

Trusting God with My Family

Protecting Our Family

Hi, my name is Darrell and I am the director of Family Ministries here at FUMC. This means that my normal Sunday experience is spent overseeing the children of our church and their worship experience. If you are visiting with us this morning it is good to have with us, today we are continuing a series of teachings on the idea of trust and specifically, what does it mean to trust God. Last week, Pastor Richard launched us into this topic by sharing a message called **Trust God with Today**. In this message, he really locked in on a specific verse from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 3:5 states, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;”** He went on to explain to us that idea of trusting God means that we put our full weight on him, we believe he is capable of impacting every area of our life. Christians believe that God is capable of impacting every area of our lives and that the more we trust him to impact our life the more we experience the true extent of his power. As we progress through this series over the next few weeks our hope is that you might consider how you can put your full weight on God in some challenging areas of life.

This week, my hope is to challenge all of us to consider how we a trusting God’s power to protect our family. Recently, there have been a couple of stories in the news that should kind of have us scratching our heads and help illustrate the very real tension in our world. One is the 2019 College Admissions Bribery Scandal involving Lori Loughlin and several other wealthy parents paid millions of dollars to ensure their child would be accepted into “the right” undergraduate education program. The other is the court case People v. Turner from 2015 where a Stanford Swimming Athlete received an abnormally lenient sentence after being convicted of exploiting an unconscious female student at a fraternity gathering. In both cases, the families involved were unable to trust the honest process with their child's future and as a result, committed morally obtuse acts to “protect” their family and ensure their children would encounter the best possible scenario. One family didn’t trust that their children could enter college on their own merit so they rigged the system. Another set didn’t trust the court system to carry out justice with integrity so they took matters into their own hands and attempted to conceal the truth. Anyone paying attention to the news cycle can tell that this skeptical behavior is becoming commonplace in our world, people are willing to do anything to “protect” their family. **The more I look at these stories, these “family” scandals, we keep reading about I am inclined to think that they are symptoms of a much larger problem.**

Trust Problems

We have a **trust** problem. Now the above examples are obviously extreme, but they do reveal something to us. As a society, we lack faith. That lack of faith influences the way we tough situations when our family needs “protection.” Our society has taught us that we simply cannot trust anything other than ourselves to have our best interest in mind. Therefore, it is up to us to control what happens to our family and it is up to us to create the perception that the world has of us and our families. If the honest reality makes us look bad then we have to manipulate the system to make it look right. We have

to “protect” our family. We create our own dishonest reality because we believe it will solve problems and present the best version of our family to the world. If we don’t like what a school has to say about a student, we just find a new school that supports our desires. If we don’t like what a coach has to say about an athlete we fire the coach or we find a new team to meet our needs. If we don’t like what a doctor has to say we find a new doctor who will tell us what we want to hear. The point is that sometimes in our effort to protect, we set aside morality, we sacrifice integrity, we ignore the truth, and we put our faith in all the wrong places. The tension facing us today is not so much about what we do to protect our family as it is why we protect our family. **There is a difference between advocating for protection we deserve and achieving “protection” through manipulation.**

Now, please don’t misunderstand, we have the right and responsibility to advocate for ourselves and for our families, in all situations. If our family is being exploited, we must protect it. The problem is, as many of you already know, eventually, all of us face family situations we can’t control. There will be situations where we can’t dishonestly alter the world perception of our life. If we know that’s the case, why did we start believing that we are the only ones capable of handling difficult family situations? Why do we trust dishonesty to manipulate difficult situations? Why do we have to use dishonest tactics to create a public façade? Why are our family’s perceptions more important than our family’s integrity? Why did we stop trusting the power of transparency and truth? For Christians, we have to take that another step and ask ourselves, Why did we stop trusting God with our families? Why did we let our faith, our trust in God, stop influencing our decisions? **When did we stop trusting in the Power of God to protect our family?**

