

Sermon Series: Biblical Family Portraits – Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN – 3/7/2010

Title: “When Mom or Dad Gets Old”

Text: Ruth 2: 2-12

Theme: A testimony to the love of Christ at work within us is measured by the way we care for and respect the family which he has placed around us.

Intro.: *Illus.: Up – “My name is Russel”*

God’s plan and purpose in gathering us in families

- Companionship – God did not create us to be lone rangers and survivalists but put us in community
 1. *“It is not good for man to be alone.” Genesis 2:18*
 2. Sometimes in our busyness, we leave behind elderly in loneliness
 3. Being incarnational in Christ’s love by making time to be the touch of Christ
- Compassion — taking time to listen, you might actually hear the real need
 1. *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12*
 2. Where else can we know that despite our faults and weaknesses, we can receive God’s mercy in our need?
- Care — having more than good intentions and kind words – showing love
 1. **Illus.: The challenges of being the “Sandwich generation”**
 2. Learning to view an aging parent with the same eyes that the Heavenly Father view them and you
 - a. *“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! Isaiah 49:15*
 - b. *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Romans 15:1*

The story of Ruth and what God teaches us about care for family (Ruth 2:1-12)

- The context to Ruth’s story
 1. Naomi, her husband-Elimelech, and her two sons move to Moah – a godless nation – because of a famine
 2. They stay long enough that the two sons marry Ruth and Orpah but then all the men folk die and leave widows
 3. Naomi, an alien in a foreign land, decides to go back home to Bethlehem, and encourages Ruth to stay behind with her family so that she doesn’t experience the same fate in Israel
 4. Ruth, converted to God’s love, loves her mother as herself and pledges to go back and sacrifice self to care for her
- The characteristics of Christ-like-ness in the home as we care for and respect our elders
 1. Humbleness (*please let me go, vs. 2, 7*) – it is not about me, my agenda, my convenience
 2. Mercy worldview – caring for our dependent family is not about what they deserve but what they need (**vs. 2, 10**)
 - a. *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27*
 3. Actions speak as loud as your words in the way you care for your aging parents (**vs. 11, 12**)
 - a. **Illus.: Blaming God but doing nothing & Statistics don’t lie**
 - b. *Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:32*
 - c. Yet, moved by love and respect rather than rules or guilt because of how God blessed you through them.

Biblical direction for caring for our aging parents

- God’s commands to us are pretty simple, “**Love Me** by constantly **loving each other.**” (**1 Timothy 5:4**)
 1. Care for our elderly parents and grandparents in their need rises to the level of “**worship of God**” (**vs. 4**)
 - a. *‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Matthew 25:40*
 - b. **Illus.: I’ll let you know when you can stop**
 2. **Repaying** parents because know that God’s resource came to you through them and now comes thru you to them
- To the elderly in their neediness God commands them to be blameless (**1 Timothy 5:5-7**)
 1. Often in our needs we can become *ungracious* in our demanding and demeaning attitudes and words to care-givers
 2. God wants us all to be aware of how needy and dependant we, all, are on God’s care (**vs. 5**)
 - a. *And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*
- God says that before anyone else should provide for our elderly parents, we should (**1 Timothy 5:8**)
 1. God is clear about his intent and our action when he uses the words “**relatives**” and “**immediate family**”
 2. It is part of our transformational witness to Christ in our world with its “*every man for himself*” worldview
 3. *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15*

UP – “My name is Russel”

video clip demonstrating the pit falls of trying to help the elderly

Sandwich generation



If the term *Sandwich Generation* leaves you feeling hungry, you may not know about the new buzz surrounding a subset of caregivers nicknamed the “Sandwich Generation”. This colorful name refers to caregivers who find themselves squeezed between caring for younger loved ones (usually children) and elderly parents or family members. This may be nothing new, but these caregivers are becoming a rising interest within American society. Who are the Sandwich Generation? They are the nearly 10 million boomers that are now raising kids, teenagers or young adults while providing financial support for an aging parent. Usually they are between the ages of 35 and 55. These are Americans who, on an average day, can be found trying to round up lunch boxes while scheduling a doctor’s appointment for mom on the cell phone. They have special needs and unique questions such as “what do I do when my parent, who is living with me, undermines my authority with my child” or “should mom or dad move in with me?” **Who Are the Sandwich Generation?**
Posted on January 21st, 2008 by Tabitha Grace Smith

Blaming God but doing nothing

On my door there's a cartoon of two turtles. One says, "Sometimes I'd like to ask why he allows poverty, famine, and injustice when he could do something about it." The other turtle says, "I'm afraid God might ask me the same question." **Peter John Kreeft, quoted in Lee Strobel, The Case for Faith (Zondervan, 2001), p. 50**

Statistics Don't Lie

Percentage of Americans who think caring for elderly parents is an adult child's responsibility: 85

Who would consider asking elderly parents no longer able to live alone to move in with them: 85

Percentage of elderly who have never received financial help from their children: 79

Gallup poll, reported in Health, 10/93. "To Verify," Leadership.

Ruth 2:1-12

¹Naomi had a relative. He was from Elimelech's side of the family. He was a man of outstanding character named Boaz. ²Ruth, who was from Moab, said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field of anyone who will be kind to me. There I will gather the grain left behind by the reapers." Naomi told her, "Go, my daughter." ³So Ruth went. She entered a field and gathered the grain left behind by the reapers. Now it happened that she ended up in the part of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family. ⁴Just then, Boaz was coming from Bethlehem, and he said to his reapers, "May the LORD be with all of you!" They answered him, "May the LORD bless you!" ⁵Boaz asked the young man in charge of his reapers, "Who is this young woman?" ⁶The young man answered, "She's a young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." ⁷She said, 'Please let me gather grain. I will only gather among the bundles behind the reapers.' So she came here and has been on her feet from daybreak until now. She just sat down this minute in the shelter." ⁸Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go in any other field to gather grain, and don't even leave this one. Stay here with my young women. ⁹Watch where my men are reaping, and follow the young women in that field. I have ordered my young men not to touch you. When you're thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of the water that the young men have drawn." ¹⁰Ruth immediately bowed down to the ground and said to him, "Why are you so helpful? Why are you paying attention to me? I'm only a foreigner." ¹¹Boaz answered her, "People have told me about everything you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband died. They told me how you left your father and mother and the country where you were born. They also told me how you came to people that you didn't know before." ¹²May the LORD reward you for what you have done! May you receive a rich reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose protection you have come for shelter." [GW]

1 Timothy 5:4-8

⁴ But if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. ⁵ Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. ⁶ But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. [NASB]