

Children's message: Commandment with a promise.

Theme: Our extraordinary relationship with the crucified and risen Lord affects our relationships in every sphere of our lives in dramatic fashion, and especially those of our households. Every relationship, and every attending responsibility, must be brought under the administration and supervision of the Lord.

Background: Paul addresses the culture in which they live with the redemptive power of the gospel.

Introduction: I hope my kids are more forgiving than I was as a kid.

I. A New Dignity

A. Children and parents

1. Children

- a. The culture
 - The legal status of children
 - The power of the Paterfamilias
- b. The "shock"
 - Children addressed directly as legitimate members of the church
- c. Obedience in everything?
 - Nothing ungodly
 - Assumes parents have best interests in view (Matthew 7:7-9)
- d. Transforming obedience
 - Pleasing the Lord

2. Fathers - the "paterfamilias" (head of the family)

- a. Power
 - In the culture? Near limitless
 - In the Lord? Constrained by Christ
- b. Discipline
 - A loving father disciplines us (Hebrews 12)
 - The Lord commands obedience
 - Exercised in love
 - The discipline of a father (1 Corinthians 4:14ff)
- c. With a Purpose

B. Slaves and Masters

1. Getting past the offense (Exodus 21:16)

- Old Testament laws of protection
- New Testament household slavery

2. Slaves

- a. A radical idea
 - Slaves as independent, responsible individuals
 - With responsibility and respect
- b. Obey in everything?
 - 1) There are limits (1 Peter 2:18-20; 4:15&16)
 - 2) Going through the motions?
 - 3) Genuine obedience and service (Revelation 3:16)
- c. Serving the Lord, not men (3:17)
- d. Bringing "reward" with it
- e. Responsibility (Ephesians 6:7&8)

3. Masters

- a. Another radical position!
- b. You are not the "master" - you have a "Master"!

II A New Order

- A. A new head
 - Not the paterfamilias - but Christ!
- B. What is fitting in Christ
 - No Jew/Greek, Male/Female, Slave/Free
- C. Transforming the culture

III. The Right Focus

- A. Set on things above
- B. Submitting in all things to "the Lord"
 - Invoked seven times in this passage
 - Instructions not bound by culture!
- C. Accepting different roles

IV. The Continuing Challenge

- A. Not the "self-help" section of the NT on family relations
- B. Keeping our eyes/hearts on things above - where our life is hidden with Christ in God
- C. The toughest place to consistently put on the character of Christ? The home.
- D. A life that is hidden with Christ in God