

Running Your Family By the Book (part 4)
(preached 11/2/14; Pine Grove BC Sunday PM)

Introduction

Ever since the Columbine school shooting in Littleton Colorado in 1999, tragedies at public schools have become normal.

Last week, a high school freshman in a school outside of Seattle, WA walked into a school cafeteria and shoot 5 of his friends...

OF which, 2 were his cousins, before turning the gun on himself and taking his own life.

And the world is again rattled by the news of another school shooting.

Turns out, school shootings are not that new.

There are records of school shooting all the way back to the 1700s and probably earlier...

But the shock of these tragedies is that they strike the youngest people of our world in what many feel is a safe environment.

So, we mourn for their deaths and the world asks the same questions...

Yet the tragedies are becoming more and more frequent....

I was reading about the shooting in Washington this week and I found this comment by a student at the school...

She was asked by a reporter to respond to the shooting, and she was asked to describe the shooter...

Here is what she said....

"Jaylen was a popular student. Just a week ago, he had been named the high school's freshman homecoming prince.

"It's weird to think about, because you see him and he is such a happy person," sophomore Alex Pietsch said. "You never really see him be so angry and so upset. ... People were telling me who it was when I was getting in my mom's car and I was like, 'What? This is not happening. ... This is crazy.' It was just surprising to me that him, out of all people, would be the one."

And in that last statement, we see a great mistake in her assessment of the shooter.

She sees him as someone who couldn't possibly shoot other people.

And that is a mistake made by thousands of people every day.

They have a wrong view of the nature of people, specifically the nature of children.

The fact is that this shooter and every other shooter is not an innocent teen who has been led to this violence by video games, movies or the internet.

The biblical view of man which includes kids is that we are born sinners.

We are fallen creatures even from birth who rebel against our Creator.

The Bible describes us as dead in our sins before we are saved.

The real question is not why are there so many school shootings..

The real question is why aren't there so many more?

Now, I know it is a Sunday night and we have been learning about family....

And tonight we turn to children, but it is important to get the right view of our children.

They are not sweet, little innocent kids.

Yes, we love them.

Yes, I love mine.

But if you don't understand that your kids are fallen just like you, you are making a dangerous mistake.

The same sinful nature that makes a woman refuse to submit and makes a man want to dominate his wife....

Is the same sinful nature that our children possess, and it is the same sinfulness that point to their need of a Savior.

Children are not innocent until proven guilty.

Their hearts are bent toward sin....

And that is why God addresses children in this section in Ephesians regarding the family.

Children need the instruction of Scripture too.

And so, let's look at what the Lord has to children tonight in His word.

Let's read Ephesians 6:1-3.....

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

In one way, you are incredibly blessed by God.

Because he has simplified your life at this point in time.

The clear instruction that you must follow is to obey and honor your parents.

That's it.

God doesn't give you a list of dos and donts for kids.

Now, your parents may give you that list and you need to obey it.

But God simply gives you essentially these two simple instructions, obey and honor your parents.

But let me be honest with you...

It will be the hardest thing you have ever done.

And that is because of two simple reasons.

#1 – You are a fallen creature...

And

#2 – You live in a fallen world.

And I ask you to listen closely because I am going to tell you the secret to obedience.

And I am going to tell you the secret to living in this world but you must pay attention to hear it.

Right now, in this moment, there is a part of you or maybe even all of you that has no desire to be here.

If it was left up to you, you would be at home on your iPod or iPad listening or watching whatever you desired.

Because you are a person who was born resisting authority in your life.

A favorite question or a great discovery of children when you read them the Bible is that everyone in the world had Adam and Eve as a great granddad and grandma.

Kids are often amazed to discover that truth.

And it is true.

Every single person who has ever lived goes all the way back to Adam and Eve.

And in some ways, that is amazing.

But it is also very disturbing.

Because when Adam and Eve ate of that fruit in the garden, it caused a lot of problems.

Not only for them, but also for all of us adults and also for you kids.

God had told Adam and Eve not to eat from that tree, but when they disobeyed, the entire world was changed...

Even right up to the time when you was born.

Because you were born with a sinful nature that comes from your great granddaddy Adam.

A sinful nature that makes you disobedient even as a little baby.

Who cried because you were selfish.

Who thought that you were the only person in the world.

And many of you still think that.

In fact, no one had to teach you disobey.

At your first birthday, your mom and dad didn't sit you down and say...

