

THE FULL FAMILY CHURCH

DATE : **11 MAY 2008**

SERMON : **WHO'S YOUR DADDY?**

READING : Deut. 31:1 - 8 (6) & Joshua 1: 1 - 9 (5)

Let's begin this sermon with a 30 seconds game. And you may phone a friend or home for the answer.

Ready?

Question 1.

- Who of you can put up your hand and say with absolute honesty you had a wonderful child life?

Ok, let's take a closer look:

Question 2.

- Who can say with absolute honesty that he/she had a wonderful perfect open relationship with their parents?

So few hands?

Question 3.

- Who can honestly say that he/she could share everything with Mom and Dad? Also when you fell in love for the first time? That you could take your friend home and discuss it with them and get their approval and openly discuss the relationship with them?

Where are all the hands now?

Most of us come from families where everything did not always run as smooth as we would have hoped for. That had nothing to do with the fact that we are straight or gay, tall, short, thin or plump.

Generally speaking nothing really seemed to lack. When one comes to think about it you actually knew of a few other families who had much more challenges than you had at home.

The only thing that really bothered was communication. And in the silence of the communication gap we had to assume many things for ourselves.

We had to assume that Mom and Dad love us because we had been taken care of in a material way: food, clothes, a place to live and money. The association were established since we were little: Care (material care) = love.

That is a misconception, an incorrect presumption.

We also assumed that performance on our side kept our parents happy. They seemed to "love" us more when we performed and achieved. Our parent also showed their approval when we kept the family name up high by FITTING IN in the family customs and traditions. Another misconception and wrong presumption.

In that way we run the race of our lives securely in the track that was laid down for us. Our parents and families boast when they referred to us as model children and show pieces. We do not make any waves like other children. We are regarded as good and obedient. We help with chores, perform at school, achieve in cultural and sports activities, never moan and behave well and content.

Why do we do these things?

There is one of two reasons:

1. We are born that way. We feel safe in the environment to behave that way and we accept the boundaries because it is the right thing to do.
2. The other reason is one that concerns me a bit. When we adhere to what is expected from us because of fear.

How are you motivated?

There are two ways:

I can motivate you by giving you an incentive. I can say, "Sally, if you achieve 10 percent more in your homework, you may get a new bicycle."

At work my employer can say, "If you increase your sales this month by R50 000, I will raise your commission to 15%."

This is regarded at **positive motivation**.

But I can also motivate you by saying, "Sally, if you do not achieve 10% more in your school work, you may not continue with ballet classes in the afternoons."

Or you employer can say, "If you do not increase your sales by R50 000 this month, I will cut your commission by 15%."

This is **negative motivation**.

"If do not perform well at sport or cultural activities, if you are not good at home, not do what I tell you to do, I will not love you anymore. **If you DO** this or that **I will** love you." There is a condition.

Or the worst one: "I you love me you will do this or that." This is also a way to motivate. This is regarded as blackmailing.

Why do we yield to such demands?

If happens subconsciously because we have a deep rooted fear of rejection.

Nobody on earth can live without nurturing and a measure of fostering. We all need to know that we are loved, accepted and that we belong.

Research has proven that animals and people who are deprived of close contact (touching) and nurturing, whither and die. In fact they die very young. And yet they received food, liquids, warmth, protection, you name it. The only thing they did not get were touching, personal warmth and nurturing.

The same experiments were done with ape babies raised by real mothers and surrogate mothers. They received enough of what the previous group received as well as touching, nurturing, personal warmth and care.

This is what we perceive as "belonging to". We all need to know that we belong to. We need to be loved and we want to know that someone somewhere cares enough about us to share that personal warmth and care we need. Without any strings attached of course. Only because of who I am, because I am good enough to be able to receive it.

This was the original idea God had in mind when He instated parenthood. Two people who would take care of you after you are born.

Once the male and female seeds merge during conception a new human being is formed. He/she grows inside the mother's womb where he/she has constant personal contact with the mother. Once we baby is born this personal contact and closeness should continue. Unconditionally.

No matter whether we have been raised in a straight or gay home, a home should always be a safe haven. A child does not value gender only love and caring. Research proved the evidence. The only need a child has is a full tummy, dry bottom, warmth, and a lot of love. Especially love.

This kind of love comes in various forms in a family:

Unconditional acceptance, appreciation and respect for me as an individual.

