

Restore the Home

Sermon #1046
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Study given by W. D. Frazee—March 31,

Are you ready for Jesus to come? That is the introduction to our study this morning.

"And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" Luke 1:17.

Thank the Lord, somebody is going to be ready when Jesus comes. He will not find the entire world unready. Most will be unready, but a few will be ready. Our text brings to view a work of preparation to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. I want to notice more about that work of preparation. It is said to be in the spirit and power of Elijah.

The first thing mentioned is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and then the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

There is something about the matter of the relation of parents and children which enters basically into the preparation for the coming of Jesus.

"Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, page 119.

Notice the word "begin". You can't get back of the beginning. When you go to Genesis 1:1 and read, "In the beginning," you can't get any further back than that.

In the great reformatory movement which is to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, inspiration both in the Bible and in the revelations of the Spirit of Prophecy teaches us that the place to begin is with the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers. And in that order.

There is a work that is to be done in the hearts of parents to fit them to stand before their families in the place of God, and thus cooperate with God in making ready a people prepared for the Lord. I would like to notice that this is exactly what God wants parents to do.

"What is higher education? No education can be called higher education unless it bears the similitude of heaven, unless it leads young men and young women to be Christlike, and fits them to stand at the head of their families in the place of God" *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 467.

That doesn't mean to be a Pope. It doesn't mean to be anti-Christ, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Not at all.

But God has chosen to delegate some of His authority, some of His power and responsibility that goes with it, to fathers and mothers. He has chosen to do that, and the greatest respect we can shew to God is to accept His arrangement.

Needless to say, we cannot improve on it. Lucifer has been trying that for six thousand years. Personally I am not impressed with the showing he has made. Are you? I cannot see any system the Devil has established here on earth that I like.

Look over in India or China. Look down into Africa or the Islands of the sea. Look around in America and tell me what improvement the Devil has made on God's plan. Every time the Devil has changed anything, he has spoiled it. Every time he has made what he calls improvement, it has been a perversion. There is no improvement to it.

The reason for that is very simple. God is infinite, and in His holy law He has expressed His will, and the law of the Lord is perfect (Psalm 19:7). You cannot improve anything that is perfect. If you change it, it is no longer perfect.

Consequently, every change Lucifer has suggested has been degeneration rather than improvement. But the Devil has sold his package to the world at large. The world believes to a greater or less extent that God's way can be improved upon. We are told in Revelation 12:9 that Satan deceives the whole world.

I want you to think of that. What does it mean to deceive? It means to tell a lie, but tell it in such a way that people believe it. Otherwise there is no deception. And the Devil is deceiving the whole world. That is what the Bible says. If we believe the Bible, we must accept that as a statement of fact.

In this matter of the family, and the relationship of parents and children, the Devil has deceived the whole world. There is a great reformatory movement that must begin in the home in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. Let us cooperate with God in that reformation.

This concerns everyone here this morning. It concerns you if you are a father. It concerns you if you are a mother. Children and young people, it concerns you. Older ones who are not parents, it concerns you. You have an influence. There is no way of escaping what you think effects other lives. And it is only as our thoughts are changed and our attitudes are brought back into harmony with God's program that we will be ready for the coming of Jesus.

Are you ready for Jesus to come? Oh friends, that this reformation beginning in our hearts and homes may spread and help in this blessed work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

I would like to notice what is involved in this work of reformation that centers in the home, and how much depends upon it. I read of the great potential there is in this:

"The Christian home is to be an object-lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives"
Ministry of Healing, page 352.

We have all heard sermons that have stirred our hearts and moved us to decision. We all thank God for the ministry of His word. But there is something that has greater power than any sermon. That is what I read here. What is it? The influence of a true Christian home. That is the greatest sermon that can be preached.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if your home could be like that? Well, it can be. God has made full provision for it. All we have to do is accept His principles. But obviously we can never demonstrate the power of those principles unless it is those principles that are being demonstrated in the home.

