

May 8, 2022  
The Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Pastor Matt Duerr

## **He is God Alone-Preparing for Babylon Part II**

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. As you know our sermon series is on He is God Alone, and we focused on the resurrection, the foundation of our faith because Christ alone has risen and done everything needed. We have looked at the historicity of Christ's resurrection and that it is an actual fact. And then last week we began talking about the life we're living right now; a life where God is still God alone. But we are in a Babylon; a world order that is in competition for the hearts the minds the souls of our children. And we saw how in the book of Daniel that these four Hebrew boys were well prepared to resolve, to stand for Yahweh their God, and not to defile themselves, not to bow down and worship any other God, and to pray to God. The challenge comes for us today, living in a modern-day Babylon, and how do we raise children to be like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego; to be ones who take a stand for God?

Let me begin by repeating something I said last week. There is no parenting program with cute little sound bites that does the work. No, this kind of faith only comes about through active work. It never comes passively. And what does that active work look like? We find it in our Old Testament reading for today. Please remember the context there, God is speaking to the people, to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. So, this is God Himself saying, "and these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes, you shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates."

That is a boatload of work. And it is also reality 24/7 365 1/4 days a year. These words that I command; this is not a suggestion. It's not something you might want to consider. These words God commands shall be on your heart. Think about the heart, for us it's the epicenter of love. It's why we have a heart at Valentine's Day. And think about what that is saying, we are to love God's word. Why? Because God's word is the guiding principle in everything. It is God's word that teaches us righteous living. It is God's word that addresses that question that's so big in society today; 'what is my purpose in life?' And the Bible so clear that our purpose in life is that we may declare the excellencies of Him who has called us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light.

But ultimately that word is salvation. Salvation for you, for me, but more importantly for our children, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren. And I hear a lot of people talking about the mess that the world is today; the mess that our country is today, the mess that our state is today, and I also hear about the mess that the church is today. And I would contend, and I think I am on rock solid footing here; the reason we have a mess today is because, as the polls show us, 9% of professing Christians read their Bible daily. That means 91% are ill prepared to do what God says here with His word; that we are to have it on our heart, and we are to teach it diligently to our children.

That word children in the Hebrew goes all the way down to infancy. And why do we start at infancy because we believe in our mighty God whose Holy Spirit comes to us through the waters of baptism and that Holy Spirit can do what no teacher can do. That Holy Spirit can work faith in the life of a child if we will just give the Holy Spirit something to work with, His word. And so, we start out from infancy. Parents become the number one teacher in Word, sharing God's word: and in deed, living God's word.

And notice God throws a special word in there diligently. What is diligently? It means faithfully, consistently and with a level of intensity. What is the goal of this teaching? Mastery, that is the constant purpose of all teaching, mastery. Now how do you get to that point where a

student, a child, a grandchild, has mastered something? Well, they can't master it, unless you, number one introduce them to it. You have to share God's word with them, read it to them, share the accounts that you have read in scripture with them. But the second step after the introduction, giving the material to them, is to explain it to them like Phillip did on the road with that Ethiopian eunuch. Explain why and what God's word says and means. Put it into the context so that they understood what it meant for Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to stand up. But then transfer it to the context of today. And there's going to be times where you're going to be called on to stand up for God's word today.

Third after we introduce it to them, explain it to them, reinforce it constantly. Bring it to their remembrance. When I was a teacher teaching math, 5th and 6th grade is where you learn the multiplication tables. We had a quiz every day of the year on multiplication. It would come sometimes during religion class. Mr. Duerr it's religion, we can't do multiplication now! Oh no, numbers are a gift from God, so here we go. Get out your piece of paper, we've got a 10-question multiplication quiz. I'll tell you what, that constant reinforcement, the kids knew their multiplication tables inside and out by the end of 6th grade. We need to approach scripture and the teaching of scripture with our children the same way, with that same level of intensity and faithfulness.

God continues saying, "talk of them when you sit in your house." What do we normally do when we sit in our house? Well, I think we usually tend to sit and watch TV. Or maybe read a book or the younger generation maybe go on the computer and play a game, or unfortunately go to Twitter, Tic Tok, Facebook or any of those other things. But here's the challenge for us as parents as to when we're sitting in the house. Transition from that to that which is surrounded or centered on God's word. To watch a TV show that is Christian; that brings God's word to them. To find the game on the computer that is built on God's word. And instead of looking at you know, Tik Tok or something like that, create biblical challenges for our children.

Whether it's in the form of some sort of a game, or actually an application in their life. For those with young children, I strongly recommend the Arch books, you can get them from Concordia Publishing House. That's what I grew up on, what my kids grew up on. It simply takes the Bible and breaks it down into the big stories, the big accounts, so that the children can learn them from the earliest ages.

