

Sermon for August 31, 2008

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: Ephesians 6:1-9

Title: "Honor"

Introduction: I remember when I was a kid living at home that things changed when both my parents left the house. I'm sure you all never did this, but it was like if my parents left the house then their rules no longer applied. It didn't matter if there was a babysitter because you could always convince them, true or not: "My Mommy lets me."

You all never did that? Well, when we got older and into high school, we would go over to friend's houses or go out to a movie or something, but there was still one rule that applied: No matter what time we got home, we had to let Mom know we were there safely. That's all she asked for, "I just want to know that you are home safe."

Well, you can imagine how many times we, I mean, my sister tried to get away with stuff. There was one night that she came home way after curfew and I knew that she would pull something with Mom like, "Oh, mom, don't you remember me coming in last night? I said goodnight to you..." Right! She had recently got me into trouble for something, so I decided to make sure she did not get away with it.

The upstairs of our house at that time had two bedrooms and a bathroom. My sister had one bedroom and I had the other. So, of course she had to come up the stairs. I knew she would not turn a light on for fear of waking our parents, so I just laid down on the landing at the top of the stairs. As soon as she put her foot on the top step, I grabbed her ankle. Needless to say, I did not have to do anything else.

You know, we have that tendency. We like to see what we can get away with when people are not looking!

Remember that Paul is encouraging the church in Ephesus to be all that they can be. As we get into the last chapter of his Letter to the Ephesians, we find that he is continuing to challenge people to live their **WHOLE** lives for Christ ... whether it is in our marital relationships or families or at the workplace ... we need to live this life for Christ! We need to each live for Christ in everything. Only then will we be **ONE BODY** under the **HEADSHIP** of Christ!

At this time I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will find our Scripture for today. On the other you will find a brief outline of where we are going with today's scripture, complete with fill-in-the-blanks. My hope is that you will hear something or see something on our screens that will help in your personal faith journey or help you help someone else in their faith journey.

Last week, we heard Paul addressing married couples and how God wants us to be in that relationship. If you missed it or any of the messages in our series called, 'ONE', please find them on our website at [www.bmzchurch.org](http://www.bmzchurch.org).

Anyway, Paul was teaching couples how to submit to one another. Wives submit / respect / obey your husbands. Husbands, love your wives like Christ loved the Church ... He gave His life for her. Husbands, be leaders in the health of your relationship with your wives and always put their happiness as your 2<sup>nd</sup> priority. Your relationship with God comes 1<sup>st</sup>, then the happiness of your wife ... **THEN**, work and friends and hunting and fishing and kids, etc.

Let's start the last Chapter of the Letter to the Ephesians:

## READ EPHESIANS 6:1-9 NOW AND PRAY!

Again, Paul wants for the Church in Ephesus to live up to their potential as they serve the Kingdom of God. In order to do that the individuals need to conduct themselves the way God created them to conduct themselves. This means in our families and in our workplaces.

Last week it was marriage relationships. This week we start with our parent/child relationships. “Children, obey your parents ... ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

As I parent these days, I realize that things in our world have changed, but there are some things that should not change ... listen: (*Read “Different drug problem...”*)

### I. Children – Three Reasons They Should Obey Their Parents

#### A. They are Christians

1. Children obey their parents because life is not about them. We are to submit ourselves to the Lord ... that means all of us (kids too!).
2. This is how family works so there is harmony and ONENess in the home:
  - a. The wife submits to the husband “as you do to the Lord”. (5:22)
  - b. The husband loves his wife “with the same love Christ showed the church.” (5:25)
  - c. And the children “obey your parents because you belong to the Lord.” (6:1)

#### B. Obedience is Right

1. There is an order to things that God creates that makes an action right.
  - a. The parents brought the children into the world.
  - b. The parents have more experience than the children.
  - c. The parents have more wisdom than the children.
  - d. The parents have more knowledge than the children.
  - e. And most parents pay for their children. (“Can I have some money?”)
  - f. It is RIGHT that children obey their parents!
2. Today, it seems like this has been changed to, “Parents, obey your children and make sure they get whatever they want because this will make them happy and bring peace to your home.” BUT, I’m not sure that agrees with Who God is!

#### C. Obedience is Commanded

1. 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment = “Honor your father and mother as the Lord your God commanded you.” (Deut. 5:16a)
2. God said do it. That should be good enough for all of us!
3. “Honor” means more than simple obedience, by the way.

- a. Honor means to show respect and love.
- b. Honor means to bring ‘Honor’ to your parents by the way you live.
- c. Honor means that you make the family name respectable by the way you conduct yourself in speech and action!