No matter what you do or say, that will ever change the way I love you. Nothing that you do in your life can erase the fact that you are my child.

The right and permission to discover your gender orientation within the strong family walls and to be able to make peace with it.

Permission to bring your boyfriend or girlfriend home where he/she can be respected and honoured as a part of the family setup or circle of friends.

A family should pick you up and put you on a parent's lap when your heart is broken because of a love relationship or friendship that did not withstand the test of time.

It is also this wonderful caring love that would walk the road of healing with a child without being patronising or over critical.

It would support one and cover your nakedness when you get out of the closed and come screaming down the road in high heels.

It would grant you the right to make mistakes within the safe boundaries of a family so that you can learn. Without being yelled at or being rejected because of mistakes; being cheered on and encouraged to be able to overcome the challenge next time around.

It is the loving arms of a father around his daughter and son to let them know, "you are ok". Also the loving arms of a mother around her son and daughter saying, "You are special and I accept you unconditionally."

It is also the loving arms of a father who complements his daughter, "You are beautiful, a lovely woman. I celebrate you femininity." A father should be his daughter's "first" boyfriend so to speak.

It is also the arms of a loving mother around her son, saying, "You are a man. You are very handsome, strong, and I celebrate your masculinity." A mother should be her son's "first" boyfriend so to speak.

And this has nothing to do with sexuality!

Are those the qualities that you received in your family and in your wider family? Or did you have to live a lie to gain their favour.

You see, when you have to live a lie to receive favour that is because the love you received was conditional. That was a kind of love that stipulated, "**If you** do this or that, or behave in this or that way, **I will** love you." That is manipulative love. Parents need not say it in so many words but children can read behaviour.

To say the truth is that is not love at all. This is manipulation and the Bible refers to the cause of this behaviour as evil and cunning. Nothing good can transpire from this.

Do you honestly think that God is satisfied with you having to live a lie trying to win the favour of your family? I don't think so.

But Pastor, the Bible says, "Honour you father and your mother!" You're right. But the Bible also says that you may not, "speak false evidence". In other words you may not lie. Living a lie is as good as speaking lies.

Then how do I go about this now?

Boundaries. You have to set boundaries. Healthy boundaries. Caring boundaries. Boundaries that says, "I would like to love you, but the Bible says I have to love you the way I love myself. If I cannot love myself I cannot love you with honesty, respect and trust."

We have previously seen that any relationship should be based on RESPECT and TRUST. If you cannot therefore associate with your family in this way, the relationship will become detrimental and will disintegrate.

This kind of lie that a person lives brings about a pattern that causes one not to want anything to do with people in general.

Suppose that you have a gay gender orientation, the danger comes in when you meet someone you are attracted to, or even enter into a relationship, and then gets out of the closet with your family. Your family reacts heavily. It is a shock to them. Then you decide to write them off. Can you afford it? You might think that you can because you now have a replacement for them: you newly found partner.

Everything goes well for some time. Then one day you realise that the care and nurturing you were looking for in that relationship neither meets the care and nurturing you were looking for in your family. You put pressure on the relationship by demanding unreasonable requirements. Your partner becomes anxious and backs off.

Your relationship is in shambles and you end up without the closeness of the relationship and your family. A Double rejection.

You wanted to avoid this at all cost! That is why you never wanted to bring those matters under your parent's attention in the first place. Now, in the seemingly safe environment of the relationship you took the bull by the horns and enlightened your parents. They did not quite react in the way you wanted them to react therefore you are furious. Subsequently you tell them that they never loved you.

You did not take into account that they also had to work through a lot of trauma. All those years they thought they knew you and then you tipped a bucket of cold water on them and expect that they should accept you without making a scene or take a deep breath.

They cannot! They are people and people get startled, they react. Just like you do! They feel guilty, threatened, betrayed, robbed of their child, they feel responsible for your being "different".

You wanted them to react the way you hoped they would by saying: "Oh, my child, we are glad that you are gay. Now we can look forward to not looking forward to have grandchildren. Children are actually disgusting beings. We are so glad that you are going to wear a white dress when you walk down the aisle. We detest brides."

Or:

"We are glad that you will never bring home a beautiful daughter in law. We will never have to compete about your love with a strange woman."

Or:

"Don't worry, honey, most people are gay. We are just so grateful that you are not straight."

