

GENERAL THEME: BUILDING A NATION:

Introductory remarks

- The spiritual destiny of nations,
- The role of the Church
- Church – collection of families
- Families – collection of individuals, including parents, children, youth.
- Nations – Should be a collection of Churches.

Question: How may are first generation Christians....?

SERMON TITLE: CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD – A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

- Children a gift from God

Psa 127:3 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.

Psa 127:4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.

Psa 127:5 Happy *is* the man that hath his **quiver** full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

- 1st born son - a special gift?
- Barrenness - a curse?, a situation God can resolve and reproach taken away by God: - Several examples in the Bible....the most important being Abraham and Sarah as the consequences of this childless state and Abraham's attempt to help God live with us today.....

Psa 113:9 He maketh the **barren** woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

- But physical Childhood – A state of vulnerability needs feeding, guidance, teaching, mentoring to grow into a balanced individual.
- Provides a parallel for Spiritual growth - childhood, need to grow up spiritually.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere **milk** of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Role of Parents –

For elders, leaders and indeed for all in the Church, Titus

To love children: Tit 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their **children**,

To teach them the fear of God and godliness: Tit 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful **children** not accused of riot or unruly.

1Ti 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their **children** and their own houses well.

To encourage children: Col 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your **children** *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

Role of Children:

To obey parents in the lord: Col 3:20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

To obey authority: Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

The lesson of obedience to authority is paramount for spiritual and social order

How it is done practically - Proverbs -

Role of the church

2 Stories

The story of Eli as a parent and Eli's Children -1 Sam 2 and 3

- Eli was a Judge and Priest in Israel
- Sons - described as “sons of belial”
- Were corrupt, cheated and defiled the sanctity of the system of sacrifices.
- Defiled the sanctity of the temple - through immorality.
- Caused the children of God to abhor the process of sacrifice
- Sin therefore spread in Israel.
- What went wrong? – How could this be the family of a senior man of God and leader of the people?
- Just think of the consequences – for a nation – of the failure of a family, and a man?.....

Contrast this with;

The Story of Daniel as a young man who attracts the attention of the King and colleagues; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego - Daniel 1:

- Had already proved themselves.
- Had already excelled –
- Had caught the attention of the leadership
- When assigned the most important of tasks...advising the King, interpreting dreams.... did not disappoint.
- Daniel - Mentioned in Ezekiel - compared to Noah and Job....righteousness.

- Had been given an early exposure to God, who he was, the fear of God-as they were wise, the respect of Authority – respected the King but were aware that there was authority above that of the King
- Were willing to lay down their lives for this cause.....

Lessons:

- Children to be taught – primarily, the things of God, who God is, the fear of God, should be taught by theoretical learning but also by example....by parents..... but also the knowledge of the world....education, skills, science.....as this is the currency of the world... we are in this world but are not of this world.....
- Jesus: A carpenter – Matt 13:55, Mark 6:3 – Role of every Jewish Father – Circumcise the child, redeem him, teach him the law, teach him a trade – if you do not teach a trade it is equivalent to teaching the son robbery....Paul.- a tentmaker.
- Youth – not be idle, learn hard work, lean not to despise working with hands, teaches patience...overcoming obstacles, dependence on God, absence from idleness, living within one's means.....
- Don't take other Christians for granted, that they should always lend when you call.....
- Don't get the order wrong.....don't prioritize the world and all its education above the knowledge and fear of God and a commitment to righteous, pure Christian living.

Christian parenting and contemporary challenges, misconceptions

My own life briefly.....

Conclusion:

Strengthen existing groups from Sunday school to the Marrieds fellowship in Calvary chapel to leverage the ministry to young people, get them more engaged in church, identify Christian role models for them, give them mentors and Godly pillars to model their lives on rather than what is secular (at school or on TV and social media).

Holiday time - engagement with youth, bring friends to church, AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTRY.....