

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“I am a Christian solely and entirely because of the grace of God and not because of anything that I have thought or said or done. He brought me to know that I was dead, ‘dead in trespasses and sins’, a slave to the world, and the flesh, and the devil, that in me ‘dwelleth no good thing’, and that I was under the wrath of God and heading for eternal punishment.

He brought me to see that the real cause of all my troubles and ills, and that of all men, was an evil and fallen nature which hated God and loved sin. My trouble was not only that I did things that were wrong, but that I myself was wrong at the very center of my being.”

[Martyn Lloyd-Jones testimony to Iain Murray, p. 64, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The First Forty Years, 1899-1939, Banner of Truth]

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

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Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

Will There be a Next Generation?

May 18th, 2025

Sermon Text: Ephesians 5:17-6:4

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6

The Lord Jesus Christ will always build His church. The gates of hell will never stop this. Christ always

has His remnant, His elect. Elijah thought he was the only one left, and yet 7,000 had been preserved by the Lord. God’s true church is not only a remnant, but typically it is *scattered*. Persecution, false shepherds who do not feed the flock – all of these factors and more work to scatter Christ’s people.

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that

day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (Acts 8:1)

We have seen this in our own small flock here. Christ's people who hear His Word and love His church are scattered around this nation and even around the world. But Christ builds His Church.

Now, this morning I would like to call your attention to Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, particularly these words which concern one of the chief ways Christ builds His church. Follow along as I read from the 5th chapter beginning at verse 17 and on into chapter 6 –

Ephesians 5:17-33 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (18) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, (19) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your

heart, (20) giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

(22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

(25) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (28) In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does

the church, (30) because we are members of his body.

(31) “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (32) This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (33) However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), (3) “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

You Must be Born Again

When Christ’s people obey His Word, when marriages and families are functioning as Paul here instructs us, *then one of the*

chief ways in which Christ builds His church is that the next generation will arise and fill the ranks in the body of Christ, the church. It is not fail-safe. Godly parents certainly can have an ungodly child. Nevertheless, one chief way the Lord builds His church is through Godly parents and grandparents raising up children in the Lord, passing on that baton of the gospel and true faith in Christ.

Largely, this has not happened in this church. Where is the next generation? Thankfully there have been a few exceptions, but the large majority of the next generation – children who grew up in this church – are in the world, not born again, not following Christ. Why? I can tell you. It is because the parents were like the Israelites in the wilderness, they hardened their hearts against the Lord and against His commandments. Christ was not present in their families. The parents led their children right down Broadway.

Now, this morning it is not my purpose to discourage anyone, but

to bring the truth of God's life-giving Word to bear upon this vital subject so that we as parents and grandparents and even great grandparents do not follow that same path to destruction, but rather to lead the next generation and the next and the next to the Narrow Way which is Christ and which leads to life.

Now, let's begin at the beginning:

(18) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

We have studied this passage in detail in the mid-week Bible study through Ephesians, and we have noted that before Paul begins his instruction about marriage, husbands and wives, children – families if you will – he prefaces it all with *but be filled with the Spirit*.

Some years ago I preached a series of sermons on the family. I focused on raising up Godly children, and the first sermon in that series was *You Must be Born Again*. Parents cannot pass on the baton of Christ

to their children if they themselves do not know Him. In retrospect there were parents then who took great offense at this. How dare anyone imply that they were not Christians! But clearly this must be the starting point. Does anyone have children or grandchildren who are worldlings? Then how can we point them to Christ if we ourselves are not born again?

And this is the very thing Paul is telling us – *be filled with the Spirit*. Before he even begins his instruction about husbands, wives, children, employers and employees, he prefaces it all with *be filled with the Spirit*. What does that mean? It means,

If our marriages and families and other relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ are going to be all that the Lord intends them to be, we must be born again. Only Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and Paul gives us hands-on examples of how the Spirit of Christ in us will lead us.

We have seen it over and over again down through the years.

Parents who claim to know Christ, and yet as the years go by one child after another chooses the world. Not just one here and there, but the majority if not all of them. Why? Because mom and dad were not born again. The Holy Spirit was not present in them nor in their home. They did not love the brethren, they did not love God's Word, and they passed on that spirit to their children.

Do I overstate the case? I think not. The evidence supports this conclusion.