## II. Fathers (Parents) – Three Responsibilities Toward Children

### A. Don’t “Anger” Them (6:4a)

1. Please note that I put quotes around the word “ANGER”. The reason I did this is because when we bring our children up to respect their Dad and Mom and we expect them to live their lives as God wants them to, they Will Be Angry at times! That’s not what Paul is talking about...
2. Another translation of this is to *provoke*, *aggravate* or *irritate* your children. Which I don’t like, because I think I’m very good at irritating my children!!
3. But in this instance, Paul is saying to *provoke* your children is to seriously tear them down as people ... to discourage them in their lives.
4. It is NOT our job as parents to make sure our children feel inferior to us ... just less experienced.
5. We are to pass down wisdom, knowledge and experience and encourage them to keep getting better at the things they do and to continue to grow in their faith in Christ!
6. So, don’t “Anger” them; ENCOURAGE them.

### B. Must Discipline Them

1. There are schools of thought that say that we should not discipline our children because it will “warp their characters”. Or, we will stunt their creativity and thought.
2. What Paul says here (heavy paraphrase) is that if your children decide that it’s okay to talk back to adults (any adults, including their parents) in a sassy voice, it would be good to have them “drug to the woodshed” to make some adjustments and that that will build strong character!
3. Please understand that discipline does not equal abuse. We must, Fathers, discipline out of love and not anger.
4. Our discipline must be as fair and consistent as possible so our kids don’t have to wonder what the consequences will be when they get caught. Our children need to know what’s coming!

### C. Must Instruct / Encourage Them

1. We, as parents, not only use actions to teach our children, but we use our words as well.
  - a. This seems like common sense to most of us, but not all of us.
  - b. Too many parents think their children ought to know certain things without being told.
  - c. Not all children learn that way!
2. Now, I understand that our kids don't always appreciate what we have to teach them, but that does not take away our obligation to do so anyway.
3. Please parents, let your instruction be based on Scripture and what you know as followers of Jesus Christ.
4. Home is where children ought to learn about what it means to live the life of a Real Follower of Jesus Christ.
5. One of my parents meetings as a Youth Director I had parents who were upset because they didn't think that their kids were learning enough about living like Christ in Youth Group. My response: "I have them maybe two hours a week. What I do is a supplement to what you are already teaching them at home." End of meeting!

### III. Slaves / Employees – Two Reasons to be Obedient

Please understand that in the Roman Empire in Paul's time there were probably 6 million slaves. Slavery was accepted as part of society. Paul's ministry really did not have to do with overthrowing the Roman government, but to preach the Gospel and win souls for Jesus Christ. So, Paul was encouraging those Christians in Ephesus who held servant positions. Today, we would do the same type of encouragement to "employees".

#### A. *Really Serving Christ*

1. When we work we are really serving Christ; not the company or the boss.
  - a. As a follower of Christ, our chance to witness to other people is a hard day's work ... not slacking off!
  - b. We get a chance to model the Kingdom of God to others by the way we conduct ourselves when the "boss" is not around.
  - c. Do we live life understanding that God is always there and watching what we do and listening to what we say and think? There is no "down time" as a follower of Jesus.
2. Others need to see that there is a consistency to us followers in all aspects of our lives. Work is important. It shows our integrity.

- B. ***It's the Will of God*** – a 2<sup>nd</sup> reason to be obedient as an employee is that it is the Will of God!
1. We are to have a “right attitude” in everything we do as Christians.
  2. Any task we do can be to the “Glory of God”. Everything we do is a reflection of Who we Honor.
  3. Ask yourself after your day at work, “Was God honored by what I just accomplished? Would I have lived out those 8 hours that way if Jesus was hanging next to me?”

#### IV. Masters / Bosses – Four Responsibilities Toward Workers

If you are in a leadership position in your workplace, you have even more of a responsibility ... not just to the company you work for, but to Christ. As a Christian employer or manager, you have responsibilities to your workers:

- A. Do Your Best for Them
1. “Treat your (employees) right”. (6:9)
  2. If you don't serve the Lord from your heart in the workplace, how could you expect your workers to do the same?
  3. Don't act one way on Sunday and another on Monday and expect the people you work with (especially those under your care) to have any desire to get to know Jesus!
  4. I would hate to hear the phrase, “My boss is supposed to be a Christian, but you'd never know it!”
- B. Do Not Threaten
1. Roman masters could lawfully beat or kill a slave that was out of line.
  2. Instead of threatening employees with negative consequences (which could cause them to work less hard), set a good example and encourage your employees...
  3. “One Minute Manager” = give encouragement every chance you get ... catch them doing something good!
- C. Do Submit to the Lord
1. “You both have the same Master in heaven...” Be careful how you treat other people, whether they are “under” you or not, because we are all God's children!
  2. Jesus said the way to be a ruler was to first be a SERVANT (Matt. 25:21). All good leaders have 1<sup>st</sup> shown that they can be good servants/workers/peons.
  3. Show those you are leading who your Leader is by your actions. Let them know without saying it that you Submit to the Lord!
- D. Do Not Play Favorites

1. A Christian employer or manager or leader cannot play favorites with those under her/his authority.
2. God doesn't play favorites. God judges each of us according to our obedience and disobedience of God and nothing else. It has nothing to do with our looks or our family name or our political power or our economic status.
3. We should be the same!

Next Week: Put on your armor ... it's time to fight!

Let's Pray!