Ok...now that we have taught you to walk....

We are teach you how to disobey.

Oh no. By then, you were already an expert at disobedience and many of you still are working to perfect that.

Want to test what I am telling you?

Take a young child.

Point at an object and tell them, “Do not touch.”

Turn your back and that run straight to touch it.

And what is that a picture of?

Adam and Eve eating the apple when God told them not to.

That is the depth of our sinfulness.

And our disobedience.

And you can see it at very young ages.

Sometimes, it is cute to watch kids disobey, and sometimes we as parents laugh.

But the truth you need to hear tonight is that this disobedient, selfish and sinful nature is tragic.

It is very sad, and sometimes the toddler who can't obey becomes the teenager who takes a gun and shoots people with it.

And even if that doesn't happen in your life, this disobedience is tragic in other ways.

It leads to horrible relationships with your parents or friends.

It leads to horrible consequences in school.

It leads to horrible behavior in the world.

It leads to unwed teenage mothers.

It leads to drug and alcohol abuse.

It leads to suicide.

All the sin in the world.

All the tragedies that you see.

Has one root cause.

The sinful nature of the human heart.

The disobedient and selfish human heart.

That may not be true of you now.

Your consequence may be a spanking or a grounding or other form of punishment...

But all disobedience has consequences.

And I haven't even mentioned the worst consequence of all...

And that is the eternal consequence of sin...

Which is eternal punishment in hell.

We may joke our disobedience at times, but it is the most serious problem in your life.

A 3 year old climbing up on a counter and stealing from the cookie jar may be cute....

But at the same time, it is heart breaking.

Because that is his biggest problem and it will only get bigger if he is left without instruction.

That's why God in His word has this simple instruction to you children and it is this...

Obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

Your heart needs to be told to obey because it is filled with sin and disobedience.

And that is what you should do.

Then this statement always comes from kids.

I really want to obey my parents, but every time I try I can't do it.

And you know what is amazing about that statement?

It is absolutely true.

Your heart is so overcome with sin and disobedience that you can't obey from a heart like that.

Even if you try, the sin win.

And you still disobey.

That is why the gospel of Jesus is the promise of a new heart for those who repent of sin and believe in him.

You get a new heart that wants to obey when you get saved.

Now, that doesn't mean you will obey perfectly when you get saved.

Because you will still battle an old flesh that wants to disobey.

The truth of the gospel is that you get a new heart but it is put in an old body.

And you will still be influenced by your old sinful nature.

But the truth of your new heart is that it has the ability to obey parents, but most importantly, it now has the ability to obey God.

And that is really the part of obedience that you need to understand.

When a child disobeys his parents, he or she is really disobeying God...

Because God has placed the parents over their children.

IT is the same way with husbands and wives....

A husband who doesn't love his wife is really not loving God as he should...

And a wife who refuses to submit is essentially refusing to submit to God.

That is why disobedience is so serious.

It is not disobedience toward a parent, it is disobedience to God Himself.

So, first of all, let's learn this kids....

The reason that God tells you to obey is because you were born to disobey...

And the only way to learn how to truly obey is to be born again.

And that is what getting saved means.

It means that you are born again, but this time you get a brand new heart that wants to obey.

So, how do you follow this command in the Bible?

First , you need that new heart that comes when you repent and trust Christ to save you.

Second, assuming that you are saved and have a heart that wants to obey....

What do you need to know next?

The next thing that you need to know is that you have that new heart but you live in world where most everybody else has an old heart.

The world around you is fallen.

Nearly everything that you see in this world is because of the fallen sinful heart that most people have.

That's why the TV that you watch does not talk about the God of the Bible

That's why the actors and celebrities that you see do not honor God with their lives.

That's why people that the world says are important usually aren't Christians.

The world is in love with their old hearts.

The world allows them to let their sinful hearts do as they please.

They can sin all they want.

They can do whatever they want.

And when you go into that world, you will always be tempted because why?

You still have a fallen flesh. An old nature that still loves to disobey.

Even though you have a new heart, your old nature is still strong.

Paul said that "the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

The world is full of people who have a sinful nature and a sinful heart.

That's why when you speak of obeying God, they make fun of you.

They think that is silly.

Because they have both a sinful heart and a sinful flesh.

And that is hard for you to deal with.

So, you too are tempted to disobey?

So, is there hope for obedience even with a new heart?

Yes!

And here is how you obey with that new heart.