Can you hear that?!

And because they do not react the way you wanted, you want to return good for evil and you send them off one way to hell. You experience rejection from your family, yet in your subconscious mind you are aware that you deserved it for the lie you lived all those years. It worsens the matter because now you have brought that upon yourself as well. You are angry and sorry for yourself, but you never admit it to anyone. You direct all your disappointment, anger, pain, and rejection to your family and your parents.

Now you arrive at your partner and starts to moan and groan in his ears about this stressful episode day and night. The partner cannot keep up with it and before you can say Camp David the bomb explodes.

He also reacts in a way you did not want him to and subsequently you also send him to hell one way.

Now you are stuck in a double rejection. Not nice! Nobody wants to be burdened with a moaner and before long your friends start to take a hike from your deadly self petty parties.

By now you realise that your friends also walked out on you. Another rejection – number three!

You arrive at the shrink. He/she listens. You land up taking antidepressants and sleeping tablets. You start to neglect your appearance because you find that people have pity on you when you look like death. But only for a short while because they cannot succeed in encouraging you.

Before long you realise that you can manipulate more and more people by suicidal threats. By now you take more and more antidepressants and sleeping tablets only to see what people's reaction will be. Your quest for attention gets out of hand. And in an effort to receive nurturing and care you chase everybody away from you. An evil cycle of rejection upon rejection.

This is but ONE of the scenarios. There are hundreds of them.

We find the same thing among straight people.

Then a boy or girl comes from a broken family where they did not receive sufficient attention the same thing will happen. Maybe one or both of the parents suffered from an addiction. Or the parents were not adaptable from the onset of their marriage.

Subsequently the children will suffer from love-deficiency.

When they enter into a relationship as adults; let's say a daughter, she bumps into an attractive guy, falls madly in love, and then starts to manipulate him to such an extent that he becomes paralysed by the effect of all the attention.

She plays him like a deck of cards and gradually pulls him into her way of doing things. She gets what she wants every time because he does not want to lose her.

She then starts to execute her clever plans. She takes revenge on the man who dares to come so close to her. She takes revenge for the love she never got from her father.

At long last she spits him out, lifeless, cynical and highly reluctant to ever enter into a relationship again. And once again she sits with the remains of disappointment and rejection. She becomes bitter, saying: "You see, there you have it. Just the way men are. They use you and then get rid of you". That is a regular reaction. Most people would believe her because the man is not there to represent himself.

In that way she takes revenge on this poor fellow on behalf of her mother, her sister and her brother. But the real revenge was actually directed toward her father.

Can you see this evil cycle? This is why the Bible speaks about a family curse or a generational curse. We read about that in Exodus 20:5:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them [*foreign gods*], nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, (6) and showing loving-kindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. ”

Can you see? The curse derives from bowing down to foreign Gods. In this way our forefathers could have faulted ignorantly. The penalty that runs down in a family is high.

What are commandments that God is referring to here?

Is it directly linked to the Royal Law, “to love the Lord you God with your whole heart, your whole soul and all of your energies, and the **second to that stands equal to this; you have to love your neighbour as yourself.**”

This involves our love for Him and our love for one another. Our parents and our children are also our neighbours.

How do we break this devastating curse that robs and destroys so many potentially beautiful people?

The first thing would be to ask the important question, “Who is your Daddy?” Where do you run to when the storms are blowing heavily?

You have to realise that there is not one perfect parent home on this planet, with a perfect Mom and a perfect Dad.

They are not perfect because *they* did not have a perfect Mom and Dad themselves. They also have to navigate through life ignorantly to keep going. And if you should read their diaries carefully, you would see several blood stains on those pages of life.

So, do not be hard on them. Throughout their lives they only meant well. I am not referring to parents who deliberately abuse children. That is unnatural and wrong!

Yes, I know, we all have a choice of how to handle our circumstances. In the same way you have a choice too, like they also have a choice. If they should make bad choices, who are you to criticise them? Have you never made any bad choices? And if you haven't then stay on your knees because then your first time is around the next corner.

In stead of criticising your parent or remaining a prisoner of your upbringing, do something about it. Break this pattern, this curse that is steering you to your last

precipice. Nobody can do it on your behalf. Only you can. And only if and when you decide to do it.

Where should you look for a model in this regard?

