



Date: Oct. 14 18 p.m.

Text: Psalm 128

Title: Thanksgiving for Families

Place: Cloverdale

This evening we are giving God thanks for families. The family unit is the amazing plan of God. Who is rich who has no family?

In funeral eulogies of the greatest and the most famous men and women the biggest compliment to be paid to him or her no matter what their other accomplishments have been, no matter what money or possessions they have is to say that **he was a good family man.** Without that there is so much missing.

I think that we too often take it for granted how God has ordained the family. We assume it and we enjoy so many blessings within our families, but do we ever really stop to think of what God has done in ordaining family.

Next year in the winter issue of Current we will have a book review on the classic book called **Home Making** by Dr. Russell Miller, who entered heaven in 1912. It is a sweet and tenderhearted treatment of the Christian Home. In the introduction he gives this analogy of homes to hills receiving the benefits of rain:

“The Benediction that falls upon the homes of a country is like the gentle rain that descends among the hills.

A thousand springs are fuller afterward, and along the banks of a thousand streamlets flowing through the valley the grass is greener and the flowers pour out richer fragrance.

Homes are springs among the hills, whose many streamlets, uniting, form, like great rivers, society, the community, the nation, the Church.

If the springs run low the rivers waste; if they pour out bounteous currents the rivers are full. If the springs are pure the rivers are clear like crystal; if they are foul the rivers are defiled. A curse upon homes sends a poisoning blight

everywhere; a blessing sends healing and new life into every channel.

Homes are the divinely ordained fountains of life. It is not by accident that men live in families rather than solitarily.

The human race began in a family, and Eden was a home. The divine blessing has ever rested upon nations and communities just in the measure in which they have adhered to these original institutions and have kept marriage and the home pure and holy; and blight and curse have come just in the measure in which they have departed from these divine models, dishonoring marriage and tearing down the sacred walls of home.”

“Back of the home lies marriage.

We can therefore say that God is the God of families.

This Psalm 128 takes stock of the family man – v3 & v6.

- As Creator
- By populating the whole world from one family.
- By the patriarchs who became heads of such significant families in history.
- By governing society through households

In these times when the family is threatened by neglect and by rebellion to God’s order in society we need to renew our appreciation of the family.

- **4 in 10 marriages end in divorce**
- **Marriages ending in divorce last on average 13.7 years**
- **Living common law in Canada has grown**
- **Common law unions that break up (similar rate as marriages) last an average of 4.3 years.**

If the family ends, so will society as we know it. Indeed, we would argue that society will cease to function at all and misery, loneliness, disease, bitterness, harshness will become the lot of nations.

Family is ordained by God for protection, peace, love and contentment even in this fallen world.

We want to look at this in just a few areas:

1. THE FAMILY IS GOD'S PLAN FOR COMPANIONSHIP

We learned that God said in Genesis in the creation week, **“It is not good for man to be alone.”**

God created man a social being. – For God and for fellow man

God gave the gift of speech to facilitate social life and friendship.

The ability to love and to be loved.

Loneliness is a great problem in this sinful world.

Statistics show that more and more people live alone than ever before in the history of the western world.

- Young people go off from their families and end up living alone.
- Marriages break up - it leads to dysfunction and deep depression.

Depression in the western world is at an all time high.***

The Christian home, marriage and family are God's plan

Wives often complain, ‘My husband is not home enough.’ Their complaint is often justified. But still, they might not be at peace if their husband was at home most of the time and only gone a little.

But be thankful that they do come home. Yes, they work long hours, they have interests outside the home, but they do come home. There are widows who have no husband at all.

My mother was widowed at age 42. There was a day that my dad never came home to us. He came home in a casket.***

Since then my mother has endured 45 years of widowhood.

Pray that you never have to endure that.

That is why the Bible has a very special call to remember widows.***

Companionship is blessed: Troubles are shared. The joy of a good talk.

To know someone with the confidence that you can know each other thinking is very special. It is seldom found outside families.

Men, this is not an excuse for not talking, because your wife knows you thinking.

When we come to the need for communication in marriage we will emphasise that this is needful. To shut your wife out of your life, or to have no time for that special one-to-one talk is to undermine the whole blessing of marriage.

We should give thanks here this evening for the blessing of a companion in life.

Riches, fame, and accomplishments in this world can never replace that amazing bond which develops between a husband and his wife.