You simply exercise it.

You obey. Then you obey. Then you obey more.

And you kill that old nature.

You crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.

That means you say no to your old nature through the power of the Spirit.

And you build up that new heart through obedience.

That's why it is so important to obey as a child.

Learn now how to live in obedience to your parents...

Which becomes the training ground for living in obedience to God.

Children, obedience is important to God but it must all obedience must occur with the right attitude.

That is why we see a repeat of the 5th Commandment in verse 2...

Honor your father and mother

If you obey and your heart is not in it, it is not obedience.

For example, when your mom says to clean your room...

And you head toward your room rolling your eyes and thinking bad thoughts about your mom in your heart....

You are not obeying.

True obedience is from the heart.

God wants no other obedience.

If you say, "I'm going to take out the trash just so dad will shut up."

Even if you take out the trash, you haven't obeyed.

The word for that is hypocrisy.

It is doing one thing but believing just the opposite.

It is making your bed in the morning while your heart is full of anger at your mom who asked you to do it.

You are not pleasing the Lord when you do that.

Half obedience is disobedience.

The Pharisees were great examples of this.

They followed all the rules, but their hearts were far from God.

And if you start doing that as a child, it will lead to more and more of that in your life.

Obedience is always from the heart.

And let me add this here as well.

True obedience is always immediate.

It doesn't require a reminder from your parents.

If you have to think about it, it reveals that your heart is probably not into it.

Yet, I must add that the phrase here, "in the Lord" means that there is limits to a child's obedience.

Children are not required to obey parents who command them to do sinful things.

And if you are a child or teen who thinks that your parents are asking you to do something that is against the commands of Scripture,...

Ask another person in the church.

Lives wives submission, a child's obedience is limited at times as well.

And then the instruction to children ends with the same promise of the 5th Commandment...

³ *so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*

Here is the promise to children who obey and honor their parents from the heart...

First, it will be well with you.

Second, you will live long on the earth.

Now, these are the principles of obedience and honor.

Have truly obedient children died at a young age and had a hard time?

Sure.

Have disobedient kids lived a long and easy life.

Yes.

But these are the exceptions and not the rule.

In general, things usually go well for children who obey and honor their parents.

I mean, how does no punishment sound?

It should sound great.

How do parents who love and provide for your sound?

It should sound great.

How does a long life sound to you?

It should sound great, as the Lord gives you many years to serve Him and watch your family grow up.

And here is why that is true.

First of all, God promised it.

But second of all, so many problems come into the lives of those kids who never obeyed their parents.

First, they have a miserable childhood.

I have heard so many kids say things like, “My parents make my life miserable.”

No. The truth of these verses is that you make you life miserable by disobeying and not honoring them.

Your parents are simply trying to obey the Lord and help you learn obedience.

You are just reaping the consequences of disobedience...

And according to these verses....

That is a life that doesn't go well.

Which unfortunately extends into adulthood as well.

Why do so many people die young?

Though this is not true for every older teen or young adult who dies....

The truth of these verses is that some of these deaths started with simply disobeying their parents as a child.

That may sound simple, but that is the exact truth this verse teaches.

As much as it hurts me to tell you children, disobedience to your parents often has very bad consequences.

At the beginning, it may be a spanking....

But if you continue in it, the consequence may eventually be death at a young age.

And I don't tell you that to scare you...

God tells us all that in his word.

Conclusion

So, where does that leave us?

First, children know this.

Your disobedience tells you that you need a new heart that only comes when you repent of your sin....

And trust that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus will save you.

Then, if you say that you are a Christian, use that new heart to start obeying your parents.

And though you won't obey perfectly, your parents will be able to tell if you truly have a new heart by how you obey.

Second, be aware of the world.

Know that many of your friends will tempt you disobey your parents...

Probably because they disobey theirs.

Don't fill your eyes, ears and mind with the world, but with the truth of God's Word.

Read your Bible.

Pray.

Come to church.

Serve in church.

The world will not teach you to obey, but to disobey.

So be very careful who you are listening to.

Third, practice obedience with a pure heart.

When you obey while having a bad attitude.

Confess that sin to God, and then do what your parents ask with a cheerful heart..

And do it right away.

Fourth, remember that disobedience has consequences.

The consequences for disobedience can go all the way from a spanking to your life being cut short.

The place to learn live in obedience is in your home with your parents.

And the time to learn living in obedience to them is now.

Let us pray.