

Sep. 8, 2019

# Proclaiming the Excellencies of Christ at Home

Psalm 78:1-8

*The greatest responsibility of Christian parents is to teach their children to place their confidence in God.*

This morning is normally one of the highlights of the year because typically, on the Second Sunday of September we lay out our ministry vision for the year. This year, however, we have so much vision going on already it would be foolhardy to load anything else on top of what's already happening. The plan for casting vision, therefore, has been moved to January at which time we suspect there will be much to announce regarding the launch of our next church plant and all the ministry opportunities and needs (in BOTH churches) that come with it.

Having said that, let me just briefly whet your appetite for what (according to our Fallible, Dependent Plan) is just around the corner for us as a church.

1. **Church Plant:** This, of course, is the biggest thing on the ministry radar. You may remember that last year on "Vision Sunday" I said something to this effect: "Our church growth plan is as follows: We need 70 of or 80 of you to Leave!" And in fact, one year later we do indeed have approx. 70 people who have committed to be sent out on mission to plant another solid, biblical church in this area. (That number, 70, by the way, includes the children of the families who have committed. And all fo these "founding members" of our church-plant will begin meeting together for training and fellowship next week! If you are new to Calvary, this is our second church plant – the first is in Mansfield, and if you live in that region of the Metroplex I would encourage you to consider making that your church home. On the other hand, if you live in the north-western region of Fort Worth (between Saginaw and Eagle Mountain) we want to encourage you to consider joining the initiative to plant Christ Fellowship Bible Church. If you are interested, please contact Keith Christensen or Matt Scheffler for details.
2. **New Office Building:** Again, if you are new to Calvary you may not realize that the building that sits on the west parking lot is not yet operational. It is our hope that it will be a fully operational office building within a month's time (or less). We are certainly getting close. And maybe we can open it officially with some fanfare on a

Sunday morning coming soon. In the meantime - in keeping with our conviction to remain debt free, we are down to the last \$13,000 needed to finish the job. So, can I just appeal to you one more time to give? And would you consider attending Misty Majka's garage sale coming soon. (Oct. 19) All the proceeds will go to the building fund.

3. Keith's replacement: We are actively looking for For all the man that we believe the Lord will provide for us to pick up where Keith left off. Please join us in earnest prayer for as he will play an integral Role in the ministry of shepherding and leading for years to come.
4. New Ministry Leaders The church plant is really going to take some key people away from Calvary, and so if you have been sitting around waiting for lightening to strike before you hear God's call to ministry: "You Are Officially Called!" We need musicians, and singers, and instrumentalists. We need more men and women (mostly Women) who will invest the time and effort necessary to join our team of counselors. If you really want to be on the front lines of ministry, join the evangelism team (4SG) or the counseling ministry. And here's an offer for you. If you are a member of CBC and have never attended the counseling training conference, and are willing to attend the BC training events in Granbury starting next week, we will pay your registration fees. Just let us know if you want to take us on that.
5. Leadership Training: One of our commitments as a church is to train men. We have a men's ministry (ISI) that is about to launch. One group will meet on Sat (morn) and another on thursday (morn). Watch your bulletin for details. Also, Jason and I are preparing to fly out to a church in California that's doing a great job at offering more formal training in theology and biblical living. Our desire is to learn from them and then launch our own formal ministry training one year from now.
6. And there is more to say, but I need to quit so we will have time for the sermon.

Read Psalm 78:1-8

There are two things I love to see in this world. I love to see lost people come to Christ and I love to see children born into Christian homes; Especially when parents are committed to leading their children into a life of worship and love; hen they are

devoted to teaching their kids to love God with all their hearts and love the people around them as themselves.

Here at Calvary Bible Church we have a purpose statement that we recite together as often as I can remember to do it. It goes like this: We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples. So, parenting for us is not just a matter of keeping our kids well fed, entertained, and educated until the day they leave for college. No, we have an ambition for our children that is significantly higher than that because Jesus is worthy of more.

When Asaph, the chief musician of O.T. Israel, wrote what we have come to call the 78th Psalm, I wonder if He intended it to be sung in worship services such as this. Perhaps he wanted parents to sing it on the day each child was born. I wonder if he envisioned the occasion of bringing their newborn to the temple, holding them up before the eyes of the Lord and saying; "O' Lord God, these children of mine are precious gifts from your hand. They are Yours and You have entrusted them to us. Help us, we pray, to raise them to follow hard after You and find in You the fulfillment of all their desires.

