

Honor Your Father and Mother

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As I've said, it is a Communion Sunday here at Truth Community Church and we're so delighted that you're here with us as we anticipate remembering the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one sure way to heaven and there is no other. Jesus said that, "No one can come to the Father except through me," and what he has appointed is that we would come to God through faith in his atoning blood and we'll remember that at the end of the service. For now, we prepare ourselves for the taking of communion, to take it in a worthy way. We'll listen first to what God has to say in his word as we continue in the study of God's word Sunday by Sunday. We're so delighted that we are able to do that. And what we want to do today is we want to come to a text that will naturally end with the book of Ephesians. It may not seem like the first text that you would go to for a communion service but I think that if you stay with us you'll see that the Lord has appointed even this for us to remember him by.

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 6, beginning in verse 1. Ephesians 6:1-3 and what you'll find as you contemplate communion in light of this text is that for those of us that are adults, this is going to kind of sift our lives as we remember how we've responded to our parents in times gone by, perhaps even now. For those of you that are still under the authority of your parents and living in your home, it is certainly directly relevant to you. And it gives us a sense of the standard to which God calls us as we contemplate ourselves in relationship to our family circle.

Ephesians 6:1 through 3 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." Now, that might not seem like a text that has a whole lot in it but as you look at the scriptural teaching on parents and children, what you'll find is that there is so much to say that I actually decided to break this into two weeks. We'll have kind of a biblical introduction to the concept of honoring your father and mother here this week and then next week we'll look at the text itself in closer detail. What we want to do here today is to simply set a biblical framework, kind of a broad biblical framework so that we can put the obedience of children and the honoring of their fathers and mothers into a biblical framework so that we can see it from a proper perspective. It would be a serious mistake for us to simply think about that text and just start to have our mind categorize it as matters of outward conformity that children would not embarrass their

parents in public or something like that without going to the real heart realities of what God is speaking about here. And you know, what happens as you look into this theme in the Bible even more closely, is that you see that God ties the concept of honoring your father and mother closely, intimately, weaving it around his own character. What we see as we consider this topic of honoring your father and mother is we see nothing less than the way that God has ordered life to be and so we see the created purpose of God being expressed in what is said in the time that we have here this morning.

God's standard, let's just kind of approach it this way, set something very basic out to begin with, God's standard for the family is that a man and a woman would marry, have children, and raise them in the Lord. That's the pattern. That's the biblical pattern. There aren't multiple alternatives. The fact that we live in a world and in a society that has redefined things radically for us and in the concepts of cohabitation and marriage never really even enters into the concept; a man and a woman can live together without marriage, that's all, while it's common in our day, it is absolutely contrary to God's word. The idea that people of identical sexes could come together and somehow do what they do and call it marriage is utterly foreign to God's word. It is a complete abomination of what God has established marriage to be. And when you add the ideas of abortion and the slaughtering of children, you can just see that there are a litany of sins within our culture that are completely arrayed against these simple patterns that God has established in his word. A man and a woman come together, have children and thereby have a family. And I realized that for many of you, your life experience growing up was foreign to that. Maybe one of your parents was absent through death or divorce or something like that, well, let this be an opportunity for you to see that whatever the fractures and whatever the pains were that a bad marriage, a failed marriage, a no marriage, have inflicted on your life, perhaps even failed marriages of your own, let this be an opportunity for you to see the gracious way that God established things and what he intended and to see that the pain and the sorrow that you have felt in life is not attributed to the plan of God, it's not attributed to the holiness of God, rather you are feeling the awful effects of sin and the fallenness of man and that that is what has hurt you and harmed you. It's not that God's pattern has harmed anybody. God's patterns are always good. God's laws are designed for our good, for our blessing, and it's when we violate that that we feel sad consequences and painful consequences. But here is what I would say just kind of sweeping back for a moment to the concept of the sins of our society, beloved, we won't most likely see it in our day what I'm about to say, but it is inevitable that all of those things will ultimately collapse. It is a pattern of life set on shifting sand that cannot stand the test of time ultimately.

So what we're going to do today is we're going to honor the Scriptures that will stand forever. The Lord Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my word will not pass away." So what we're going to do here today is simply honor God's word, see what it says in its clarity and in its simplicity and let that sift our lives. It is so important for us to approach Scripture that way, approach Scripture in its simplicity and its clarity and let it sift our lives rather than what the pattern is of many is to say, "Well, let's bring all of our problems and all of our heartaches and sorrow and impose those upon the Bible and make the Bible fit to what our experience is." That's exactly wrong. That's exactly what you

don't do. What you do is you set aside your experience and you say, "What does God say in his word?" and then you grasp it and you understand it and you let it sift you and minister to you according to his purposes.

