time, John 6:44,
“44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up”

3. He turns prodigals homeward John 16:8,
“8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”

Our calling as parents is to pray, to love, and to share and to trust Him for the results.

1 Corinthians 3:5-8, **“5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. 6 I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. 7 It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God**

makes the seed grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose.”

I love the thought of Job praying for his children...

Job 1:5, **“5 When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, “Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular practice.”**

As parents we need to continually bring our children before the Lord!

What’s A Parent To Do?

Pray without ceasing, even when nothing seems to change. God’s silence is not His absence. Seeds planted decades ago can still bear fruit.

Point # 5. Persevere in Faith and Hope

Galatians 6:9 reminds us, **“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”**

Do not **“get tired of doing what is good.”**
Parenting is lifelong ministry. Your prayers may become your greatest work in their lives.

Remember, in Luke 15 and the story of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15:17 reminds us that **“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!’”**

The son **“came to his senses”** not because his father chased him, but because the father’s love was consistent, not moved by circumstances and it remained unwavering until the day of return.

We walk by faith and not by sight!

Conclusion:

Yes, the days are dark. Many hearts have grown cold. But Christ's love, alive in His people, still burns brighter than ever. We are to be like diamonds against the backdrop of black velvet.

When your heart aches for a wandering child, look to your heavenly Father—He knows exactly what it feels like to love rebellious children. Yet He waits patiently, full of mercy.

Keep loving. Keep praying. Keep believing. One day, that distant figure on the horizon may just be your son or daughter coming home. If it is... oh what a joy that will be... But even if it's not your son or daughter, you will see One coming over the horizon, your Father, who through all eternity was loving and waiting and watching for you...to come home...

I wanted to close the service with a song the

Lord brought to my mind this week... I want you
to leave knowing that Parenting is not an easy
job. Its messy and the target is always moving.
Like life, its filled with victories and defeats...
No matter how it goes you have a promise from
God to be held... Thats the name of the
song... Held by Natalie Grant

Natalie Grant
"Held"

Two months is too little
They let him go
They had no sudden healing
To think that providence
Would take a child from his mother
While she prays, is appalling

Who told us we'd be rescued
What has changed and
Why should we be saved from nightmares
We're asking why this happens to us
Who have died to live, it's unfair

This is what it means to be held

How it feels, when the sacred is torn from your
life

And you survive

This is what it is to be loved and to know

That the promise was when everything fell

We'd be held

This hand is bitterness

We want to taste it and

Let the hatred numb our sorrow

The wise hands opens slowly

To lilies of the valley and tomorrow

This is what it means to be held

How it feels, when the sacred is torn from your
life

And you survive

This is what it is to be loved and to know

That the promise was when everything fell

We'd be held

If hope is born of suffering

If this is only the beginning

Can we not wait, for one hour

Watching for our Savior

This is what it means to be held
How it feels, when the sacred is torn from your
life
And you survive
This is what it is to be loved and to know
That the promise was when everything fell
We'd be held

[Repeat Chorus]