An apparently successful home without these principles is a terrible thing. The more successful a home seems to be without these principles, the worse it is. We can rejoice in the failure of every home that is built upon wrong principles. Rejoice only in the sense that some, by getting a stomach ache, will cease to eat green apples. Some, by being scratched by thorns and brambles, will learn to hate the Devil who caused those things.

No. The kind of home demonstration we need is a demonstration of true principles.

I want to look at one of the most successful homes the Bible tells about. We will read what the Lord says about Abraham:

"And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" Genesis 18:17-19.

Notice that the fulfillment of the wonderful promise made to Abraham depended upon Abraham doing certain things. What were they? Commanding his

children and his household after him. So I would like to note the work of the father in the Christian household:

"Every member of the family centers in the father. His name, 'house-band,' is the true definition of husband. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues, energy, integrity, honesty, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. With such a household Jesus will terry" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, page 547.

We want Jesus in our homes, don't we? Notice several things said about the father. He is the priest, the lawmaker. He is the center. His name, "house-band," is the true definition of husband. Those who are fathers here this morning should magnify their office. They should appreciate the rare privilege, the high honor that God has bestowed upon them.

They do not have to boast. After all, these statements, instead of inflating us, should humble us. Instead of causing us to be egotistical and bigoted, they should cause us to cry out to God, realizing that He alone can give us what it takes to carry out what is required here.

We are like empty cups. It is very fine when thirsty people are around, provided there is a source of water, and the cups get under the spout. Every man who carries these responsibilities in a family must be like that empty cup, going to God and being filled with that which is necessary to carry out this commission.

Men, God challenges you to come up to this high and holy responsibility. In carrying it out, we have some modern trends to work against that are tremendous.

Somebody has said that the eighteenth century brought the emancipation of man, the nineteenth century brought the emancipation of woman, and the twentieth century brought the emancipation of the child.

That statement viewed from the standpoint of the historian is probably quite an accurate generalization. The American revolution that brought freedom to this country, the French revolution that overturned the throne there, and the influences set in motion, brought freedom to men that they were no longer serfs. In many countries that was true.

In the last century the movements for women's suffrage, and all that has gone with it, has lifted women far above slaves in many lands and many homes.

In recent decades we have witnessed both in laws passed and the attitudes of the people a great change toward the child. It used to be considered that the child was the property of the father. He could do as he pleased.

In some places today it is almost impossible for a father to exercise very much discipline without being criticized soundly. The tender hearts of people seem to go out to little children, and as a result they are left to grow up pretty much as they please.

It is a great kind of charity, a queer kind of pity overlooking, as the Devil would have it, the fundamental fact in the plan of God that authority and affection must be blended.

God is not dispensing love without discipline. God is not interested in love without law. That is sentimentalism. The world is full of it today. And in no place do we see a greater demonstration of the futility of Satan's plans than in the home today. Without authority based upon the mandate of Jehovah, no amount of what is called love can be successful in getting people ready for heaven, or even for success in this world.

"Let authority and affection be blended. They are in the character of God. 'God is love.' 1 John 4:8. But love includes justice as well as mercy. It includes firmness as well as kindness. There is law. There is pardon. But pardon does not set aside law, and love does not set aside justice. And the father, standing in the place of God, is to represent to his family those blended attributes which are seen in their perfection in God alone"
Evangelism, page 582.

Oh friends, what a challenge and responsibility. A father must not be as a child, moved merely by impulse. He is bound to his family by sacred, holy ties. Every member of the family centers in the father.

I wonder if, with all our vaunted progress in civilization, this program that takes the father away so much from his home and family and puts him out where he sees neither his wife or children for many of his waking hours day after day is designed to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. How every father should cherish the opportunities to be with his wife and children. How those opportunities should be made the most of.

The father is, in one sense, the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. Who should lead out? Whose is the primary responsibility in making the home a spiritual home? The father.

Do you notice the popular opinion that Sunday school is for women and children? Is that what the church is for? And the Devil has sold that idea to millions of people. He has pictured religion as something more or less soft. And a lot of it is soft to the point of being mushy.