So one other thing, one of the other things that just makes it so wonderful to do this what we're doing here together today, is that we have the blessed Holy Spirit within us. Those who are believers in Christ, we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us, giving us the capacity that goes beyond the natural man to understand what God has said, to help us in our application, to convict us, to encourage us. So what we're doing here today is not simply me speaking to you on a human level at all, we're all coming together as one under the authority of God's word and through his appointed means of making his word known through public proclamation and the act of preaching, God will use his word in our lives and we will trust his Spirit to apply it to each of our hearts as we need him to do.

So with open hearts, with receptive hearts, we come to the concept of honoring your father and mother and what I want to do in our time together today, we're going to take a biblical sweep of it. We're going to look at several texts that I have chosen to kind of emphasize what needs to be said and we're going to look at things from three different perspectives. We're going to look at it first from the order of God; and then secondly, the disorder of man; and then thirdly, and leading us into communion, we'll look at this idea from the perfection of Christ. The order of God, the disorder of man, and the perfection of Christ, all giving us a biblical overview, a biblically informed way of thinking about this most fundamental of human relationships and that's what we're going to do.

So let's consider first of all: the order of God. The order of God. Central, foundational, a cornerstone of God's moral order for men in their human relationships and even, not to say too much, even for their vertical response to God, central to all of that is the concept that children should honor and obey their parents. This is fundamental to life and if you look at the book of Exodus 20, we'll start right there in the 10 Commandments. Exodus 20, I encourage you to turn there with me. I think you'll be a little bit surprised about where all of this goes by the time we're finished today, but Exodus 20 is a chapter where we first find the 10 Commandments delineated for us as God gave them to Moses. And in the fifth commandment, we find this statement in Exodus 20:12, remembering that this is God's moral law applicable to all times and all places and all people. Exodus 20:12, God says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you." As God is establishing his moral order, he has established in the first four commandments a vertical response in giving glory to God and honoring his name and so forth, and as kind of a transitional commandment, you find him stating that, "You are to honor your father and your mother."

Now, God reiterated this principle multiple times in the law of Moses. It might surprise you to hear that because some of these texts aren't necessarily quite as well known, but if you look over at the book of Leviticus, for example, Leviticus 19, just the next book over from Exodus, Leviticus 19:1-3, "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'" Now that's a pretty profound statement. God declares his own

nature to be one of holiness; one that is set apart; one that is constituted by absolute perfect moral purity, and then he speaks to his people and he says, "You are to be like I am. You are to be holy. You are to be set apart. There is to be a moral purity in your life that patterns after my own." "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." Notice where, in light of our context of this morning, notice where he immediately goes after making that foundational statement. You would never guess this. You would think that it would follow, "Oh, therefore you should pray or therefore offer sacrifices," in the Old Testament context. That's not where God goes. God gives us a sense of the priority that he attaches to his name, what flows from his name, what flows from his character, verse 3 is this, "Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God." He says, "You be holy as I am holy," and then where he goes from there is, "You honor your father and your mother."

Young people, adults with living parents, those of you who your parents are gone as we reflect back on our lives, every one of us in one manner or another has a father and has a mother and what God says, "If you appreciate my holiness, you should understand that flowing from my holiness is an obligation on you that you would honor your father and your mother in your life." So honoring your parents flows from the holiness of God. You young people, especially you young people that are in your teens and your early years, I realize both from having been a kid and having raised kids now, you realize that there is a time from birth until 10, 11, 12, 13 years old, maybe, where parents pretty much, not to say too much, but can pretty much enforce their will upon you. You know, there is superior physical strength; there is superior intellectual ability, at least for some parents. But, you know, parents have the capacity as an adult to control the situation through their superior physical and mental abilities when a child is young, but as you start to grow older and you start to enter into your teenage years and your own mind starts to develop and your body starts to develop and some of you get stronger than your parents ever dreamt of being, then the stage is there for you to think differently about it. Well, here's what I want you to see and knowing the nature of the heart of men and the heart of children is this: is that it is easy for you, especially in that time, to start to think lightly of your parents; to start to despise them; to start to think that you know more than they know and to disrespect them and to be ashamed to be seen with them and on it goes. Well, here's what I want you to see, all of that was simply to set up this one simple point: what you need to understand is that your attitude toward your parents reflects indelibly, reflects like a mirror what your attitude toward God is. Those of you that are hostile to your parents, those of you that talk sass to your parents, those that speak badly of your parents, that disobey them, that bite back, that live in sullen resentment of your parents even if you don't voice it, what you need to understand is that's a direct violation of the character of God for you to be that way. And I'm speaking to you softly, gently, knowing what I was like as a young teenager in my own home. I'm ashamed of what I was like and the way that I responded to my parents, but what you and I need to understand is that God says, "You honor your parents because I am holy and you are to be holy like I am. You cannot separate the two." God will have none of the idea that a young person would say, "Oh, I love God and worship God and, by the way, you know, I practically hate my parents." Those two things don't go together. They are mutually exclusive. So as you're sitting here contemplating your relationship with your parents, have a sense of the