It is building on the foundation that “two shall be one”. They are one flesh, one family unit, one complete building block in society.

We do well therefore to give thanks to the Lord for our families. Young people too you are blessed to be born into a loving, wholesome, and I trust a happy family unit. This is God’s gift.

2. THE FAMILY IS GOD’S PLAN FOR CHILDREN

God’s plan was to populate the whole world from one set of parents.

But just think about how amazing it is that from two parents come forth a whole new human being.

Stop to think that each one of us here in this meeting exists as the product of a husband and wife – our father and mother. We came forth from our mother’s womb.

Ecclesiastes asked, How are the bones formed in the womb?

To this day, Scientists are trying to discover how male chromosomes and female chromosomes combine to carry all the DNA (the biological blueprint material) to form a new human life.

Then there is an even greater wonder which calls the theologians into debate:

How is the soul created in the conception of a child? A soul that will outlive this world and live for all eternity as long as God Himself shall live – eternally.

This is the work of God. See Ps. 128, 3& 4 also Ps. 127:3.

As parents, you are entrusted with the care, training, and preparation of a life that is to be steered to live for God’s glory.****

[This will require some separate messages]

What is the value of a child? More than all material things we possess.

When a child is sick and nigh to death some parents are willing to sell everything they possess to pay for the medical care required.***

The value of children continues throughout life as grandparents - we are further blessed to see them blessed See **Psalm 128:5 & 6.** “the Lord shall bless thee out of Zion...”

3. THE FAMILY IS GOD’S PLAN FOR CONVERSION

God is pleased to work in families. The promise is unto you and to your children Peter said in **Acts 2:39.**

[1] **First, we should thank God for a converted spouse – husband or wife.** The Bible addresses some in the N.T. who did not have saved spouses. **1Peter 3:1-6. and 1Cor. 7:13-16.** Peter addresses the issues of living with an unsaved husband in meekness that the husband may be converted.

These people would have heard the gospel and come to Christ after marriage.

- **The marriage bond did not change.**

It is a tough thing for a wife to live the Christian life while her husband is in opposition to the gospel.

A wife may not be allowed to read the Bible in her husband’s presence or read the Bible at all to the children.

A wife may want to go to a Bible preaching church, while her husband is troubled by it and won’t go with her, and so discourages her from going.

It can be the cause of great grief and hardship.

Never take it for granted if your husband or wife is saved and walking in the Lord. That is God’s great blessing to you.

Your wife or husband may not be the Christian he or she ought to be, but thank God for even a spark of grace. C.H.S.

See **1Cor 1:4** - . **** Even though there were problems with people at Corinth – it was a problem church with problem people. Still the apostle praised God for the grace of God in each of them.

The wonderful thing is that it so often pleases God to save both husband and wife.***

For God to convert children in the family. It is sovereign mercy.

Salvation is a miracle and we must not take it for granted that if Mom and Dad are saved and walking with the Lord then children will too. Salvation is by grace not by race.***

The Lord has given us promises that He will save the children of believing parents:

Is. 54:13; Is 59:21.***

Conc: This makes it a great thing to be a Christian and to be striving to set up a Christian home.

Missionaries have gone to cultures where family life was filled with brutality. Men made slaves out of their women, children were no more than chattels to be traded for a horse or for food.

Two hundred years ago among Native Peoples in North America - if a wife did not please her husband he could banish her, or even sell her. She was property, not loved for her own sake.

The gospel has brought the great blessing of the true meaning to the family. Secularism, Atheism abandons what God has ordained and returns to misery and ruin.

There is nothing more glorifying to God on earth than a Christian family where every member is living to His honour. A home as that of Joshua, *“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”*

Conc: In these times when the Christian home is under attack we must do all in our power to demonstrate the grace of God in our homes.

- **We need to guard our marriages.** - The worst thing that can happen in your life is for your marriage to fail Financially, emotionally and spiritually. – so invest in it.

Do not take the health and stability of your marriage for granted. The devil would ruin it. When two sinners unite in marriage there are many issues.

Our author Russel miller likened it to two rivers converging into one wider river. At first there will be fast and conflicting currents, but along the way the rush of water will settle to a steady flow in a wider deeper and quieter way.

- **We need to stand for God’s plan for godly homes.**
- **We need to pray that our society be brought back to God’s holy ordinance of marriage,** as the basis of family life and life in our society.

Next week we will deal with duties of such a home.