

Raising Church

Today we are going to be talking about what it takes to raise a church, and I am going to be using a lot of familial language in here tonight, speaking to parents with kids, but the impact of today's passage is not limited to those with kids.

That's why today's sermon is called raising church, because whether you accept it or not it is your job as members of this church is to help raise the children of this church. It is your job as a member of this church to pay witness to the deeds Christ has done in your life and to spread the fame of your Lord to everyone in this building, you are an instrument that God is using to raise the next generation for his glory.

Let me tell you right now that there is a battle being waged for the hearts of young people in this church. We live in a world where people of all ages are constantly connected to a stream of never ending information most of which will not hold weight past tomorrow. That means that now more than ever we as a church need to stop wasting our breath and wasting our actions on things that don't live past today. We need once more to be light on fire with the purpose and passion that God intend us to live under.

The truth is, many of your kids get this better than you do. The thing I love about kids is that they are so easily amazed. They are so easily in awe and wonder of new things. I was standing in the back before service a couple weekends ago and a little boy came up to me and asked me "Did you see the weinermobile?" And at first I was thoroughly confused as to what he was talking about because the Oscar Meyer weinermobile is something that I have not thought about in years, and just before I respond I hear behind me this voice of sheer excitement behind me saying "Yes it was awesome." And I turned and saw Tony Cooley standing brimming ear to ear with the biggest smile I have ever seen. And Tony this 25 year old bearded dude with body piercings and this little blond haired Daunte totally had a moment of worship together as they stood and reminisced about the giant 30 foot long hotdog with a motor they had each seen this week.

The point I'm making is that if something is worth awestruck wonder, it is something that we should never become un-amazing in its delivery and application.

We are going to look more closely at what this means and how this applies to raising the newest generation of God's worshippers, but first let's **Pray**.

Tonight we are going to stick our feet knee deep in the old testament and take a look at the measures God used to help establish himself among his people.

Now our main passage of scripture tonight is going to be in Deuteronomy 6, so if you have your Bibles you can turn there, but before I get into the scripture tonight I want to give us some background as to what has gone on up until this point in scripture.

The Israelites were captive and slaves in the land of Egypt, and the Lord spoke to Moses and said to him in Exodus three that I'm going to get my people, I have heard their cries and I will take my people into a land that I will give them, so Moses goes into to Egypt tells Pharaoh and Pharaoh says no way these are my people and then God says, I have ten plagues that beg to differ, and God eventually softens Pharaoh's heart enough to let his people go, but then changes his mind and chases the Israelites down on the edge of the red sea. Now all of a sudden the Israelites who were once so happy that God was saving them are mad at him and yelling at Moses for bringing them out in the desert to die. So Moses cries out to God, and God's like watch and be in awe, and he parts the red sea for the Israelites and once they pass through he closes the sea and all of Pharaoh's army is destroyed in the waters. Now we think the Israelites would be happy, but they continue to rebel against the God who just saved them, and they whine to him, so God puts them in a 40 year time out in the desert where he is basically saying, You think you can live without me, try it. They don't like it. They whine cause they're hungry, so God gives them bread that falls from the sky, then they are mad cause all they have is bread to eat, so God says fine, I'll give you meat, so he gives them quail to eat, then they whine cause their thirst, and at this point even Moses is getting a little testy, and God gives the people water from a rock, and now their 40 year time out is almost done and God says to them, remember that land I promised I would give you, the land flowing with milk and honey, I'm about to bring you there God says go this way because I have given these cities into your hand, so the Israelites go and capture these cities because God gave them into their hands and now they are standing at the edge of the Jordan river, about to cross over into the promise land, and God stops and gives them some tips and pointers for living there.

That is where our scripture comes in today. **Deut 6:4-15**

So there is a lot of stuff going on here. Really this section of scripture is a snapshot of a 5 chapter brick here in the beginning of Deuteronomy. Basically what God is doing here with the people is telling them how to live a sustainable life for worship, how to sustainably and functionally raise the newly born and unborn generations of Israelites so that they also know the powerful acts that God did for their parents in the exodus out of Egypt. Cause a lot of these people here still saw with their own eyes the wonders that God did in Egypt, they saw the plagues, they walked through the sea, they ate the manna, and yet their kids and grandkids will not be afforded the same luxury of seeing God's power in such a visible way.