supreme importance that God attaches to it and you can't, and understand that you can't separate the two. The holiness of God yields over into reverence and honoring for your parents. The two go together.

Look over at Deuteronomy 5, and what I'm saying here as I say these things to you young people, it's not to right now anyway, it's not to rebuke you or anything like that but just to help you understand and see the issue. Deuteronomy 5:16 as Moses reiterates the law of God for a second time. Deuteronomy, the second law. He's restating the law again before the children of Israel enter into the Promised Land and Moses himself moves on to his eternal reward. Deuteronomy 5:16 says, "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you." Do you see it, young people? Do you see it, adults? Because the fact that we move out from under our parents roofs does not sever and finalize and excuse us from this command going forward. We'll see that later on in the life of our Lord Jesus, but do you see it? Honor your father and your mother. Why? Because it's what the Lord your God has commanded you. The Lord your God commands you to respond to your parents this way.

So you must see, you must understand, that you start your thinking with the Bible, you start your thinking with God, you start your thinking with his holiness, you continue your thinking with what he has commanded and you say, "What has he commanded to me as a child toward my parents?" He says, "You honor them. You reverence them. You give them respect." So you realize that all of a sudden this is God looking down; this is God declaring his will; this is God saying the way that he wants it to be. And so what that means is honoring your parents is not optional. Boy or girl, Christian or non-Christian, this is God's law and we're all accountable to his law in that way. And what you see in this, what you see in verse 16, look at Deuteronomy 5:16 with me again, is in the gracious nature of God, he attaches a promise to this command. Not a threat, a promise. He says, "You honor your father and your mother as the LORD your God has commanded you so that your days would be prolonged and that it would go well with you." Paul repeats that aspect of this command in the text that we read in Ephesians 6 earlier. So this blessing, this general blessing of God that is attached to honoring your parents isn't just for Old Testament Israel, it's repeated in the New Testament. This is the way that God has ordained things and that just gives you a sense of how interwoven it is to his enduring moral law. He ties it to his character. He says it multiple times in the Old Testament. He repeats it in the New Testament. He promises blessing for it. You cannot think about your parents apart from the reality of the living God as he has revealed himself in his word. Wow. Don't think about it that way often, do you?

And what does it mean then to honor your parents? What does it mean to respond to this command? Well, we'll talk about it a little more next week's also but for now I just want to quote a highly respected Old Testament scholar, Walter Kaiser, who says it this way better than I ever could and more succinctly than I ever would. Walter Kaiser says, "Based on Old Testament usage, we may say it involves," I'm quoting him here, "we may say it involves 1. prizing them highly." Prizing them highly. "2. Caring and showing affection to them. And 3, showing them respect, reverence and deference." You prize

them highly. You value them as the fact that these are the parents, this is the man and the woman that God chose to give life to you. You honor your parents in recognizing that whatever their faults may be and their faults may be many, they may not even know the Lord, yet still God has appointed them, God chose them, God used them, God providentially orchestrated your life so that you would be under those parents and knowing all of that in advance, he said beforehand, he said, "You honor your father and your mother. You prize them. You respect them. You obey them. You show affection to them." That's what it means to honor your parents.

