

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 23rd, 2018
Pastor Matthew Ude

Ephesians 6:1-9 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: ³ "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. ⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he* is a slave or free. ⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

The Lord Blesses Us Through Earthly Authority

"This is the first commandment with a promise." What does this mean?

Two weeks ago when we began our discussion of marriage, I said that was a hard saying. That was something that many don't want to hear. But what we have here is a far more difficult saying if we truly understand what Paul is talking about.

Paul is reminding us of here is that God is a god of order not chaos, authority not rebellion. "All authority is from God," all rebellion is from Satan.

Yet pretty much everything that characterizes American life is rebellion. We often disguise it with the word freedom or liberty but mostly what it truly is, is a rejection of God's order. The thing that sinful heart hates more than anything else is to be told that it must be subject to any other.

Yet scripture reminds us that the mind and heart of Christ is seen foremost in this that He was obedient to his Father. As Judas betrayed Him, He was obedient to His Father. As the Jews lied about Him He was obedient to His Father. As they whipped, as they drove the nails into His hands, He was obedient to His father. "He was obedient even unto death. Therefore God also has highly exalted him."

Almost without exception all the greatest of the Old Testament heroes went through this same pattern. They learned humility and obedience before God raised them into position of authority.

Moses knew that he was chosen by God to lead the people out of slavery, and when he was young he tried to do it the human way. He killed an Egyptian and thought to lead his people in

rebellion against Pharaoh. But this method was rejected by God. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness learning humility and obedience. Then the Lord brought him back. Did you ever stop to consider that the people did not leave Egypt until Pharaoh gave them permission? The Lord who turned the Nile to blood and smote the first born of Egypt certainly could have lead his people to victory over the armies Pharaoh. But our God is not a god of rebellion. Pharaoh had authority under God over the Israelites and the Lord worked through Pharaoh to release his people.

Joseph who we will discuss in bible class and Sunday school today, learned humility and obedience first as the servant of Potiphar and then in the prison, before the Lord raised him to a position of authority, second in all of Egypt.

David would not harm King Saul, even when Saul was hunting for David's life. David learned humility and obedience through suffering, then was raised up by the Lord as king.

And so many others, Jeremiah proclaimed:

Lam 3:27-30 NKJ ²⁷ *It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth.* ²⁸ *Let him sit alone and keep silent, Because God has laid it on him;* ²⁹ *Let him put his mouth in the dust-- There may yet be hope.* ³⁰ *Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him, And be full of reproach.*

This is one of the things that really strikes one about the life of Martin Luther. Martin was one whose life followed this same pattern. He learned early on humility and obedience to his father and to those who were in authority over him, the government and his superiors in the church. It is something that set him apart from the other reformers. He despised and hated every form of rebellion and spoke fervently against it.

He himself would not have left the Catholic Church except he had to preach the truth and they kicked him out. Even after that in the Lutheran confessions after speaking in length that the Pope is not the successor to Peter, go onto say that we would gladly return and submit ourselves to his authority for the sake of good order, if he would allow us to preach salvation by grace alone through faith.

One of the things that Luther is criticized the most for is the peasants' rebellion. The peasants rebelled against their lords and they claimed they were doing it in Luther's name. Luther tried at first to find a peaceful solution to the situation, but when the peasants refused to stop, Luther told the German princes to slaughter them.

Eph 6:1-3 NKJ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* ² *"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:* ³ *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*

This is the first thing that every child ought to learn, why? Because

1. This is right – this is the way of God
2. With promise – Earthly blessings come to us mainly through those whom the Lord has placed in authority over us. You may think that “I work hard and provide for myself.” But without the roads, without the power lines without the protections of the military and the police, without the laws and the courts, your hard work would mean nothing. I’m not an expert but I believe the government even does quite a bit to help make sure that the price of produce stays at a decent price.

Children learn obedience, not only is it good and right but those in authority are the primary vehicles through which the Lord will bless your life.

PARENTS – Do not provoke your children.

Here I quote from Wiersbe

“Fathers provoke their children and discourage them by saying one thing and doing another. By always blaming and never praising. By being inconsistent and unfair in discipline, and by showing favoritism in the home. Also by making promises and not keeping them, and by making light of problems that, to the children, are very important.” – *Be Rich*, Wiersbe page 154

Instead we are to “nuture.” The greek term here means to bear up in growth. So your tomato plant starts growing out under the wire of the cage and you carefully pick them up and put them over the wire so that it has the support that it needs to keep growing.

And admonish in the Lord. So yes we are to discipline, though we are to do this in a fair and loving manner. Never discipline in anger, never yell in anger, but only in love.

EMPLOYEES – serve your employer whole heartedly, with single mindedness of purpose. Why? Because in so doing you serve the LORD.

EMPLOYERS – “do the same thing to them” what does that mean? Just as they are to serve you whole heartedly with their labor, you are to serve them whole heartedly with your authority. Not seeking to pay them the lowest you can get away with, but giving them what is fair and right. Not demanding or threatening but encouraging in love.

Through all of this Jesus is our good and loving savior. He encourages and strengthens us. HE instructs and admonishes us so that we grow in love and faith. He does this with a loving and gentle hand. He knows our hearts of rebellion and forgives us. He is our dear shepherd and

father who showers grace and blessing upon us through his representatives and through his word, even though we deserve none of it.

Amen