

Text: Ephesians 6:1 – 3

Theme: Let Your Light Shine in Your Christian Home!

With his message from God's Word for us last week, Pastor Schultz finished our look at what is referred to as the "First Table" of the 10 Commandments. As we read our Savior's words from Matthew chapter 22 just a few moments ago, the "First Table" of God's Law says that you and I are to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." We are to make the one and only true God #1 in our lives. We are to give him the praise and glory he alone deserves as our only Savior-God. We look forward to times when we are able to gather around his Word here in his House and in our own homes. Today we begin our look at the "Second Table" of God's Law which Jesus summarized for us when he said in our Gospel Lesson for today, "Love your neighbor as yourself." As we continue our look at our Lord's 10 Commandments, remembering that you and I are lights in a sin-darkened world, each one of us hears the encouragement to let your light shine in your Christian home. I invite you to listen now to the Word of our God as it is recorded for us in the sixth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. If you would like to follow along, the reading is printed out for you in the Worship Folder. We read the first 3 verses of Ephesians chapter 6 where God's Word says to you and me:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Before we can talk about letting our light shine in the Christian Home, we first will want to remember the relationship we enjoy with our Father in heaven. Our God says that in order for anyone to hope to be part of his family, a person must obey his Law perfectly. Yet, God's Word tells us that from the time we were conceived in the womb of our mothers, we are sinners. The sinful nature inside each one of us shows itself as each day we sin against our Lord in our thoughts, our words and our actions. Because of our sinfulness, the only thing we can say that we deserve is to be punished for our sins, thrown into hell, and never have the hope of being part of the family of the Father in heaven. But, the Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ came in to this world for you and me. Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live. He suffered and died in our place. Three days later, our triumphant Savior rose again. Through the blood of Jesus Christ alone payment for all of our sins has been made in full. By the grace of God, we are given credit for the perfect life Jesus lived. We are now declared "Not Guilty" of our sins. Through Jesus Christ alone those who, by the grace of God, believe in Jesus as their only Savior from all sin, are part of God's family and are able to call him our loving Father.

Since we enjoy this special relationship with our Lord, and out of thankfulness for all that Jesus Christ has done for us, we desire to live our lives in a way that brings our God the praise and glory he alone deserves. Now specifically in the 4th Commandment, our Lord teaches you and me to honor, love and respect ALL those who are in positions of authority over us. But, because of our limited time today, we will focus on how this commandment applies in the Christian Home. God's Word to children begins this way, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." There is some question here as to where we should place the phrase "in the Lord". Is Paul referring to the parents, who have received the gift of children from the Lord? Or is he talking about children who are "in the Lord", that is, believers. Throughout this section, Paul is addressing believers, and offering guidelines to believers for their lives. So when taken with what is said in the verses surrounding this verse, perhaps it is best to see Paul as referring here to children who are believers, that is, children who are "in the Lord." Why will children "in the Lord" be willing to do what God's Word says here? Because they too are members of the family of the father in heaven. Jesus Christ died for their sins too. God the Holy Spirit has caused them to believe in Jesus Christ as their only Savior from sin. As believers in Jesus, children desire to live for their Savior. Paul also says that "this is right". It is the Lord's will that children follow the guidelines offered here in these verses before us.

What is the Lord's will for children? "Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' . . ." Children are to obey their parents. They are to realize that it is the Lord himself who has given parents authority over their children. To give parents honor means that children will do what God's Word says gladly and willingly, realizing this is his will for their lives. Parents, when children see that you take your role as God's representative in their lives seriously, when they see that you love them, are concerned about them, that you will do all you are able to in order to provide for them, protect them and guide them, all because you want what is best for your child, then to do what God's Word says here is something which your children will do in love for you and in love for their Savior.

Our Lord shows the importance of following his will in the 4th Commandment by attaching a promise "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." When this Commandment was first given, it was a promise to the children of Israel that they would enjoy a time of blessing in the Promised Land if they would obey this Commandment. But it is a promise for all Christian children as well. If children put in to practice the God-pleasing instruction and advice they receive from their parents, it will go well with them as they live out their days on this earth. But, and the question does need to be asked, what about the child who dies at a young age? Does this mean that the child did not obey the fourth commandment? No, rather it means that the Lord has made a wonderful, loving exception to his promise. For in Isaiah 57 we read these comforting words, "The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil." The promise to those whom the Lord calls home to his side at a young age is that they are rescued from all the evil things of this world.

So now, children of all ages, let me ask you the question: "How are you doing at letting your light shine in the Christian Home?" Are you giving your parents honor by obeying what they say? Each one of us will confess the many times we have failed to honor and obey our parents. But for those times we fail, the Good News is that Jesus Christ died for all our sins, and that through Jesus Christ alone we are all members of our heavenly Father's family. This will motivate us to live lives which do show obedience to our parents and giving them honor. This means we will listen to what our parents have to say to us and respect their opinions. Maybe they aren't happy with our grades in school, or the friends we are spending time with, or our attitude toward them or others in authority, at those times we will gladly and willingly sit down and talk with them. As they offer us instruction and encouragement based on the Word of God, we will not simply walk away thinking, "Mom and Dad just don't get it!" Rather we will hear what our parents have to say, remembering that they only want what is best for us, not only for our lives here on this earth but more importantly that they are concerned about our eternal life and our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" Has anyone ever asked you that question? How did you answer? Some children may answer that they want to be a doctor, or a policeman or a fireman. Let's ask the question in a little different way, "How might you serve your Lord when you grow up?" Some may answer by saying that they would like to be a Pastor in one of our churches or a Teacher in one of schools. But, how about serving your Lord right now by being an obedient child, who loves and respects their parents? How about honoring the Lord of the Home by honoring your parents. Dear children of our Father in heaven, with the help of God the Holy Spirit, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN HOME!