I suspect if Asaph were here today, he would want to stand together and sing a song of sacred blessing and solemn warning. And the reason I wonder that is because these are the themes we discover in the song we know as the 78th Psalm.

This morning I think we would benefit as a church by hearing the message of Psalm 78.

For the most part, this Psalm is a song of Israel's history of unfaithfulness to the Lord, and the suffering that resulted under God's judgment. It is also a call for parents to take seriously their call to raise children who put their confidence in God.

1. Asaph's goal here, I believe, is to remind the people that God is gracious and compassionate, slow to chide and swift to bless. And the surest path to His abundant blessing is found in being diligent to train our children to delight in the Lord. But how do we as parents secure that blessing upon our families. What does the Bible reveal that will equip us to raise our children in a manner that pleases the Lord? Well, this passage doesn't teach us everything God has to say about parenting, but it does touch on three important subjects The Ultimate Subject of child training?
2. The Wonderful Purpose for child training?
3. The Frightening Danger in child training?

Let's begin with verses 1-4.

## I. The Ultimate Subject of Child-training

1. Read vs. 1-4

2. For the sake of time let me just tell you that from the start we need to understand that the “parable” which consists of “dark sayings” is the Word of God. We know that because he describes these “dark sayings” as things “which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.”

3. Eventually these truths were written down and copied so that everyone could read it for themselves. But until that time, it was the responsibility of every parent to pass down divine truth orally.

4. So, Asaph says in verse 4, “We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come...”

A. Now, this is important. Asaph is having the people sing a covenantal commitment to God by their children.

B. And the commitment is this, “Lord, we promise that we will not conceal your word in our home.” The word (conceal) in the Hebrew (and English, for that matter), means “to hide.” We will not hide your Word from our children. We won't conceal it in a dark place. We won't keep it a secret from them.

5. Now, friends, I need to say to you that this is the starting block for Christian parenting that sadly, many “Christian” parents fail to stand upon. That is to say, in my experience as a pastor I have come to believe that most fathers who claim to be Christian do not regularly meet with their families for the express purpose of giving them the Word of God. And I am here to tell you this morning, men, that this is a failure of the first order! This is our first responsibility toward our families.

A. Why is it that we think of “family worship” as a secondary, optional kind of religious discipline that we might get around to some day when it's convenient.

B. Moms and dads, this is a first-order discipline in our homes.

C. As Arthur Pink so painfully says to the men of the church: It is not enough that we pray as private individuals in our closets; we are required to honor God in our families as well. Each day... the whole household should be gathered together to bow before the Lord — parents and children, master and servant — to confess their sins, to give thanks for God's mercies, to seek His help and blessing. Nothing

must be allowed to interfere with this duty: all other domestic arrangements are to bend to it... If we would enjoy the blessing of God upon our family, then let its members gather together daily for praise and prayer. 'Those that honor Me I will honor' is His response."

D. What is your highest goal for your children?

- 1) A liberal arts or classical education,
- 2) The skills necessary to get a good job,
- 3) The kind of social presence that will land them a good spouse.

E. NO! The most important goal on our agenda as parents should be to write on their hearts the Word of God and fill their hearts with love for God.

F. Look at v. 5 (read v. 5).

G. We know this from Deut. 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> 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 up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

H. Moses is saying to parents, "There is only one God. And your responsibility is to love him and to do everything necessary to help your children love him too.

6. But, there's more to be said here. Because it is possible to work hard at having your children hear God's word and even memorize God's Word, but it never makes it to their heart. So, we need to ask Asaph, "What is it from the Word of God that we should focus on?"

7. Thankfully, Asaph answers that question in verse four.

Read 4

8. So there are three things that we should focus on in our teaching.

- A. The glorious deeds of the Lord,
- B. His might,
- C. His the wonders he has done.

9. So, the First things we should tell them are “The glorious deeds of the Lord (NAS “the praises of the Lord.” I take that to mean the things for which God is worthy of praise. In other words, teach them about the glorious and infinite attributes of God.

- A. Teach them about the immensity of God. Explain to them with every opportunity how big God is. When you look into the sky and you’re talking about the stars and the space between them and around them, and the fact that the universe is so big many people think it just goes on and on forever. Tell them that God is bigger still.
- B. Teach them about the love of God. Explain to them that His love for His people, even when they sin against Him, is so unimaginably full and overflowing that human words are inadequate to describe it. One hymn writer unfolds it like this: “Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the sky of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry, nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky.” Teach them the love of God.
- C. Teach them about the grace of God. Tell them about His omniscience and omnipresence and humility. In a thousand ways, teach them that God is worthy of their joyful and awestruck adoration. Teach them the praises of the Lord.

