

The *Practice* of Family & Covenant Keeping

Family camp Providence Reformed Church

Michewana

September 2 and 3, 2023

Mark 10:13-16

'¹³ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.'

- Children belong to the covenant.
- Jesus, the Mediator (Heb) and Head (Rom 5) of the covenant receives children and blesses them.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

¹ Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded **to teach** you, **that ye might do them** in the land whither ye go to possess it:

² That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, **to keep** all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and **thy son, and thy son's son**, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

³ **Hear** therefore, O Israel, and **observe to do it**; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

⁴ **Hear**, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all **thine heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁶ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in **thine heart**:

⁷ And thou shalt **teach** them diligently unto **thy children**, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in **thine house**, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

⁹ And thou shalt write them upon the posts of **thy house**, and on **thy gates**.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9



Ex 13:1-10, 13:11-16,
Dt 6:4-9, 11:13-21

Problems of covenant keeping. 1. Our heart

- Three headed enemy: our heart, world and Satan.
- Our heart.
 - 'Trust yourself', 'Stay true to yourself', 'Tune in to your needs and instincts', 'Listen to your feeling'.
 - Jeremiah 17:9, *'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?'*
 - Matthew 15:19-20, *'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man.'*
- Therefore: searching of our heart, personal and in family.
 - Psalm 4:4, *'Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.'*
 - Hag 1:7, *'Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.'*
 - Psalm 139:23-24 *'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'*

Problems of covenant keeping. 2.The world

Dt 6 verses Rev 13:16-17

*'And he causeth all,
both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,
to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:
And that no man might buy or sell,
save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of
his name.'*

Problems of covenant keeping. 2.Satan

- Col 2:15 *'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.'*
- Rev 12:9 *'And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world'*
- Eph 6:12 *'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'*
- Eph 6:13 *'Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'*
- John 15:5 *'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.'*

Christ, Suretee

- How to keep the covenant with these enemies?
 - We need Christ!
 - Hold Him high. Store His words. Set at his feet. Abide in Him.
 - In the family: bringing the children to Christ's feet.
 - John 15:4, 7 *'Abide in me, and I in you. ... If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'*
- The importance of faith in Jesus. The blessings in Him. Ephesians 1:
 - Verse 4, *'he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.'*
 - Verse 5, *'predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.'*
 - Verse 6, *'he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'*
 - Verse 7, *'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'*
 - Verse 9, *'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will.'*
 - Verse 11, *'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.'*
 - Verse 13, *'sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.'*

Three more things. 1. The Spirit

- The Spirit is much needed.
 - Zech 4:6, *'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.'*
 - Ez 36:27, *'And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.'*
 - And so, the Spirit is poured out at Pentecost and the prophecy of Joel finds its first fulfillment.'
- Therefore: pray for the Spirit and use the Sword of the Spirit
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17 *'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'*
- God's Word is central in Christian homes and families. Read, study, meditate, teach, explain, apply, ...

Three more things. 2. Love

- God is love.
 - Summary ten commandments, *'Love God above all, and the neighbour as yourself.'*
 - 1 John 4:8,16, *'God is love'*.
 - John 3:16, *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'*
 - 1 Cor 13:2b, *'If I have not charity (love), I am nothing.'*
- Without love no covenant keeping.
 - Dt 7:9-10, *'Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.'*
- In family life.
 - Love is place of that love in covenant keeping, showing God's image, walking with Christ.
 - Psalm 133, 1 Cor 13.

Three more things. 3. Repentance

- Repentance is a change in mind, heart, and actions, wherein we turn from evil and seek the Lord.
- Definition covenant, *'an agreement between two or more parties with binding commitments, by which they enter into a relationship.'*
- Therefore, repentance needed.
- Mk 1:15 *'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'*
- Repentance :
 - Is a continual exercise.
Proverbs 20:9, *'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?'*
 - Creates hatred of sin, fleeing for sin
 - Makes us hungry for forgiveness, righteousness and sanctification
 - Draws us to Christ
- Important in family life. Prayers. Demonstrated daily life. Often in God's word.

Baptism. Important help.

- Westminster Larger catechism, Answer 167
 - *'The needful but much-neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others, by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of the Baptism and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that Sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.'*

Covenant keeping practices in the family

- First. Let the family be a place where faith can grow and increase.
- Second. To be that place, God's Word is always open.
- Third. We pray personally, but also together as a family.
- Fourth. We give each other an example of a life of obedience to the LORD and good works.
- Fifth. We try to bring our children, Also outside our home into a Christian environment.
- Sixth. We do all this so that our children, too,
 - learn to keep the covenant: fear the LORD (faith in Christ), obey Him and do good works.
 - So that they become an image of God
 - So that they will be a light in the world and a salt of the world.
 - So they will be a faithful witness of the LORD in Christ and win others for His Kingdom who will become a member of His covenant.

As a family we are a place where we by God's grace keep the covenant with God, in faith in Christ, in evangelical obedience and in good works.