Now, young people, is that the way that you deal with your parents? Those of you that are seven or eight, you're old enough to interact with this question and to reflect on your life from a moral perspective. Do you realize, young people, that when you speak back and sass back to your parents, when you say, "No!" do you realize, do you realize that there's a real sense in which you are looking Christ in the face and saying that? That Christ commands you not to be that way, to instead reverence them and to say no in a defiant way to your parents is to defy God himself. Not because your parents are God, but because your parents are the appointed representatives of God and this is the order that he has ordained. So we realize that there is a seriousness, there is a sobriety about this.

Parents, our time will come in a couple of weeks when we look at Ephesians 6:4 about how God has spoken to us on how to handle our roles so we have to do these things in order and kind of take the long picture of it here, but for those of us that have parents living, we need to respect and honor God, first of all, respect and honor his word, and to realize that flowing from that is an honor that flows to your parents. Really, God's word couldn't be any clearer about it, could it?

So let's sum this up, the order of God, the first part of this, let's just state it simply and also recognizing, also recognizing, again as we're going to see from the life of Christ soon enough, that this principle of honoring your parents, it flows through into your adult life as well. If you have adult living parents, you should be honoring them. Some of you are honoring them by providing care for them in difficult circumstances and that's exactly what you should be doing. God bless you as you deal with the difficulties of that. But what we all need to see as we all come under the authority of God's word here, is to understand this: your attitude and behavior toward your parents tells you what your response toward God really is. Those who honor their parents are honoring God. Those who disrespect them and disobey them are sinning against God. No exceptions. No questions asked. This isn't difficult. God has made his will known, the only question is how we respond to it at that point and you say, "Well, you know, I can remember," for some of you young people you're saying, "Oh, this is how I live." Okay, let the Spirit of God convict you and you humble yourself and repent of that.

Those of us who look back on our childhood and see that, oh, we failed so many ways and all of that, well, remember that this is why Christ came. Christ came in part, part of the multitude of sins and the multicolored nature of your sinfulness that Christ died to redeem you from and to cleanse you from, included the rotten way that you responded to your parents in times gone by; that his blood was shed even for that. So as we are

convicted by this and as we feel the weight of God's word on this, it should drive us to repentance, yes, but not to an utter despair. There could never be despair for the Christian when the Lord Jesus Christ has died to ransom us. So at the same time, we let God's word have its sanctifying effect upon us.

Now, so your attitude and your behavior toward your parents is telling you what your response to God is. Don't try to talk yourself around it or to excuse it or anything like that. When you're cold and resistant to your parents, you shrivel up when they want to show you affection, and you push them away, you might as well just say, "I'm just going to push God away," and be defiant that way, to recognize what the spiritual reality of it is because this is the order of God. Well, what can we see as we go more deeply into Scripture on this? 2. Let's look at the disorder of man. The disorder of man. For the sake of time, we can only lightly touch on this key theme and what we've done, what we've done in this first part describing the order of God is we've set forth a didactic, a clear, a positive nature of how God sees the relationship between children and their parents based on the clear statements of Scripture and the commands of what God wants it to be. Honor your father and mother. He roots it in a vertical reality about his own character, okay?

Now, we can approach it from another perspective to see what God says about children and their relationship to their parents. In this way, in a way that might be just a little bit counterintuitive but you can see the importance that God attaches to it by the way that he treats disobedience to this command. And for the sake of time, we can only lightly touch on it but go back to the book of Exodus, this time to Exodus 21. Exodus 21:15 and 17, remembering that God here is laying out his law for a theocratic people, a people that were living under his direct rule. This is not directly one-for-one corresponding to the way that we should do things in a society that is not theocratic, yet at the same time, you can see how seriously God views honoring your parents from the negative side of what happens when there is disobedience and dishonor at stake.

Exodus 21:15, "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Verse 17, "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Pretty severe. This is foreign to anything that we've ever been conditioned to think about parents and children and their relationships to one another. You young people, you act up in the home and it seems like no big deal. We've all seen people in the stores and they're dragging their screaming kid along, not recognizing that we're seeing a manifestation of a spirit that God says is worthy of death. Physical or verbal assault against one's parents in the nation of Israel was grounds for the death penalty. That's how seriously God views it. It's no laughing matter. You know, and look, I get the fact that we're conditioned with modern media and what Hollywood spews out that parents are often portrayed, especially fathers, as stupid, barely sentient beings who are routinely mocked by really intelligent children, do you understand what a reversal that is of the order of God? Do you realize that in the name of entertainment we're asking people, not we, they, are conditioning people and asking people and inviting people to laugh and mock at a relationship that God says is premised on his own holiness? There should be a vast repentance of everyone in the entertainment industry that has ever produced bile like that, sewage like that, that

conditions people to laugh at that which God says is so sacred and revered that it should be viewed as a life-and-death matter.