So, we are to teach it diligently, we're to talk about God's word with our children when we sit in our house, and when we walk by the way. That's right, it's healthy. Take them for a walk. But look for God as you walk. Look at that flower and say, you know look at that pretty red rose. Do do you know why it's red? God made it that way. He made it that way to attract insects. The insects come and they get that yellow stuff that's called Pollen, and to move it from one flower to the next because that's how new plants and new flowers are made. Isn't that amazing how God did that? If you think about that, you can draw a similar sort of analogy if you see an earthworm and how they provide good soil for us, or even if it starts to rain explain the rain cycle, the water cycle, and how we get rain. And then it is God's gift to us to replenish the earth.

We are to take that word and use it when we lie down. What a perfect time to again read a little Bible account with our children, say a prayer with them. I've included Luther's evening prayer in the bulletin and it's a great prayer for all of us. Growing up, mom and dad always used the Lord's words prayer with us after we prayed for those people that we needed to pray for and thank God for what we needed thank Him for. Mom and dad taught us to pray, not just at night but when we rise. We began every morning after breakfast with Luther's morning prayer. We also would have a little devotion, or a little Bible study. My parents quite often would begin the day by giving us a purpose something like; OK, son make sure you shine for Jesus today. OK, son time to reach out to that bully today, or time to help that child in the classroom who no one seems to like very much. When we rise, we bring God's word in the challenge of God's word into our children's lives.

We then read; you shall, again not may. This is a command. “You shall bind them on your hand.” This wasn't what the Pharisees did, literally tying it to their hand in the form of a phylactery, but the hands represent work. And we are to use God's word when it comes to work with these hands. Bind His word to our work; be honest, don't steal, don't take advantage be a loyal worker to your employer work for the benefit of your employer and thank God you have an employer and have a job in the first place. Do the absolute best with the talents God has given you because we are to do all to the glory of God. And if you work with that mindset that you are doing it for the glory of God, I will tell you right now your employer will take notice and it will go well with you.

We're to take that word, to make it frontlets to our eyes. Right here at the center. Think of how close your eyes are to your brain. This is where God is telling you as we read in the Psalm this morning, “turn my eyes from looking at worthless things.” Don't let your eyes focus on that which is worthless or counterproductive, like negative tweets or pornography, or tabloid news, or the Tik Tok challenges, no. Look to promote good challenges. The sermon today is a big one. Use God's word like He tells us to and put that word, and the vision of that word in front of your eyes.

Finally, write them on your door post and gates. Now there's a literal one. So that someone coming up to your house sees that nice brass door knocker on the side that says: ‘As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,’ or John 3:16 or something like that or a doormat that says, “This house follows God's word.” Something so that when people come to your house they look and they go; ‘Oh my gosh! These people believe in God.’

Be a witness using what God has given you. You see, this is the very foundation that Jesus is speaking about in Matthew chapter seven, with the builder who built his house on the rock. Notice what Jesus says about *the word*, everyone who then hears these words of mine, and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. What is the rock? It's God's written word given to us in the Bible. But

it is also the living word that the written word points to-Jesus Christ. And when the mess, the storm comes, what happens when the house the faith is built on those rocks? It did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

It blows my mind. I know many of you know that I've done a little building in my life. And it blows my mind that when I talk to somebody who is building a house for themselves, you never hear them talking about, 'you know, I think I can save some money and some time if I go with less sacks of cement in the concrete. The plans call for six sacks of concrete which is really hard. I don't think I need that. I think I'll go to three sacks, it's a whole lot cheaper.' Or they say, 'the slab is supposed to be 6 inches thick; you know I bet 2 inches is just fine. And all this steel they want in it to hold it all together, you know as long as it's mixed well, it's probably just going to be OK. I'm not going to put that steel in.' No when it comes to building a house and the foundation you will find that people go overboard. They want it rock solid. And my question then is this. Why, when it comes to the foundation of our faith, not just our faith, but the faith of our children, and our grandchildren. When that foundation has one ingredient, the word of God; why do we buck the system and say, 'gosh no, I don't want to do that I don't have the time to read, I don't have the time to study it, oh I don't feel very good about sharing it, I might offend somebody,' when it has the very words of eternal life in it.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this sermon, this book, it has a huge challenge to it. Use it full strength! Do not dilute it. Do not be skimpy. Be very selfless and give all the time that is needed for especially our children to hear it. And at the same time, feel totally free to be extremely selfish and to say I am doing it because I want to see my children, my grandchildren, my neighbor, my friend; I want to see them in heaven as much as Jesus does.

In His Name, Amen.