What the religious experiences of many people need, and many homes need, is exactly what the father, blessed by God, can bring into it. "He is the lawmaker,

illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues, energy, integrity, honesty, and practical usefulness."

Any man that dares try it has a battle on his hands. If not in his home, at least in society around him. Any man who dares try it is going to be criticized as taking too much authority.

That is what the people said about Moses in leading the children of Israel. They came and said, Moses, you take too much on yourself. The congregation can handle things. They don't need all your authority. You are just taking on yourself more than you need to. Things would run better without your meddling.

Will the wife and children who are imbued with the Holy Spirit oppose or welcome the exercise of leadership God has delegated to the husband and father? Obviously, if they are being led by the Spirit, they will cooperate with it. If they are not, they will show either a spirit of defiance or evasion. That is what is wrecking thousands of homes today.

If we are to get ready for the coming of Jesus, there must be in every heart a longing to know the will of God, and a cooperation to carry out that will.

"With such a household Jesus will tarry, and through His quickening influence the parent's joyful exclamations shall yet be heard amid more exalted scenes, saying: `Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.'" *Ibid.*

Oh friends, I want that experience. I want to see every family here having that experience.

God says, I know Abraham. I can count on him. He will command his household after him. Notice it does not say he will coax them. It doesn't say he will bribe them. It doesn't say he will argue with them. It doesn't say he will threaten them. It doesn't say he will maneuver things around to get them to do things he wants them to do without their even knowing they were told to do it.

That is supposed to be the modern way of dealing with children, you know. Put something they need with something they like. That way they will be sure to eat it and get their minerals and vitamins without any difficulty.

It is old fashioned that a child should obey because he should obey, but that is the doctrine of the Bible. And God is going to have some families today who will demonstrate that principle. I hope every woman, wife, and mother here this morning will appreciate the importance of recognizing God's plan, and give it full support.

Somebody says, But if father would only be nicer in the way he does it, then it would be easier. But father is so strict, and even mean about it sometimes. The poor children need to get some loving somewhere.

So you are going to give it to them and separate the child from the father? God pity you. Do you remember a serpent who stole into Eden and suggested that

God was arbitrary, and that he, the serpent, was more interested in their welfare than God was? There is many a serpent in homes today breaking it apart with the subtle suggestion that bad daddy spansks baby. Mama won't let him spank baby.

What kind of influence is that. Sometimes it is worded exactly like I have said it. Other times it isn't worded that way, but that is what it means. And there is a thousand variations on bad daddy.

One variation is, We had better not tell daddy about this because he might not like it. Here is something you wanted, and you can have it. Here is something you want to do and we will arrange it. But we must not tell daddy, because he might not like it. What is that teaching? That is teaching insubordination, which is the very thing Lucifer lost heaven over. It is breaking down the foundation of authority.

Somebody says there are a lot of men who may be supposed to stand in the place of God who are not like God at all. That is true, and they will have to answer to God for it. But I want to say that even though we do not have perfect father's, breaking down their authority before the children is not going to improve a bad situation. It is only going to make it worse.

Rather let wife and children come close to the father who has burdens and problems, and may have serious faults, and say, We love you and are going to help you. We know God expects you to lead, and we are going to cooperate with you. We are going to pray for you. We are going to make your work as easy as possible.

God will bless that sort of attitude. He certainly will.

I want to turn now to Ephesians and notice some more instructions to fathers:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" Ephesians 5:25-28.

What a wonderful figure, a wonderful symbol, a wonderful illustration. God takes the union of marriage and uses it as the representation of the union of Himself and His church. The husband and father then, in exercising the authority of God, must show the love of God.

Without that he can never succeed. Never. God forbid that any man should try to be the law giver without also being the love maker. Law and love must be combined. Authority must be blended with affection.

In *Adventist Home* we have a beautiful picture of the father acting in this work, and the mother in his absence. This brings me to the next point which I am very anxious to make clear, for there are many broken and divided homes in this hour in which we live.