But let's not just leave it with those people out there, young people, understand that what God is saying here is a reflection of what he calls you to, and the seriousness with which he views your sin. It is no laughing matter. It is no joking matter. Beloved, I'm going to control myself here. I don't often do that in the pulpit but I'm going to control myself here and just simply state to you that you cannot shrug this off as if it's a matter of indifference; as if it's not important; as if, "Oh well, whatever." No, no, no, no, we don't deal with God that way. We don't look at God's word and say, "Oh well," we have a Bible in our hand, "Oh well, you know, whatever." You don't do God that way. You don't respond to a holy God with a matter of indifference that says, "I'll still do whatever I want." God says that attitude calls forth death. In Israel, a human death penalty; tor us today, we think about it in terms of an eternal death penalty, the consequences of sin being that which leads a soul to hell. That's how serious this is.

What else can we say about it? Turn over in the New Testament to the book of Matthew 15. And as you're turning there, let me just say a word to you parents that see an opportunity to address your disobedient children after the service, "Oh, can't wait to..." Don't be that way. Don't sharpen your knives. Let the Spirit of God work in your child's heart. Be gracious. Pray for them and realize that either God's word has cut them and they need your gracious response or your child has hardened himself even further under the teaching of God's word and all the more they need the grace of God expressed through you. This should not become something that turns into a finger wagging lecture against your young people but rather as an opportunity for you to appreciate what God has said in his word, to realize that this maybe isn't what is happening in your family and say, "Oh God, have mercy on us. God, his heart is dead and cold. Her attitude is still stony toward me. God, have mercy on them."

What else can we say? Let's shift into the adult realm for a moment. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ taught, now we're kind of speaking a little, maybe a little bit more to adults with parents who are still living. Jesus taught, this is fascinating to me, Jesus taught that it was a mark of false religion for adults to neglect their parents even in the name of devotion to God. Wow. To realize that there would be those boasting of their commitment to God, parading their so-called spirituality and in the name of that spirituality saying, "I don't have time or resources for my parent." Jesus condemned that mercilessly.

Look at Matthew 15, beginning in verse 3, and in kind of a reverse sense, those of you that are caring for your elderly parents, those of you that are responding financially with caretaker responsibilities, let this be an encouragement of the direct affirmation of God at what you're doing through your hands for those parents. Jesus said in Matthew 15:3, speaking to some Pharisees who had come to him and criticized his disciples because they weren't washing their hands when they eat bread. Jesus answered, verse 3, "and said to them, 'Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, "HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER," and, "HE

WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH." So he lays out God's word for him, the same Scriptures that we've seen here this morning, and then he takes it and he applies it to these Pharisees and he quotes them and the way that they approach life, "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,' they would say this aspect of my property has been dedicated to God and therefore I can't give it to you and they keep the use of the property while saying it's devoted to God, 'Sorry mom and dad. I know it would help you but it's to God. What can I do?'" And Jesus cuts through that with his perfect moral clarity. He says, verse 6, "he is not to honor his father or his mother." You don't honor your father or mother that way even though it's a direct command of God. He said, "In the name of God, you are denying your parents." He says, "Those two things cannot possibly coexist." And he says, verse 6, look at it with me, "by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: **THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.**" So even speaking to these adult religious leaders, he says, "Look at the way that you treat your parents and don't tell me, don't tell me that you're a man of God in light of the way that you treat your parents. You won't even provide for their basic necessities with what you have and you cover up your selfishness with a thin spiritual veneer that says, 'Oh, I gave that over to God. I'm too busy. I don't have that for you.'" Jesus says, "I'll have none of that. Let's just call that what it is," Jesus said, "that is hypocrisy. That is vain worship. That is under the condemnation of God." Wow. As you see then the disorder of men in contrast to the order of God, how men turn the order upside down.

