

Sermon Series: The Strong Family—7/2/2000—Lord of Life Lutheran Church

Title: “Releasing the Reins”

Text: Ephesians 4: 11-16

Introduction: ILLUS.: Allowing Maturity

Theme: Much like the family of Christ, the Christian home reflects the same transitions of nurture, growth, and launching. If we can see our homes growth in the terms of “*discipling for life*,” we will find purpose and focus as we travel through these stepping stones of life together

Defining the Seasons of Life we have or will go through

- C **Family Founding**---- Beginning with the wedding and going through the birth of the first child
- C **Childbearing**----- Starting with the birth of the first child and lasting until the last child enters school
- C **Child Rearing**----- Lasting from the time the first child enters school until the last child enters college or leaves home
- C **Child Launching**---- Beginning with the first child’s departure from home and lasting until the last child leaves.
- C **Empty Nest**----- Starting when all the children have left home
 - Of these areas the child launching can become the most divisive and unresolved for families often for decades
 - 1. For mothers who have wrapped their entire lives in nurturing their child, devastation at letting go
 - 2. For fathers who have smothered their children, resentment when their authority is eclipsed by child’s independence
 - 3. For children (of all ages) seeking to forge their completed identity anger and frustration over perceived meddling
 - 4. Understanding Jesus gives me worth and identity in life (***Let your worth be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.***)
1 Peter 3: 4)

Biblical principles from God’s family to your family for successfully letting go of the reins

- C **Keep your discipleship roles uppermost in mind**
 - 1. **Print and read Ephesians 4: 11-13**
 - 2. Biblical/Christian homes are--- “*Made disciples to make disciples*”
 - 3. Parents’ role is to “equip” (repair, adjust, complete, train) child for life and ministry in God’s kingdom and world
 - 4. **ILLUS.: BABES TO MEN**
 - 5. Seeing family members as ***treasures and saints*** rather than ***slaves and obligations***
- C **Watch for and foster signs of maturity**
 - 1. **Print and read Ephesians 4: 14-15**
 - 2. Warning and training family members to recognize the real life of Jesus versus the counterfeits that are in the world
 - **ILLUS.: “THAT’S NOT JADE”**
 - 3. Confront childish behavior as a child grows older and reverts back into it
 - “***When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child, when I became a man, I did away with childish things.***” 1 Cor. 13: 11
 - Truth without love is uncaring self-righteousness (parenting seen as a divine right)
 - “***Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed.***” ***Prov. 27: 5***
 - Love without truth is unloving laziness (parent buddies)
 - “***Speaking the truth in love***” produces Christ-like children who produce Christ-like grandchildren
 - Speaking the truth in love means that they hear that they are forgiven even when they fail
 - 4. Reward spiritual and emotional maturity
 - “***Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.***” ***1 Thess. 5: 11***
 - **ILLUS.: MENTORING TO MATURITY**
- C **Encourage growth rather than tolerate it—by words and by actions**
 - **Print and read Ephesians 4: 16**
 - Help your family member to develop their God given gifts and abilities and respect it in the context of love
 - **ILLUS.: BODY OF CHRIST**
- C **Release your family member to God’s growth and maturity**

1. Release continually, not suddenly
2. Release them into the Heavenly Father's hands
 - *“Now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20: 32*

ALLOWING TO MATURE

I met a young man not long ago who dives for exotic fish for aquariums. He said one of the most popular aquarium fish is the shark. He explained that if you catch a small shark and confine it, it will stay a size proportionate to the aquarium. Sharks can be six inches long yet fully matured. But if you turn them loose in the ocean, they grow to their normal length of eight feet. That also happens to some Christians. I've seen some of the cutest little six-inch Christians who swim around in a little puddle. But if you put them into a larger arena--into the whole creation--only then can they become great.

BABE TO MEN

In THE LAST DAYS NEWSLETTER, Leonard Ravenhill tells about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village who walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?" The old man replied, "Nope, only babies." A frothy question brought a profound answer. There are no instant heroes--whether in this world or in the kingdom of God. Growth takes time, and as I Timothy 3:6 and 5:22 point out, even spiritual leadership must be earned. William C. Shereos

COUNTERFEIT

A Chinese boy who wanted to learn about jade went to study with a talented old teacher. This gentle man put a piece of the precious stone into his hand and told him to hold it tight. Then he began to talk of philosophy, men, women, the sun and almost everything under it. After an hour he took back the stone and sent the boy home. The procedure was repeated for several weeks. The boy became frustrated. When would he be told about the jade? He was too polite, however, to question the wisdom of his venerable teacher. Then one day, when the old man put a stone into his hands, the boy cried out instinctively, "That's not jade!" (Biblical Preaching)

MENTORING TO MATURITY

As water never rises above its level so what we do never rises above what we are...We shall never take people one hair's breadth beyond our own spiritual attainment. We may point to higher things, but we shall only take them as far as we ourselves have gone. - W.H. Griffith Thomas

BODY OF CHRIST

In March of 1981, President Reagan was shot by John Hinckley, Jr., and was hospitalized for several weeks. Although Reagan was the nation's chief executive, his hospitalization had little impact on the nation's activity. Government continued on. On the other hand, suppose the garbage collectors in this country went on strike, as they did not long ago in Philadelphia. That city was not only in a literal mess, the pile of decaying trash quickly became a health hazard. A three-week nationwide strike would paralyze the country. Who is more important--the President or a garbage collector? In the body of Christ, seemingly insignificant ones are urgently needed. As Paul reminds us, "The head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (I Cor. 12:21-22). David Parsons

Ephes. 4:11-16

He also gave apostles, prophets, missionaries, as well as pastors and teachers as gifts to his church. ¹²Their purpose is to prepare God's people, to serve, and to build up the body of Christ. ¹³This is to continue until all of us are united in our faith and in our knowledge about God's Son, until we become mature, until we measure up to Christ, who is the standard. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be little children, tossed and carried about by all kinds of teachings that change like the wind. We will no longer be influenced by people who use cunning and clever strategies to lead us astray. ¹⁵Instead, as we lovingly speak the truth, we will grow up completely in our relationship to Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together and unites it through the support of every joint. As each and every part does its job, he makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.