When the father is gone, either through death or otherwise, or even when he is away for an hour, a day, or a week, the mother must recognize that she has not only her own place to fill, but that of the father also. That is very important. The home must never be left at loose ends. There must always be a house-band. And God will help the mother to fill that place if the father is not there to fill it.

I have a serious question in my own mind how much God is going to help the wife fill that place if the husband is there. But where the husband is absent, the mother should recognize that she is in charge, and should take over the full responsibility of seeing that authority as well as affection is being manifested.

"All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice. The wife and children should be encouraged to unite in this offering, and also to engage in the song of praise. Morning and evening the father, as priest of the household, should confess to God the sins committed by himself and his children through the day. This rule of action, zealously carried out by the father when he is present, or by the mother when he is absent, will result in blessings to the family" *Adventist Home*, page 212.

It comes time for the morning sacrifice. The father is absent. We have no priest this morning, so we can have no sacrifice. Is that it? No. The mother is appointed by God to go ahead. She has been delegated to take charge. And many a home would never have family worship unless the mother went right ahead.

Thank God for mothers who will try, with God's help, to fill the double place of mother and father. And women who have that need and that opportunity, be assured that there is a double portion of the Spirit. Never doubt it. God will help you. Wrestle with Him in prayer.

But remember, it calls for you to cultivate not merely mercy and tenderness and long-suffering and kindness and gentleness. You must cultivate the exercise of firmness, authority, and strict requirements. It is necessary. You must do it, and God will help you. It will result in blessings to the family. Isn't that wonderful? Thank God that when the father is away either permanently or temporarily, or when he does not know God and cannot take his position as priest of the household, then the mother must realize she is chosen and delegated of God.

Now what about the children? I want you to look at the ten commandments. They are found in Exodus 20, but you know them by heart. Suppose we had them written up here on two tables. We would have four on the first table and six on the second.

Why did God put them on two tables? Because the law is divided into two parts. The first relates to our duty to God, and the second relates to our duty to our

fellow men. I want you children to notice something very interesting. At the beginning of each table there is a commandment. Whenever there is a series of anything, there is always one that starts. God didn't just scatter out the commandments hit and miss. There is a divine sequence and order in the commandments.

The reason the First Commandment on the first table is first is because it is first. The reason the First Commandment on the second table is first is because it is first. Let's look at it.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" Exodus 20:3.

Why is it first? Because the first thing to settle in any commandment is who has the authority. Who is to be obeyed. That is the first thing to establish. God does not purpose to waste his time in speaking any other commandment unless you have first heard and accepted the First Commandment. In other words, do you accept God as supreme authority? If you do then you are bound to listen to and obey all the rest. That relates to all ten of them. Isn't that clear?

Now let's notice the Fifth Commandment. We have passed from the duties directly related to God and are dealing with the duties relating to our fellow men. There are millions of people in this world. How should we relate ourselves to them all? The first thing to settle is where authority lays.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"
Exodus 20:12.

The first thing to settle in your dealings with life and people around you is where authority is. According to this commandment it is where? It is with father and mother. And you are to do what. Honor them. It includes obedience, but it includes more than obedience. It includes living the life that brings honor to them. It includes doing not only what they say, but thinking of what will please them, and choosing to do it for Jesus' sake.

Dear Children whom God is preparing to act a part in His closing work, remember it is written in Revelation 14:12, concerning those who welcome Jesus when He comes, "Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

Will children be in that group? Will they be keeping the commandments? Will they keep the Fifth Commandment? Oh, yes. They will bring joy and honor to their parents. For such children God is waiting.

I am so glad we can study deeper into this science of the Christian home where love and law are blended; where authority and affection reign. Jesus had this attitude toward His earthly parents. Until He was thirty years old He was subject to them, bearing the burdens of the home life, and helping to support the family.

Such a program produced that wonderful character which all the universe marvels at. And such a program develops characters today that reflect the image of Jesus fully, and through them God will finish His work.

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