Faith Equals Power

The bible tells us that Jesus had a propensity for meeting people in just these types of situations. Big ones they couldn’t control, big ones that required the people involved to put their faith in something or someone other than themselves. The gospel of Mark tells us one story about a man named Jairus, a religious leader who comes to Jesus for help in caring for his sick daughter. Jesus had just arrived in a small town called Capernaum, a large crowd had already gathered to greet him and see this great teacher that they had heard so much about. Jairus, knowing full well who Jesus was and what involving him in his family business could do to his reputation asked Jesus for help. Jesus agrees to follow Jairus home and see what he can do to help his daughter. While on the way the gathered crowd continued to follow them through town. In this crowd was a woman who had been struggling from an ailment that caused her to bleed consistently and profusely. Doctors couldn’t help her and actually made her worse, and that was in addition to depriving her of her life savings. This woman believed that Jesus could help her, she believed so much in his power that she felt she only needed to touch his cloak and she would be healed. She fought through the crowd, managed to touch Jesus’ cloak, and IMMEDIATELY she was healed. Jesus felt the power leave him when she touched him and he immediately began searching for her. Eventually, despite her fear, she came forward and revealed that she had touched him. He responded to her outrage with a simple statement, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While this was happening some of Jairus' family members arrived and informed him that he was too late, his daughter had already died and he "need not bother the teacher anymore." Can you imagine what is running through his mind right now? He came to Jesus for help, he was the man who had spent his life trying to do the right thing, he had tried to protect his family. This woman who had done nothing but infect a whole crowd of people and prevent his daughter from meeting the only person who could save her. Now, because of this, she was dead and no one could do anything for her. Jesus, overhearing the exchange between Jairus and his family, had a simple statement for him, "Do not fear, only believe." They then proceeded to Jairus' house where they were greeted by professional mourners and the family attempting to grieve the girl's death. Jesus tells them all to leave because the girl is not dead, but asleep. They poke fun at him as they leave and Jesus ignores them and asks to see the girl. He instructs everyone but three of his disciples and the girl's parents to exit the room. He walks overtakes her hand, and says "Little girl, I say to you, arise." IMMEDIATELY she got up and began to walk. The people in the room were amazed, and all they could do was respond to Jesus' admonition to give the girl something to eat.

In both instances we see faith, what little faith there was, produced enough power to perform to amazing miracles. The woman forsook all knew and believed about herself for a chance to be healed. What happened with Jairus' family was nothing of a miracle that only God could do. It was a miracle he was programmed to believe would never happen. Dead people couldn't be resurrected, and they especially couldn't be resurrected by people who had been defiled and made unclean. You see when Jesus made contact with the woman he became unclean when he made contact with a dead person he became unclean, but neither thing stopped him from responding to people's faith. When it seemed like the odds were stacked against them, two people scraped together enough faith to experience the power of God and his ability to move mountains in their life. The woman's faith allowed her to experience the one thing she had always wanted: Life. Jairus' faith led him to believe that an impossible situation could be solved, but if he was wrong it would've cost him everything. **Their faith in the power Jesus possessed altered their lives forever.** Why can't you believe the same thing?

The Reality of Family Life

The old testament passage we read in service today is called the shemah, it's a teaching from the Jewish law book, and it gives the Jews directions for how they were supposed to live. Contained in that book was that short passage, a command encouraging people to Love God with their whole life and to encourage and teach their families to do the same. From the very beginning, it has been God's plan to use families to impact our world. That's exactly why he instructs us to teach our families about life with him. Valuing our family is not new. Trusting God with our family is not some new thought that has come about as new psychology for a better life. The family is God's original plan for evangelism and it's always been part of his plan to transform the world. **Family units are simply how God intended you to live.**

All of you are a part of a family and all of you will experience something in your family that you can't control. Someone in your family could get sick and you won't know what to do. Someone in your family could get a divorce and you won't know how to help them. Someone in your family is going to make a mistake and you won't know how to help them. You will see the people closest to you, your

family, get hurt or experience pain and you will not be able to solve their problem or protect them. You like Jairus will have to make a choice and that choice may ask you to sacrifice everything you have. That is the unfortunate reality of family life, you can't fix everything no matter how bad you want too. You can't always protect your family, but there is one thing you can do, you can stop living in fear and believe. You can believe that God will look out for our family and you can trust that the path he leads you down will be full of hope. **When life seems too big and your family circumstances begin to weigh heavy on you, trust your family to God.** Believe that his love for you and your family is so great, and his ability to impact your family is so real, that when life gets too big your response isn't to try to protect your family or your family's legacy. Believe that God is capable of taking even the worst family situation and turning it into something that will benefit your family in the long run and give you a reason to tell others all about what he has done for you and for them.

Trust God with your family. Teach your family to trust him. If you do that, there won't be a thing your family can't handle.

The Church and The Family

What if we were a church where hurting families could come and experience hope. What if we were a church that taught people in our community that the pain they experience is real, but that there is hope. What if we were able to help families understand that they don't need to "protect" themselves from scandal if they are willing to trust God with all that they have. What if families knew this was a safe place where they could bring all their junk and they will be met with grace, love, and understanding? What if this was a place where people could come and experience the same type of miracles that Jairus and his family experienced that day? What if we could introduce them to that opportunity?

That's what it means to introduce people to the transforming power of Jesus Christ. It means showing them they can not only trust God to transform their lives but also transform their families as well. Church, we have a calling to share the gospel with all people, to teach all people about living the life God intended them to live. We are God's plans for the transformation of the world and that means we are God's plan to transform families. **Are we ready to do what needs to be done? All we have to do is trust him and miracles will happen.**