

Can The Family Be Saved?

(Mark 10:6-9)

(Sunday, September 6)

Sharp and loud voices of our society are predicting and promoting the end of the family as we have known it. Articles such as, “Is this the last marrying generation?” proclaim the death of the family. There are even some novels that have been written suggesting a college where young people are taught to live together “free” from the responsibilities of marriage. The theory is that this kind of freedom will prevent them from having the hang-ups of commitment. They will more “genuinely” discover themselves....(whatever that means!!)

Writers are hard at work in this way, dissecting the family. Each new weakness the autopsy uncovered is loudly acclaimed. The analysts are saying that the family cannot survive this epidemic of marriage breakdown.

In view of this diagnosis, what is the Christian response to the news that the family is terminally ill? We must begin by seeing our Christian ideals again, clearly and with purpose. Jesus gave us this ideal for family life as he described the intention of God for human existence in *(Mark 10:6-9)*. Jesus clarifies God’s original intention. Jesus held up God’s ideal for marriage and told his followers to live by it!

Here is the intention of God – He created us, Male and Female for the purpose of fulfilling each other’s lives. This arrangement leads to the establishment of a family in which two people commit themselves to each other for life. Their commitment to each other is a sacred covenant. It is entered into to accomplish the purposes of God for their lives.

(Sunday, September 13)

There are three lessons that are necessary for the survival of the family in our time.

I. If the Family is to be saved, there must be a strong Spirit of Commitment in the Family.

As we have already noted, many are denying the need for commitment. They are saying that commitment is totally out of place in the

family. We are living in a time when people do not want to be committed to anything. They are saying commitment only leads to problems and denies freedom.

In much current thought, the only criteria for continuing marriage or family, is whether it is a presently satisfactory relationship. This moment-to-moment approach to marriage and the family gives it no permanence or stability. The attitude created by this lack of commitment is that if marriage gets uncomfortable, one should get out immediately.

What is happening in the family is not too different from what is happening in other places in our society. It is the same sickness that other segments of the society suffer from. We have moved to the “no-frustration” time. There is almost no tolerance of frustration of people in our society. The factors creating frustration are multiplying. Our “instant” age wants immediate results and guaranteed happiness in everything.

In this society that encourages people to commit themselves to nothing, meaningful family life will be extremely difficult. We are taught to be ready to run if any difficulty develops. Therefore, we are taught against the meaning of commitment. We must teach young people what it means to commit oneself to another in love and to help that person and oneself grow together towards God. Because society says, “don’t do it” it will take the courage of individuality for Christians to begin learning what it is to make family commitment a meaningful experience. Commitment is involved in the words of Genesis which Jesus quotes in our text when He says, *“for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one.”* That’s talking about commitment!

(Sunday, September 20)

II. If the Family is to be saved, we must inhale the atmosphere of the church for the Family.

Every family that is serious about its survival and health will find its place in the church. You need a survival kit for your family in this jungle of American society. It must include instructions on how to get into and be a part of a growing Christian fellowship. The Family needs to breathe the air of spiritual worship every week if it is to be strong.

Families are constantly exposed to forces from the outside that will destroy them. They are such things as personal success, moral decay and job and career pressures. There are so many things that can cause the family to deteriorate.

The church is one of the few remaining strengthening groups for family life. The church does something for the family that nothing else can

do. If families would make time for church participation as they do for other things, the church could be far more effective for families.

- Church membership alone will not do it!
- Occasional church attendance will not do it!
- Critical attitudes toward the church will not do it!
- Blaming the church for every failure will not do it!

Only wholesome, positive participation in Christian fellowship will allow your family to breathe the atmosphere of the church. The family should worship together every week. That shouldn't be an option in your family!!!

(Sunday, September 27)

III. If the Family is to be saved, the Family has to infuse Christ into every functioning part of the Family.

The family needs Christ!

Every part that moves must have the strength of Christ flowing into it. The Creator of family life is also the keeper of family life. Social scientists today are looking for a new arrangement to replace family life. We do not need a new arrangement; we need new persons.

Social scientists for the most part are treating the symptoms instead of the cause of the failures of the family. But Jesus Christ changes the person. He puts new blood in the veins of the family. He helps us find the purposes of God in family living.

Everyday that a family lives together, it needs the presence of Christ.

- It needs the presence of Christ to learn how to forgive.
- It needs the presence of Christ to learn how to respect one another.
- It needs the presence of Christ to learn how love, not selfishly but self-givingly.
- It needs the presence of Christ to learn how to trust others.

Jesus' parable of the houses on the rock and on the sand is appropriate for homes of today. A home falls, not because homes will not stand anymore, but because it is built on the wrong foundation. Christ is needed in your home if you want your home to last. Christ will give you something that you can build on if you let him be in control.

*"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' Name.
On Christ, the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand...."*