

“Trusting the love”
Reflections on Children’s Sunday

May 18, 2008

Text: Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Luke 10:25-37

I.

In Luke 10, Jesus tells the famous Parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable is prompted by the question of a lawyer which is, in a sense, the question of every human being about the meaning of life:

What do I do to gain eternal life?

There are many versions of this question, of course, a question about the BIG PICTURE implications of our common life. Questions like, What do I do to realize God’s purposes? Or, What do I do to be the best person I can be ... the best spouse, the best parent?

Jesus’ answer is THE GREAT COMMANDMENT, which is itself the combination of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength ... and your neighbor as yourself.

II.

Clearly, for God and for Jesus, it’s all about the LOVE. But the love God calls us to in Jesus is a BIG love. It’s a BIG love because it’s a love rooted in personal sacrifice and suffering. Moreover, it’s a BIG love because it does what’s best, ultimately, for the other person.

God’s love for us is a BIG love. What God does is **God puts God’s self into us in loving and healthy ways**. God does this through Jesus—his life, death and resurrection. God does this also through the scriptures—the timeless story of God’s love for God’s people over the centuries. And lastly, God does this through us.

But again, the key: **God puts God’s self into us in loving and healthy ways**. And the point is, we’re supposed to do the same thing for one another, particularly our spouses and our children. I want to focus briefly on our children this morning.

The most authentically Christian way to raise our children is to **put ourselves into them in LOVING and HEALTHY ways ...** and then—GET THIS: **TRUST THE LOVE**. That’s the hard part. **Trusting the love**.

III.

Sounds simple, but this is the whole key of raising our children: again, to put ourselves into our children in loving and healthy ways ... and then trust the love. Trusting the love is the way we influence our children's response ... their behaviors.

Of course, putting ourselves into our children in loving and healthy ways is a huge thing. It asks everything of us as parents. When we put ourselves *in to* our sons and daughters, we're there for them. We're there for countless games and recitals. We're involved in the practice routines and schedules. As we are able, we interact with them and guide them through the ups and downs along the way.

Again, putting ourselves into our children in loving and healthy ways is an important point.

Why? Because as a consequence, our children will NOT want to disappoint us. And that's the key. They won't want to disappoint us. And that's how we influence their behaviors.

Let's think about our lives for a moment! Assuming we've had reasonably healthy childhoods, would any of us want to disappoint our parents? I have a ninety year-old father and I still would never want to disappoint him in any way.

For the most part, our children are the same towards us. They don't want to disappoint us. More than we ever realize as parents, our children look to us for guidance. They look to us as a means of developing their identity. More than they ever let on, they want us to be proud of them.

Again, the foundational key in all of this is to *trust the love*. Because you see, friends, at the end of the day, that's all there is.

And as Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 13**,

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Love never ends.

All praise be unto God! Amen!

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