

Sermon Outline

BAPTIZED NATION

THE LITTLE CHURCH: BAPTIZED FAMILY (COLOSSIANS 3:18-21)

I. A Totalitarian Baptism

Since God is Lord of all, baptism (his sign of ownership over us) represents his rule over our whole lives. Even our families are to come under the rule of God.

II. The Christian Family Is Born of Union with Christ Jesus

III. Wives, Submit to Your Own Husbands (Colossians 3:18)

- A. Paul addresses wives first (cf. Eph 5:22).
- B. The call to submit is offensive to many wives today. This is due in part to...
 - 1. The rise of an idolatrous, authority-hating egalitarianism.
 - 2. The modern ideal of the Career-Pursuing Woman.
- C. These two factors lead to an odd way of thinking.
—“Since women today are very well educated and capable of running their own lives, they no longer need to submit to their husbands.”
- D. *But since when did education and wealth determine submission?*
—In God’s view, the wife submits for the simple fact that she is the wife!
- E. A wife submits to her husband by graciously allowing him to be the final word on family matters (assuming that that word is not against God’s Word).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is Paul’s instruction to wives? (2) What is one reason wives give for not submitting to their husbands? (3) Why should a wife submit to her husband—given that she is fully capable of providing for herself?

IV. Husbands, Love Your Wives (Colossians 3:19)

- A. Paul addresses the husbands next with two instructions.
 - 1. “Love your wives.”
 - 2. “Do not be harsh with them.”
- B. What does it mean for husbands to love their wives?
 - 1. Husbands must be devoted to their wives’ best interests.
—Those “best interests” differ from person to person. So husbands must actually listen to their own wives.

2. Husbands must have real affection and tenderness toward their wives.
—Love is more than dutifully “providing for the family.”
 3. Husbands must honor and respect their wives (Eph 5:28; 1 Pet 3:7).
- C. What does it mean for husbands to “be harsh” to their wives?
—It means to carelessly impose ourselves on them, to treat them as less than gifted daughters of God in their own right. Husbands are harsh to their wives when...
1. They obsess over small mistakes that their wives make.
 2. They do not encourage their wives but treat them like servants.
 3. They do not allow wives freedom to make their own decisions.
 4. They do not allow their wives to grow in areas not directly related to the home (arts, athletics, scholarship, etc.).
—To say that the wife’s *primary* calling is to her husband and home is not to say that those are her *only* calling.
—Please do not use Colossians 3:18 and Genesis 2:18 to justify repressive behavior.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are Paul’s two instructions for husbands? (2) What does it mean to love our wives? (3) What does it mean to not be harsh to our wives? (4) Do you use Colossians 3:18 and Genesis 2:18 to justify your own repressive behavior at home?

V. Children, Obey Your Parents (Colossians 3:20)

- A. The next instruction is for children to obey their parents in all things.
- B. Parents need to encourage and praise obedience (cf. Mt 25:21, 23).
—Do we praise our children for obedience as much as we praise them for their academic or athletic successes? What values are we teaching them if we don’t?
- C. Why does God want us to obey daddy and mommy?
 1. We can avoid the mistakes our parents made when they were younger.
 2. God wants to love us, teach us, and protect us through our parents.
 3. Obeying daddy and mommy pleases the Lord—and that should be enough of a reason.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is Paul’s instruction to children? (2) Why do parents need to praise and encourage obedience, more than other kinds of success? What could result if we give more praise to success than obedience? (3) Why does God want us to obey our parents?

VI. Fathers, Do Not Provoke Your Children (Colossians 3:21)

- A. Paul comes back to the husbands. This time, he addresses husbands who are fathers.

- B. The fact that God addresses husbands *twice* in this section shows us that God really wants husbands to get what he is trying to say.
 - 1. God is offering a new vision for husbandhood and fatherhood.
 - 2. God is now discipling husbands in particular and men in general.
- C. Fathers in most traditional cultures knew to discipline their children. —But too often, the discipline was only a tool to exert control and create fear in the child.
- D. Aside from harsh discipline, how else do fathers provoke their children? They do so by...
 - 1. Disciplining their children to appease others.
 - 2. Not apologizing when needed.
 - 3. Only scolding them and never praising them.
- E. Christ requires fathers to treat their children with respect and patience.
- F. The purpose of Christian discipline is to guide the child away from evil— NOT merely to reinforce the father’s control over him.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is Paul’s instruction to fathers? (2) What is the significance of God addressing husbands twice? (3) Aside from harsh discipline, how else do parents provoke their children? How else do *you* provoke your children?

VII. The Christian Family as the Little Church

The Christian family is born of Christ Jesus. It partakes of the life of Christ. It shares in his holy Person. It is like a little church. Such a family cannot function like the old families of the World; ruled by self-seeking, driven by fear. God’s vision of the family is that of a community governed by love and respect for one another, out of full devotion to Christ. The wife submits to her husband out of love for Christ. Children obey their parents out of love for God. And the husband, as head of the home, lovingly offers his leadership so that his wife and children can be strengthened and enriched, not controlled and stifled. There is genuine love, even mutual submission in such a family.

But for our families to become increasingly like this, we need to look to Christ Jesus alone as our Sufficiency and our Pattern. We need to find our sufficiency in Christ so that we do not demand it from others at home. We need to be willing to learn from Christ and not from old God-less traditions. Baptism requires us to make Christ the Lord of our homes.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) “The Christian family is born of Christ Jesus.” What does this mean? (2) What is God’s kind of family? What values shape such a family? (3) How can our families become like what God wants? (4) Look at your family today. Can you say it is mostly driven by love and mutual respect? Where in your family life is more submission, love, and respect needed?