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Series: The Family Works

Message: Part 2 Raising Kingdom Kids

Key Verse: Proverbs 22:6

For those you who are new or visiting Christ's Church today... I am Pastor Chad, I am the Children's Pastor and it's my turn to speak during this series we call "The Family Works".

Welcome to our home. I love what they did with the stage up here. All we are missing is a giant recliner with a huge flat panel with the game on.

This entire series is all about families. Last week Pastor Don spoke about marriages. Today I'm going to be talking about "raising kids". Next week Pastor Jared will be speaking about teens and the following week Pastor Gary will be speaking about Golden Years. Right away some of you may be saying to yourself... we're talking about kids... I don't have any kids or my kids are grown and gone. Why would I need to listen to a message about raising kids? I can assure you everything you are going to hear today apply to everyone not just children.

If you have been here a while and you've seen me speak in the past you know I typically start my messages off with a little humor. When you are speaking about kids... on thing is for sure... it's not very hard to find a good story involving a child.

Little Timothy, got to stay with his aunt and uncle for the night. Timmy's aunt thought it would be a good idea to make cupcakes with Timmy. After they had baked the cupcakes Timmy's aunt allow Timmy to put icing on all the cupcakes.

After he finished icing the cupcakes, he was so excited to take a plate of cupcakes to his uncle in the living room. His uncle looks at them and says "These cupcakes look delicious, Tim," so he took a big bite and then said "Timmy these are so good."

His uncle quickly finished off the first cupcake and took a big bit of next one. Again he complimented his little nephew. "Tim, These cupcakes look beautiful," his uncle said. "How did you get them iced so evenly?"

And little Timmy look at him and said very bluntly, "I licked 'em."

Proverbs 22:6 states...

⁶ Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

What is it we are supposed to “train” or teach our children? When looking at teaching children you have to look at it as a long term project. It doesn’t end once your child is grown and begins their own life. A good parent is always looking out for their children no matter how young or old they are... it is a lifetime event to raise children. Whether we have children of our own or not, the fact is we all have an impact on children. Trust me even if you don’t have kids they are watching everyone around them and learning. Children are like little sponges taking in everything they see and hear.

Last week my son and I worked on his “castle project”. If you have a 6th grader in your family you KNOW what I am talking about. Each child had to research their assigned castle and then build a model of the castle. His project was on the Malbork Castle which is located in Poland. It is the largest brick castle in the entire world. The castle took nearly 300 years to build.

Know if you know anything about construction. Anything that takes over 300 years to build is going to need a SOLID foundation. The same principle holds true with our children. Our children must have a solid foundation.

1. The foundation of Jesus Christ is critical.

Jesus himself said in...

Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶“Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Jesus is very clear in telling us WE MUST build our entire foundation on solid rock and that solid rock is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The very first commandment of the Ten Commandments states...

Exodus 20:3

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

We are to put God first in our lives. Everything else is secondary. God is to be our foundation. It is from his teachings that we are to build from. His teachings teach us things like, love, compassion, kindness, goodness, gentleness, honesty and most importantly “to do good works” he created us specifically for this purpose.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

What kind of children are we raising if we don't instill these truths and values from the very beginning? What kind of foundation are we building upon? Is it rock solid? Or built on sand?

This foundation will shape their entire lives... it will shape their behaviors... it will shape who they will choose as friends... how they will treat others... it will affect how they perform in their career... it will affect EVERY ASPECT of their lives. The foundation is critical... without a solid foundation... everything we try to teach our children will not have the same impact as a child who has a solid foundation in Christ.

Luke 10:15

¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

What childlike (not "childish") characteristics is Jesus speaking about?

A child possesses a simplicity of faith; a wonderful ability to trust and act on that trust. Because those of us who are older have been lied to, manipulated, and taken for granted at times and because of this we have learned to doubt and be skeptical.

A child will willingly receive a gift, without thinking there has to be strings attached. As adults the more and more we have been lied to the harder it is to believe there is really such a thing as a "something for nothing" gift.

According to a survey conducted by the Nazarene Church Growth Research shows that 85% of Americans accepted Christ by the age of 14. After that, the chances of someone accepting Christ drop drastically. Only 4% of those who accepted Christ did it after the age of 30.

You can see the older you get the more you are hardened by the lies.

The sooner you start building this foundation the better because the longer you wait the harder it is to build a solid foundation.

2. Understand each child God creates is unique.

Let's look at the first half of the verse in

Proverbs 22:6

⁶Train a child in the way he should go,

At first glance when we look at this verse it appears to be pretty straight forward. “Train a child in the way he should go”. In other words train the child in the Lord. But it doesn’t specifically say “train a child in the Lord”. I think it is implied that we should train our children in the Lord but it does say “in the way he should go”.

As I dug a little deeper into this verse I ran across the Amplified Bible version of this verse. It states...