10. Second, teach them about His strength (His Mighty Deeds). Remind them again and again that “the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe.” Teach them that He is a Mighty Fortress; that the creator of heaven and earth is their Keeper and Protector. Show them that it is safe to take risks for God; to give their lives away to His service either here or among the nations where His fame has yet to be spread. Tell the stories of how great men and women of church history laid down their lives for the gospel. Have them read biographies!

11. Oh, how we need an army of young people who will rise up in fearless devotion and lay their lives out for God believing that “to live is Christ and to die is gain.” They won’t do it unless they are convinced, as Paul was, that God is able

to keep whatever we have committed to Him against that day. So, dads and moms, we are the ones who must convince them.

12. Third, teach them His wondrous works. Speak to them about How the Lord has answered your prayers and done exceeding abundantly beyond all that you could have asked for or imagined.

- A. Israel was to remind their children often about how God had miraculously rescued them from Egypt; how He parted the Red Sea and provided water from a rock and bread from heaven.
- B. Teach them the old Biblical stories of His wondrous works and then show them that God is still in the business of answering prayer in powerful ways. Teach them about His wondrous works.
- C. And let them hear the testimony of how God has changed you.
- D. Show them how God has provided for your family - sometimes in seemingly miraculous ways. Teach them His wondrous works
- E. In fact, Asaph reminds Israel of God's works in vv. 9-16 (read).

13. The excellencies of God is the Ultimate Subject of Child-training. Everything else is secondary.

## II. The Wonderful Purpose in Child-training

1. Read 5-7

2. What is the wonderful purpose in child-training? Is it not to teach them to "put their confidence in God." That is the ultimate purpose.

- A. This is so contrary to our culture. Almost every form of mass media and social media today is designed to get our kids to put their confidence in themselves or some political party, or money, or education, or comfort or pleasure.
- B. All of these things are held out to us as "gods" who are worthy of our trust. What are we going to trust to make this life meaningful, joyful and good? Will it be God, or any number of a million other choices? In what will our children place their confidence?
- C. As parents, our primary responsibility is to burn within the hearts of our children (as we teach them obedience and math and spelling and soccer, and everything else) that their confidence is only rightly placed when it is placed irrevocably in God. If they miss that, if they end up making something or someone else supreme in their

life, they miss everything for eternity! So teach them to place their confidence in God

3. This is the central message of the whole Bible! This is the very truth that Israel failed to pass on to their children. They taught their children to put their confidence in everything BUT God. They subscribed to the religion of the true God but spent their time polishing their idols. Many times, so do we.

4. We tell our children that God is God, but we spend our lives polishing the idols of comfort and entertainment and worldly ambition, the accumulation of stuff, and the praises of men. Funny thing about children, though; they learn more from our actions than from our words. Unless God intervenes on their behalf, they will grow up worshipping the gods of their fathers. And that points to the great danger of child-training.

### III. The Frightening Danger of Child Training

1. Read vs. 8.

2. The outcome of Israel's misplaced confidence was that they inherited all the curses that God promised would be theirs if they exchanged His glory for idols.

3. The word "steadfast" (or "prepared v.8) means "to put right." These were religious people to the extreme, but they were not careful about the affections of their hearts. They did not fix their hearts on the awesome, beautiful, and majestic supremacy of God. So, they lost everything. They missed out on God's promised blessing.

4. You see, the ultimate danger of child-training is the danger of neglect. Not that we will neglect to feed or educate or sufficiently entertain, but that we will raise up obedient, well-educated, hard-working American children who get great jobs, move to the suburbs, and have a few kids, but who are absolutely poverty-stricken in the things of God.

5. The family that is most blessed of the Lord is a family who has set its heart and mind on a Godward course. And when their confidence is fully set on God, the love of Christ will rule the home.

Conclusion:

Well, there is so much more I want to say, but time is short for the Lord's table. Let me conclude with two things.

1. After the office building is done and we have the new conference

room to meet in, we want to offer an extended course on parenting. If you have small children, you won't want to miss this.

2. If you have been negligent in pointing your little ones to God, there is grace for you. Your heavenly Father will freely pardon your error and empower you to repent for his glory and for your family's great joy.