The only place you can look for perfect parents would be at our heavenly Father. If you want know in what way He cares for you, read the Bible. Read through the whole of the Old Testament and see how He dealt with His rebellious child, Israel. In spite of the way they treated Him, He still showed them that He loved them and was willing to care for them.

Read through the Old Testament and have a look at all God's wonderful promises. Those promises He declared over Israel are also applicable to all His children; you and I. Once you have accepted Jesus as your Saviour, God becomes your Father and then those promises are for you also.

Read all of them, underline them, and declare them over yourself and your parents. Those are eternal promises and can bring back life into dead roots. Those promises are meant for everyone who follows God, us Christians.

Let's have a look at a few of them:

- Jeremiah 31:3 – "I love you with an everlasting love."
- Numbers 23:19 – "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and will he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?"
- Isaiah 12:2 – "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for Jehovah, *even* Jehovah, is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation.
- Isaiah 11:2 – "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.
- Psalms 115:14 – "Jehovah increases you more and more, You and your children."
- Psalm 117:2 – "For his loving-kindness is great toward us; And the truth of Jehovah *endureth* for ever. Praise ye Jehovah."
- Isaiah 58:9 – "Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah will answer; thou shalt cry, and he will say, Here I am. "

And then also in the New Testament:

- Romans 8:31 – “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?”
- Galatians 6:9 – “And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

I know that Jesus came to set us free from the curse of the Law, but remember, it still remains the perfect Law of God. And this Law is the 10 Commandments as He gave it to Moses on Mount Sinai. (Exodus 20) Those are the standards which He instated and by which He lives. We cannot keep to that, we can only strive to do so. Listen to what Timothy says regarding the value of the Scriptures in his second letter. And remember these people did not have the New Testament we have today. They only had the Old Testament and a few letters of the apostles that were circulating.

2 Timothy 3:16 & 17 – “Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. (17) That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” This does not only include the pastor. It is meant for all of us who are a followers of Jesus Christ.

There you have it.

If you set your foundation, your fostering, your caring, upon the One who cannot lie; the One who never changes; who remains the same: yesterday, today and tomorrow; who never sleeps; who is above all other gods; who has no beginning and no end; who is the first and the last; who was there when the earth was created; who thinks good thoughts about you and who has wonderful plans for you; who created you wonderfully in your mother’s womb - if this Person can feel like this about you, don’t you think it is worth giving Him a chance to take care of you?

Read all His promises, underline them, write them down everywhere, stick them up on your mirror, in your wardrobe, read them again and again and believe them, because He cannot lie.

He is the God of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The God of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

This is the Father who is the perfect parent. He has as many motherly traits as He has fatherly ones. The Bible refers to this when it says “how often I yearned to gather you children as a hen gathers her chicks underneath her wings.”

If you experienced privation as a child; if you had to live a lie to be accepted; if you had to pretend to be that which you were not only to be accepted, the Father would like to open up His loving arms to you right now and say to you, “I understand what

you went through, my dearest child. I can say this to you because I am your Father. I can say this to you because I know what perfect motherly love is."

He is also the One that says, "I understand what you are going through when you want to take revenge on behalf of your mother, your sister and your brother, on a special man/woman whose intentions are to make you happy. I do not agree with that, but I understand. So stop it now! You don't need to rectify your weak self image in this way. I will do it for you in the right way; a way that will bring healing to you. Today I put my arms around you and nurture you. I now fill up the old voids of privation with My perfect caring, consoling and nurturing love."

In Mathew 11:28 Jesus, this wonderful Parent, now invites you personally. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This is His invitation to you now. Don't reject it. He is the One who knows everything about you. He is the One who understands you more than you understand yourself. He is the One that weeps with you when you feel like nothing is coming right. But He is also the One who wants to show you how to get order and purpose in your life.

Give Him a chance. What do you say? Don't you think it's worth it? If there is One that can help you to succeed in this, surely it should be the One who created you and understands you?

Who's your Daddy?

Would you trust people who might hurt you, even with the best intentions? Or the One who loves you unconditionally and cares for you? The One whom you will never be able to disappoint to the extent that He will right you off. He is there for you: night and day. The One that wipes away your tears when your heart is torn apart. The One who picks up the pieces and mends them when others do not want to ... not even you yourself.

Give Him a chance. He is waiting on you right now!

Who's your Daddy? I know who's mine.

Amen.

Pastor Anton Smith