Proverbs 22:6

⁶Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent],

As parents many times we want our children to become what we have envisioned. As a boy living in Oklahoma pretty much every dad envisions their son becoming a star player for the University of Oklahoma. Now I know that might sound a little strange to some of you... but there is not much else going on in Oklahoma. As a kid my favorite part of growing up was getting all of my friends in the backyard as we imagined playing football for Oklahoma. If backyard National Championships counted OU would have at least 200 more national championships just out of my backyard alone.

Sometimes we focus so hard on trying to make our children what we want them to be we lose sight on making them what God wants them to be. We actually get them off track from what God’s plans are for our children which only makes it harder for them to discover what God’s plan is for them.

When my first son Cole was born of course I already had plans of him being a star football player. Apparently, God has other plans for him. Before he could even walk he has a sense of rhythm. We had this little bouncy chair he would sit in and within seconds of us putting him in the chair he would start kicking his leg back and forth in perfect rhythm which in turn would get his chair to bounce up and down. He would sit there for hours with a big huge smile on his face just bouncing away.

When he was probably about one. We had the music turned up loud in our house and I walk into the living room the there he is stomping his feet back and forth to the beat of the song. I even have video of it but he would probably kill me if I showed it here at church.

Something about the beat of music has always stirred his soul. Apparently, God thought I was not paying attention about Cole’s gift and over the last couple of years Cole would pound on just about anything with his hands every time music was playing. To be honest... I was really

getting annoyed but I think God was getting annoyed with me too because I wasn't getting it. He defiantly has given Cole a gift and we are finally working together to develop this gift through drumming. Where the gift will lead him... I don't know... but I am excited about the journey.

God creates each one of us unique. There is no exact copy of us anywhere. At Promiseland Christian Preschool there is a set of identical triplet girls who attend the school. To me, on the outside they appear be exact copies. Only the trained eye of the parents can easily tell them apart. I was able to spend some time with them this last week and one thing is for sure God created each one of them unique. They may look the same but they definitely have different personalities.

1 Samuel 16:7b

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God's concern is not our outward appearance. God is more concerned about the work he does within us. That is where makes us unique and special.

As parents we have our own unique gifts and we typically want our children to be like us. Maybe God has created your child with similar gifts. Just don't let your idea of what your child's gift should be get in the way of the gifts God has given to your child. It is our job a parents to help them discover their gift and grow it in a way that serves the Lord.

The apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 10:31

³¹So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Other translations of this verse in Proverbs support this notion of training our children according to their gifts.

Proverbs 22:6

⁶Train up the child according to the tenor of his way,

(Darby Translation)

⁶Give instruction to a youth about his way,

(Young's Literal Translation)

3. Children are very important to Jesus.

In the book Matthew we can read just how serious Jesus is about children.

Matthew 18:1-6; 12-14

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

²He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. ⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Now Jesus is not saying he is going around drowning people. He is firmly making the point that children are VERY important to Him.

He says "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." Jesus tell us specifically when we welcome children in his name... it's the same as welcoming him in our own lives.

When we slide to verses 12-14 it reads...

Matthew 18:1-6; 12-14

¹²"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost."

God is very concerned about our children. He understands how important it is to build a solid foundation from the beginning so when they grow older they will be prepared to not fall victim to the ways of the world.

In the book of Mark we can recount how Jesus reacted to the disciples trying to turn away people who were bringing children to him. I believe their motives were sincere. They may have been trying to help Jesus conserve time and strength. They made the tragic mistake of concluding that the needs of children weren't that important.

This is how it is described in the book of

Mark 10:13-16

¹³People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

It says he was "indignant". As defined by dictionary.com. Indignant is a feeling, characterized by, or expressing strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive or insulting.

Jesus wanted to make clear to the disciple that children were very valuable to him.

The Bible portrays children as a blessing, not a burden.

Psalm 127:3

³ Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.

Like Jesus, we should invest time in our children by being involved with them, letting them know how much we love them and how much God loves them.

Children are very valuable to Jesus. Don't overlook them. Jesus was very particular in making this point.

Intro for Promiseland

Christ's Church has always had the vision of ministering to the families in our community. This week Pastor Don came into my office to drop off the copy for one of the first ads he had written for *The Times* newspaper once they moved the new building here on Bainbridge. This ad would have run in the paper in early 1991, almost 20 years ago.

It reads:

WHO CARES ABOUT YOUR FAMILY?

WE CARE!!

At Christ's Church of Fountain Hills we have exciting children's programs and dynamic youth activities. We believe in families! Ours is a church that kids WANT to go to. Children and teens enjoy lots of fun activities and events and relevant, interesting Bible lessons and devotionals. Parents have a great time here, too! Our worship service includes contemporary music and practical, interesting messages.

We love visitors!

The rest of it was just the basic contact information about the church. Isn't amazing that God's vision for this church after all this year's is still exactly the same. It just goes to show Christ's Church is serving God's will.