Here is a sobering and serious thought to consider carefully. If we do not know the Lord, if we are deceiving ourselves about be a Christian, then as parents and grandparents, *we are going to be leading the next generation down Broadway to destruction.* I saw this in the family I was raised in and the same in Verla's. Only by the electing love of Christ were Verla and I plucked up out of that darkness and saved. All the rest – parents and siblings, went down Broadway which ends in destruction.

Now, we know from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus that – well, listen to it:

Luke 16:27-29 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— (28) **for I have five brothers**—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' (29) But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

Part of this wicked man's *eternal torment* is his knowledge that HE in his life led his brothers to hell. And so it is with ungodly parents when they perish – *for all eternity they will lament that they led their children to hell instead of pointing them to Christ and life eternal.*

NOTE: If anyone listening has failed in their marriage, in their family, in their life – then “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart, but humble yourself and starting calling out to the Lord to show you mercy and save you and your children. Confess to your children your sin of failing them,

perhaps of playing the hypocrite. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved!

The Way it is Supposed to Be

We can only summarize Paul's instruction about marriage and the family this morning. As I mentioned earlier, you can get much more detailed teaching by going to our mid-week Ephesians study on Youtube. But having begun at the beginning, you must be born again, be filled with the Spirit, let's listen to God's Word here:

(21) submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submission is a central and vital element in Godly relationships. Wives to husbands, children to parents, employees to employers. Christians **MUST** model this submission, which really is an expression of love for the brethren, if we are going to show Christ to the world.

If we are going to raise Godly children, then they must see this fruit of the Spirit, this *submission* in action. Wives to husbands *as to the Lord*. Submission *out of reverence for Christ*.

Ephesians 5:23-24 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

See it? Wives, moms, grandmothers, *model Christ to their children in this way. It models submission of the Church to Christ*. The Lord has made the husband the head of his wife, as Christ is the Head of His bride, the church. *Therefore, failure to live out this divinely ordered submission is going to result in children not seeing Christ and His church*.

Now, I can certainly empathize with a wife who might be responding to this with anxiety and discouragement – *because perhaps*

she is married to a man who is not fulfilling his role in the marriage and home. Well, to such a man here is what Christ has to say – and really to all husbands:

each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Notice that the Lord has much more to say to husbands than to wives! And what is His central command to the husband?

“Husbands, love your wives”

Ephesians 5:25-33 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (28) In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, (30) because we are members of his body. (31) “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (32) This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (33) However, let

I submit to you that, as we continue to look at the instruction to husbands, that *if a husband is a Christian, and if he is obeying Christ’s commandments, if he is loving his wife and Christ loved the church, then a godly wife is not going to have any trouble submitting to him.* Because the marriage will be functioning as God intends and the home and children and everyone will be blessed. *But violate these commands, reject this instruction for your marriage and family, and you can fully expect to be leading the next generations to hell.*

I say again sadly, our experience here over all these years has been, with a few happy exceptions, what can be titled – *The lost generation.*

Parents – and the onus is primarily upon the fathers – did not show Christ to their children.

NOTE: At this point I have no doubt that some hearing this will be telling themselves in response – “this all may be true, but I can never do that. You don’t know how messed up my life is or how botched my marriage and family is. I am what I am so why should I even try.”

Let me ask you – Are you more of a sinner or more messed up than:

Mark 5:1-5 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. (2) And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. (3) He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, (4) for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to

subdue him. (5) Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

Luke 8:1-2 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, (2) and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

We could go on and on, could we not –

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were

some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Are you more sinful and hopeless than these people? How many of them did Jesus cure? ALL. Christ came to set us FREE. Do you think that He cannot do the same for you if you ask? Why go on accepting the status quo, assuming that your messed up life, or family, or children, or marriage are what they are and what they always will be?

Now, *just how, in what way, is the husband to love his wife?* To simply leave this instruction at “love” is to risk it being understood as a feeling or an attitude. But it is far more than that. This love is the love with which Christ loves His bride, the church. It is a supernatural love, and *it acts. It does.*

We see two exercises of this love here:

1. The give of self. Christ GAVE Himself for His bride. He went to the cross for her. He came into this dark, fallen world for her and took on the form of one of us. He emptied Himself of the glory He had from all eternity with the Father – *for her*.