Well, as you go on in Scripture, turn over to Romans, you'll find that disobedience to parents is a characteristic trait of a society that is already under the judgment of God. Romans 1 as we continue to teach and just plead for God to attend to the opening of his word with his mercy, his grace, his blessing, his power because heaven knows there's no power in the human speaker anywhere. Romans 1:18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." How can we recognize this ungodliness and what is it that manifests the fact that God's wrath is coming down upon a society? Well, look over at verse 28 of Romans 1, "They did not see fit to of knowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips." That's an awful litany of darkness, isn't it? What else comes in that cluster of grace? What is it, if you think about these as the grapes of wrath and these are the individual fruits that belong to a single cluster that belongs in the realm of God's wrath, what else does it contain? Verse 30, they are "slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil," here it is, "disobedient to parents." What God says reveals his wrath and invokes his wrath, we've turned into comedy and some, I fear, of you children are living in this realm as if it was okay and it's not. God says, "This is damnable. This calls forth my judgment. This is akin to murder and gossip and deceit and evil and wickedness and arrogance." The disorder of men, the awfulness of disobedience

to parents is revealed in a negative way by the way that God views it and declares judgment upon it.

Look over at 2 Timothy 3 where you see it again being laid out. 2 Timothy, after Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, you'll find your way over 2 Timothy, the pastoral epistles. 2 Timothy 3:1-2, "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," there it is again, "disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," and on it goes. Once again, the grapes of wrath, a single cluster of grapes showing forth what the nature of the difficulty of the last days will be, embedded in that cluster of all manner of wickedness is disobedience to parents.

You see, this is not a laughing matter, not from God's perspective, not from a biblical perspective, not from the perspective of anyone who earnestly wants to follow Christ. We see that this refusal to prize your parents, to honor them, to obey them, to respect them, to care for them, to provide for them, adults, is all dishonoring to them and therefore dishonoring to God. So these passages give us a negative way to measure the importance that God attaches to this principle. The judgment is severe.

Now, let me speak kindly to you young people here. I realize that for some of you you're probably squirming and you probably should be. If you're squirming, it's because God's word is making a direct hit on your life. Some of you, if the truth be known, rather than hardening your heart once again against your parents and therefore against God, you should instead be weeping tears of repentance and saying, "O God, what have I done? You've given me Christian parents that love me and pray for me and how have I responded to them? I won't obey them. I don't love them. I speak badly to them. I won't even pray for them, O God." Advance it forward a few years into your adult life and ask yourself, "How have I responded to my own father? My own mother?" and realize that what we're seeing here is God through his word by the power of his Holy Spirit, using a surgeon's scalpel to open up and expose your soul for what the reality of it is. God knows the hidden attitudes of your heart. He hears the angry and disrespectful words you speak. He sees the way that you neglect affection when it could so easily be given. He sees the actions you do in secret that even your parents don't know.

Young people, let me just say this, I hadn't thought about this until just this very moment but please tell me, young people, please tell me that you never speak badly about your parents to your friends. Please tell me that your friends have never heard you disrespect and criticize and mock your father or mother. Tell me that you've never done that because the treachery of that against God and against your parents is unspeakable. That should never be. What your friends and peers should hear is only you speaking well of your parents, respecting them, respecting them to those who will mock you for doing it. Let that be the test of how far you're willing to take your commitment to obedience and honoring God and honoring your parents. "Do you know what? I'll honor my parents even when my friends mock me for it."

You see, here's your problem and I speak as one who cares for your soul, here's your problem, is that while the world may think it's amusing and it may make you seem cool with your friends and you may feel justified in your bitterness toward your parents, God doesn't see it that way. God isn't amused. God is actually angry with your sin, angry with those settled attitudes of disrespect to your parents. He says, "That is not acceptable. Don't you realize that I have made it plain in my word how you are to be toward your parents? Respectful, prizing them, loving them, obeying them, honoring them, and here you are doing what you do." Do you think that's acceptable to God? Under no circumstances whatever in the course of eternity will that ever be acceptable to him. Ever.

So you cannot fool God even if you fool us here at church. You know, I assume the best about you. You know, there is no one that's in my mind as I'm saying this that I'm targeting with my words. I assume the best about you on a human level. What I want you to see is what I think is irrelevant to the reality of your spiritual life, that what God sees is what matters. God sees it all and you know to some extent what's in your heart toward your parents. And if you're convicted, the first act of repentance that you should make even as you're sitting here today, just to reach over and touch the hand of your parent that you've disrespected as an indication, "Mom, I'm sorry. I hear this. This is speaking to me." Then when you get out and we walk out from here and you have a private moment with your parents, "That was talking about me, wasn't it? I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for the way that I dealt with you in anger again and again and again," and not shift the blame. "Well, you know, you were like..!" No, we don't go there. We don't go there. You don't blame your parents for your own sin. God is holding you accountable for your disobedience and understanding that it's ultimately disobedience against God. That's what you need to see.