So God is saying to them, "This is how you instill worship in the coming generations. This is how you make my people amazed at my work."

Now here is why we are starting in the old testament, it's because God didn't put this in the Bible only so we could see how mighty he was, or that we could remember ancient history, he put this story in the Bible because the story of the Exodus is a Divinely inspired foreshadowing of our story. The story of Salvation, where we were once trapped in our sins unable to save ourselves, yet God in his great mercy sent us a savior, who Hebrews says is greater than Moses, and instead of piercing a rock and giving us water, He pierced his son so that we can have the water of new life, and now we live as a people redeemed from our past ways, but we still

struggle and wrestle with keeping God first in our life.

We look at this section of scripture because we are the Israelites, we are redeemed by our God and therefore the same tools and methodologies that the Israelites used to instill worship in their children are the exact same tools we should use to instill worship in our children. To raise them in the knowledge and awareness of our God.

The entirety of this book is the manual for our life, the entirety of this book is a picture that points to the cross and the entirety of this book must have an effect on your life if you desire to properly raise your children in a proper way.

Because ultimately, listen here, ultimately you do not have any control over the salvation of your child. You may be able to influence it, but salvation belongs to the Lord. We see that in **Matt 16:15-17**

See it is not through flesh and blood that we are saved, but through the revealing and redeeming work of our God. So that means that in the mold of Philippians 1:12-13 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

And we know that it is God's good pleasure to bring people to worship so we know that when we properly work out our own salvation, that gives venue to our God to save, our children will not be saved because of our perfect parenting, but rather our children will be saved by our perfect God for his good pleasure and our parenting and our lives will work as a sweet aroma to his saving presence.

So what then does that look like, how do we change the environment in which our church and kids live so that it provides a fuller venue for Gods miraculous work? I believe three things are given in today's text that provide some direction to our lives.

1. Love God

Deut 6:5-6

See this may sound like the biggest no duh statement ever, but I cannot tell you how ignored this facet is in our Church today. I get so many parents talking to me about how they cannot get their kids to come to youth group, and so many teens telling me how much of a waste their life is on them and the problem with both of these examples is that they do not love God to the length at which we are called to love God.

Think right now to yourself, what do you love most? If I pulled some random person off of the street and told them to observe you for a week, what would they tell me at the end of the week that your heart desires the most? Because if that thing is not God the remaining portion of this verse will not be achievable.

I love when it says these are the things that shall be on your heart. See I cannot will something

upon your heart. I can tell you and preach at you for hours to love God, but unless God works in your heart, and your heart chooses to embrace that God, you will never be able to have anything godly upon your heart.

I have seen people who like God, who don't mind the idea of God, but when I compare them to the people who wholeheartedly love God, there is a real visible difference. When I see that in someone's life, I want that. Someone who exercises their love properly is someone to be modeled.

Story of Tracy and blind woman who could tell she was a Christian by her demeanor. That's because when you love God, people notice in real ways. Parents, youth leaders, children's workers, community group leaders, church...love God.

Love him with all of your heart, with all of your soul and with all of your might. This means that the energy with which you love God should be exhausting. If you woke up tomorrow and you Love for God was gone, your life should be astoundingly different, because it is by your love for God that people will see and worship your God.

2. Teach God Unceasingly

Deut 6:7

I am really bad at giving presents. It was my girlfriend's birthday last week and it was literally mental torture for me to give her the present, not because finding the present was hard, but because I got the present a week early and was so excited to give it that I didn't want to wait until her birthday. What I got her was a Tennessee Titans shirt, yes, I'm branding my girlfriend. But the reason I was so excited about it was because I wanted her to share in my joy of the Titans. I knew something was amazing, and it felt painful and wrong to keep it hidden from her for that long.