Husbands are to love their wives, by giving themselves for her. You work out the details of application. This is the fruit of the Spirit in action. Deny oneself, take up your cross and follow Christ, and in doing so the husband will give himself for his bride. *This love is not simply giving her things, but give her yourself.* Many marriages, including many that claim to be Christian, are devoid of this giving of *self*. Two people living under one roof yet separate lives.

Ephesians 5:31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

If this is not what a marriage is, then some serious self-examination needs to take place. *Am I born again? Am I filled with the Spirit of the Lord?*

But that is not all that loving one's wife means.

Ephesians 5:26-28 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (28) In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

See it? Here it become very obvious that this is quite impossible if the husband is not born again. *The husband is to be the head, the leader in spiritual things. He is to promote*

sanctification and Christian growth in his wife and children. He is to teach the Word in his home and by that Word wash his wife, enabling her to be holy and without blemish. Any husband who is not obeying this command does not love his wife nor his children as Christ loved the church.

In many marriages and homes, many that even claim to be Christian, this is not happening and THIS is why the next generation sees no need for Christ or His church. This plague has been upon this church for decades – the husband and wives have not raised up their children in the Lord. Wives have not submitted to their husbands *as to the Lord*, because their husbands have not loved them as Christ loves the church. Husbands have not been the head, but have chosen to be AWOL and left the spiritual welfare of the children to the wife. The result? Look around. Where is the next generation? And I do not believe this has happened in only this church – but in many.

A Note About Baptists

We are a reformed Baptist church. This means, among few other things, that we differ in or doctrine and practice from our paedobaptism brethren in regard to how we view our children in relation to the church.

And herein is one source of our problem.

Paedobaptist churches, like Presbyterian churches, not only practice infant baptism, but their attitude toward the children of believers differs from ours in what I maintain is something we need to take careful note of. They believe that the New Covenant has some similarities to the Old Covenant in which the children of parents in that covenant were also in the covenant. In other words, they believe that the children of believers are in the Church – not that they are automatically regenerate – but that they are separated from the world. It does not mean that they are united with Christ as only happens in the new birth. *But they are not to be treated as if they were just like the children of pagans.* They are to be extended

certain privileges that the children of the world do not have.

- a. Being in the church among believers on the Lord's day.
- b. Being taught by believing parents in the instruction of the Lord.
- c. Teaching them to be separate from the world in a biblical way.
- d. Being provided with Christian education and catechism.
- e. Teaching them by word and example how the church and the shepherds of the church are to be related to.

Paedobaptist churches are typically seen practicing this separateness by such things as establishing Christian schools.

Now, contrast that with what so often happens in Baptist churches and which we have seen numerous examples of here over the years. Fathers, for instance, can be guilty of absconding their duties as given by the Lord:

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

I have heard professing Christian fathers say “Well, yes, some of my children are sinning, but they are the ones who have to decide to believe in Christ and be saved. I can’t do that for them.” And so you see such fathers, and sometimes mothers as well, not even being really burdened or grieved about the souls of their children in this way.

But this is a half truth. Yes, each person must believe in Christ to be saved. No one can do that for them. BUT fathers in particular with the help of their wife, can and must raise up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The fathers must model Christ to them, and the mothers as well.

I heard a man who claimed to be a Christian say one time – I am really proud of my 4 children. They are all honest and hard-working and

responsible. None of them have shown any need for Christ, but I am proud of how they turned out.”

How can a real Christian father ever say something like that? I know why none of his children show any interest in Christ – the reason should be obvious.

Listen, I do not speak as an absolute here, but I will speak of what is the norm and what is to be expected.

If parents see their children, one after another, growing up and choosing the world instead of Christ, then something is seriously wrong in that home. A Christian husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church, and a Christian mother joyfully able to submit to such a husband, raising up their children in Christ’s instruction, should expect to see their children growing up in Christ and being that next generation in His church.

This is why the Lord includes, in his listing of qualifications for pastors and elders this:

1 Timothy 3:4-5 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, (5) for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Sadly, we have had a number of elders here over the years who flunk this test.

Deuteronomy 6:5-21 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(10) “And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, (11) and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, (12) then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(13) It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. (14) You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— (15) for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

(16) “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. (17) You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his

testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. (18) And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers (19) by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

(20) “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ (21) then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.