For over 10 years Promiseland Christian Preschool has shared this same vision of sharing the love of Christ by serving families within our community. Even as the church that originally started Promiseland began to struggle their ministry grew and flourished. This last year the church they were associated with closed their doors and just a few months ago Promiseland learned that the building they have been blessed with for the last ten years would no longer be available after the end of the school year. They were faced with a tough decision to either close the ministry at the end of the school year or find a new home.

Immediately, God began sending his little messengers to me suggesting we should looking into seeing if there was anything Christ's Church could do to help. To be honest, my initial response was "we've got too much going on already". But God knows me pretty well, just like when he decided to have my son pound on everything around him just so I would get the message. Only this time, He kept pounding me with people asking if there is something Christ's Church could do. So after one of our weekly staff meeting I clearly got the message and began working.

So I contact Carri the Director of Promiseland and we began to talk about the idea of Promiseland becoming a ministry of Christ's Church. I know she two would attest to the fact that we both a little skeptical about the whole idea. Immediately, God began opening doors and bringing people in who could help. And for just over a month did a thorough analysis of the feasibility and possibility of Promiseland becoming a ministry of Christ's Church. Within that month God assembled and amazing team of individuals. Two of them don't even go to our church and don't even have children but they were so moved by God's will for this ministry they have volunteered their amazing gifts to see this happen.

Now some of you who have been here a long time may be thinking. We already had a Preschool one. Been there, done that. Let me share a true story about a family who's children attended our preschool and I'll let you determine if the preschool was a success or not. This is the story as I have heard it.

About 8 years ago, there was a young family living in Fountain Hills who were dealing with a lot of issues and had decided it was time to get back to church. They were searching for answers about what was happening in their life. So they went to four or five churches around town and just never felt comfortable anywhere. In fact they were about ready to give up on the whole "get back to church" idea. They decided they would go to the church where their children had gone to preschool. As the father recalls, by this time the preschool here at Christ's Church either no longer existed or it was pretty close to the end.

So they got up on Sunday and headed off to "try" one more church. They dropped the kids off at Sunday School and headed up to this very room. They sat somewhere toward not really wanting to be noticed. As they looked around they noticed there were really a bunch of "old" people here there really weren't many young families. So they were a little apprehensive off the bat. The Father stated to his wife after the praise band was done, "that was horrible" he had never heard Christian music like that before. Of course, his wife liked the music they didn't agree on too much back then.

But something started to change immediately. Pastor Don began to deliver his weekly message and they were completely captivated by what he was talking about. To this day they don't even remember what the message was about specifically but they remember they kept pinching each other because everything that Don was speaking about was related to what they were experiencing in life. After the message the wife said to her husband, "It's like they bugged our house and know everything that is going on in our lives." For weeks the messages were "dead on" with what they were experiencing in their lives. They knew that God wanted them here at Christ's Church.

His wife on MANY occasions has told me about how blessed their marriage and family have become since joining Christ's Church. Even for her husband he could have never imagined IN A MILLION YEARS what God had planned for him.

That husband is here today in this very room, sitting in front of you as the Children's Pastor of this church.

Didn't see that coming did you? So I ask, do you believe in the power of God? A preschool not only changes the lives of children but it changes the lives of entire families.

Two weeks ago today, a team of individuals presented a plan to add Promiseland Christian Preschool as a ministry of Christ's Church of Fountain Hills to the Board of Elders. And as many of you know by the letter sent out this week or by reading it in the paper, the board voted unanimously to add Promiseland Christian Preschool as a ministry of Christ's Church.

I am going to ask the staff of Promiseland and the Elders of Christ's Church to come before you today so we dedicate this new ministry and as a Body of Christ make a commitment to support this ministry the same way we commit to supporting the families within our community.

Dedication of Promiseland

Introduce each staff member.

When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was just a few weeks old, a tiny baby, Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple to be presented to God. It was in that Temple that our Lord was BLESSED by a great and good man named Simeon.

In his own ministry, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Would the staff of Promiseland please turn and face me. Today, in this house of God, you are presenting the ministry of Promiseland Christian Preschool as you give thanks to God for the rich blessings he has blessed this ministry with over the last 10 years.

You are also dedicating yourself, as a member of this ministry, will you make promise to God that you will continue fully dedicate the gifts that He has bestowed upon for the purpose of this ministry? Will you to continue to faithfully serve the children and families of Promiseland and continue to seek and follow His will for this ministry? Will you continue to share the message of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his undenying love? If so, please respond with, "we will".

Will you please face the congregation.

Congregation will you please stand:

As a the body of Christ, and as you come before God, will you by your prayers and life, be a positive example of Christian living and will you encourage and support this new ministry and it staff to the commitments they have made on this day? If so, please respond with, "we will".

Before we go into communion and then the offering, I am going to now ask the Board of Elder to lay hands on the staff of Promiseland and pray.