This should be the same emotions we have when we are not teaching God. When you look throughout the scriptures God's word and his miracles and his teachings have been the worst kept secret in the history of the world. Why? Because when God works in someone's life the natural response is to speak of it. To share it.

Let me prove my point.

Jer 20:9

The word of the Lord was so powerful that when Jeremiah didn't open his mouth to proclaim it, there was literal physical pain in his chest because the word needed to be preached.

I love looking at the gospel for this, because in the gospels it was very common for Jesus to heal someone, and then tell them not to talk about it. But in my head this didn't make any sense. Because every time Jesus said this, the people went and talked about it. Look here.

Matt 9:30-31

Mark 7:36

See it's almost like Jesus is saying "I dare you to not talk about me." Jesus says, I dare you to not let others know the power of my miracles. I dare you to keep quiet about what I have done for you.

And yet the people cannot be silenced. This means we church should never let a stray word come out of our mouth that is not laden, with supported by and flowing from the gospel. There is no such thing as a wasted word, but rather everything you say points to your father in heaven. In its demeanor and in it's message.

You are called to teach. See these people in the new testament, they simply got their eyes opened or their leprosy cured, we were literally brought from death to life, from sin to salvation, how much more should we proclaim the good works of our father in heaven to our children and in our homes. How much more should you, as the Lord stirs in your heart the reality of his work, willingly volunteer to teach the kids, youth and young adults in this church because you know your God is great and that it is your duty as a witness to this God to spread his name throughout his people.

So now we love God and we are talking about God, but what are we talking about and how is that message furthering our love and facilitating the love of others.

3. Remember the work of your God

Deut 6:8-15

You see when you tuck your kids into bed at night, when you leave your volunteer shift with redemption groups, children's ministry or youth group, you don't want them to remember the good time they had there, you want them to remember the God they met there.

See we have subtly shifted our attention in our Churches from God to us. But that's not what we are called to teach our kids, we are called to bring our kids to awestruck wonder of our God, by keeping in front of them an awe inspiring picture of our God.

God is saying tell your kids how I brought you into a salvation that you did not earn, with riches of grace that you did not build, with storehouses of mercy that you did not fill, with conquered sins that you did not defeat, with a death you did not die for a life you did not deserve – where you have joy and joy abounding. Then take care lest you forget my children that it is God who gives this to you. No other god has done that for you, no other god will do that for you, so do not pursue empty passions and idols, but fear, love and worship this God the true God because he is a jealous God who pursued you with an intense love, love him, worship him lest you find yourself on the other side of God's just wrath.

And if that is hard for you to remember become more acquainted with this. Read it daily. If you forget it, bind it on your hand, stick it on your forehead, write it on your house and on

your gates. Find a parrot and train him to sit on your shoulder and recite scripture to you, do whatever it takes, go to whatever necessary lengths it takes to not forget what the Lord has done for you.

It is through this knowledge that we worship, and it is by this God that your children will be saved and that his church will be raised and that glory will go to him.

So church is this present in your life. Is this in the fore front of your mind, on the tip of your tongue, on the top of your heart and the pads of your feet and the palms of your hand.

Do you worship this God with reckless abandonment, do you love him with a consuming love, do you speak of him in an unrelenting tone to those around you because you know the only thing you can leave the next generation is your God.

Church, we are the bride of Christ, and Christ did not die so that we can raise a generation who whores their hearts after other gods because their parents and their church refused to impart to them the works and wonder of our good God.

I want to leave you with this quote from the late 19th century pastor Charles Spurgeon:

The house in which there is no family altar can scarcely expect a Divine blessing. If the Lord does not cover our habitation with His wings, our family is like a house without a roof. If we do not seek the Lord's guidance, our household is a ship without a pilot. And unless guarded by devotion, our family will be a field without a hedge. The mournful behavior of many of the children of professing parents is mainly due to the neglect or the coldness of family worship—and many a judgment has, I doubt not—fallen upon households because the Lord is not duly honored therein.