Well, that's the negative. We saw the positive, in one sense, God's commands positively stated with promises of blessing attached to them. We've seen it from a negative sense, how God views the principle of honoring parents by the penalties and the judgment that he pronounces on the disobedience to parents. Well, let's elevate this discussion even more as if that were possible. Wow. But it is. Thirdly this morning, the perfection of Christ. The perfection of Christ. Ultimately what we want to do, ultimately what we want to do is not justify bad attitudes because our parents weren't all that we hoped them to be. That's no good. God doesn't accept that as an excuse. You don't want to say, "Well, I'm not as bad as my friends are toward their parents." You don't want to do that either as if comparing yourself to unsaved, unchurched young people is actually a standard that would somehow approximate what God wants from you. That doesn't make any sense, does it? No, let's lift our eyes all the way up to Christ and see what Christ did. You know, sometimes we forget, don't we? We think about Christ and we go quickly to the cross and it's good that we should, it's good that we do that because that was central to his purpose and reason that he came was to offer his life as an atoning sacrifice for sinners like you and me, but do you know what? We forget that along the way Christ had earthly parents. Jesus Christ himself, the sinless eternal Son of God had a biological human mother and Joseph his father who stood in his place as a father though he wasn't his biological father because Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. But

what did Jesus do in that perspective? He was born into a family just like you and I were. He was born to parents who received him just like you and I did and how did he live in light of that, remembering that he's God in human flesh? How did he respond? His mother leads him and speaks to him in his younger days. Did Jesus cop an attitude with her? "Hey, woman, don't you know who I am?" No. No, and if ever a child had a right to cop an attitude with his mother, it would have been the Lord Jesus, right? I mean, he created her brain. And what did he do?

Look at Luke 2. We get just a glimpse of the way that Jesus lived as a child. And as you're turning there, I don't want to lose this thought, it would be enough if we simply had a written word from God that commended honoring our fathers and mothers to us for it to be noble, for it to be right, that would be enough, but when you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ stepped into this God-ordained relationship between parents and a child and honored it himself, then this whole concept of honoring your father and mother has been elevated to a whole other realm; that the perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ himself, honored this principle, obeyed God perfectly in this way.

Look at Luke 2:51, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth," went down with his parents, "and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart." Look at that. Jesus lived in subjection to his parents. He continued to live in subjection to them. Throughout the entire course of his developing life, he was in perfect subjection to his parents. If ever a child had parents that were not worthy of him, beloved, young people, it's not you. It's not you that is so great that has parents that are not worthy of you. Let's turn that on its head. That's not right. The one person who had parents who were not worthy of him was the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sinless, his parents were sinful sinners; believing Jews as they were, they were still like all the rest of us, fallen short of the glory of God and yet Jesus saw fit to live in subjection to them.

Listen to what Matthew Henry says about this obedience of Christ to his parents. I quote, "He observed their orders and he went and came as they directed. He worked with his father in the trade of a carpenter and by this he has given an example to children to be obedient to their parents in the Lord. Though he was the Son Of God, he was subject to his parents, how then will they answer who, although they are sinful, are disobedient to their parents?" So here's Jesus, sinless, the eternal Son of God saying, "I embrace the law of God and I will live under it and I will live in obedience to my parents." The point is that how is it that we as sinful children have rebellious attitudes toward our parents when Christ was not that way when he was the Son of God? There is no escaping this. Christ gives us an example in that way that we honor and then he does something else. Through his life, what he has done, you young people, do you know what he has done, is he has redeemed and he has elevated and made noble the concept of obeying your parents because through his own life, through his own submission to God's law, through his own submission to God's parents, Christ has attached through his own life and earthly obedience an eternal value to the relationship between a child and his parents. Wow.

Indeed, and this is almost crushing what we're about to say. It's so sweet. It's so beautiful. It's so humbling. Do you realize that Christ even honored his mother on the cross? Do

you realize that? That from birth, growing up, entering into manhood, he lived in perfect subjection to his parents. He never sinned against God. He never could have and therefore he never once dishonored his parents in anything that he did, positive and negative. He refrained from disobedience. He gave them the perfect honor to which they were entitled. And here's what I want you to see is that that was so inbred, that was so central to his character, to his affections, to his priorities, that he carried it all the way to Calvary; that as he carried the cross on his back until they enlisted help along the way, as they hoisted him up on the cross, even then, even as he's bearing your sins and mine in his body on the cross, even then he's honoring his mother. It's incredible. Under the weight of a world of sin, he still has time to honor his mother.

Look at John 19. I get emotional thinking about this. Look at John 19:18 just so you see the context, "There they crucified Him," John 19:18, "they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between." So Jesus is attached to the wooden cross. He's there. He is nailed to it. Physically he cannot move. And it goes through, he hears the mocking of the crowd, the thieves on either side mock him, the soldiers want to gamble for his garment. Look at verse 24, you see there petty, earthly demeanor, "They said to one another, 'Let us not tear it,'" his seamless tunic, "but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be." In their petty, carrying out of their soldierly duties, the Son of God is on the cross and what are they doing? They're tossing dice for a piece of cloth. "Therefore," verse 25, "the soldiers did these things. But," notice this, "standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." Look at this in light of everything that we've said here, Jesus under the physical excruciating of crucifixion, about to bear the sins of the world when darkness descends and his Father turns away from him in holiness and he's attached in darkness, separated from earth and heaven, standing between earth and heaven, what does he do? What's in his heart? Verse 26, bloodied, battered by the prior beatings, heaving, pressing his legs down trying to get a breath because of the human torture of the cross, what does he do? "When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!'" What is he doing there? He's providing for his mother's care after he's gone. He's making earthly provision that his mother would be cared for when he is no longer there to do it. How do you know that? It's what it says, verse 27, "From that hour the disciple took her into his own household." They understood what he meant by that. He's saying, "Mother," if only we could hear it from his sinless lips to know, if only we could hear the way in which he addressed her at that moment of care. The word is enough but there must have been such a tone in his voice as he's speaking his final words to his mother, "Mother, behold your son." Woman, he says, but he's speaking to her as his mother. He said to his mother, "Woman," addressing her, "behold, your son." He's saying, "Here's the one that I want to take care of you," and he speaks to John the disciple and says, "John, take care of my mother after I'm gone." How important is honoring your father and mother? To Jesus it was important enough that he did it even in the throes of his sacrificial death on the cross. Our Lord's perfect life, what you want to see in this, our Lord's perfect life extended even to his earthly parents and it extended not only to his earthly parents, it was central to his thinking even as he was

about to die. "I'm going to take care of my mom here," and he does, and it is recorded for us in Scripture.

So what can we see in this? Well, we see the order of God that God commanded this order. We see the disorder and the judgment that it brings, and then we kind of take that and we look and we see our Lord Jesus Christ saying this is what it looks like: subjection and care and affection all the way through. Now, there's more to say about this and we'll say it next week. How can we transition from what we've seen here from God's word today to the Lord's table? Well, in a profound way, what we've seen here today gives us a picture of the whole nature of why we need redemption. You see, it's not just fathers and mothers. God has a whole law, a seamless law that he has commanded by which we should honor him and every one of us has broken it, and it invokes his judgment, and yet Christ steps into our place, lived a perfect life of obedience in order to, in his own obedience we find the obedience which satisfies God's law. He goes to the cross and he sheds his blood in payment for the sins of countless people who would one day believe in him, sheds his blood to satisfy the justice of God against their guilt. God's law, our violation, and Christ comes and redeems it. That's what we remember here at the cross, a redeeming Savior, a loving, gracious, perfectly obedient Savior who has bid us to come to him for salvation, those of us that know him and have received him, now he bids us to this table of remembrance by which we would recall that a real human body and real human blood were broken and shed so that you could be saved. That's what we remember here today. We remember Christ and when you believe in Christ, the full merits of his perfect righteousness are credited to your account before God so that in the eyes of God you are viewed as though you lived the perfect life of Christ because that's what has been imputed to your account. And all of your sin, what about all of your sin? The guilt placed on Calvary, punished there, blood shed so that there would be no more condemnation. That's what we remember. A perfect sacrifice by a perfect Savior who has perfectly redeemed us and fit us for heaven with a holy God.

Let's bow together in prayer as we prepare our hearts for communion.

Yes, our Lord Jesus stood as a sacrificial Lamb in our place, died on the cross and rose from the dead to show that sin's penalty had been fully paid. In this quiet moment, all of you including you young people convicted by God's word today, you can find forgiveness of your sins through repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what we remember today at the table.

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