Title: The faithful son, part 1

Text: John 19:25-27

Date Preached: 1/27/2019 (MBC PM)

What do making your bed, doing your homework, driving the speed limit, and paying your taxes all have in common?

And perhaps you’re wondering, what in the world does this have to do with Jesus on the cross? Well the answer is the 5th commandment. Do you remember what the 5th commandment is? It is to honor your father and your mother. This commandment is most clearly applicable to parents with children in the home, but the principle of submitting to those in authority over you is applicable to all of us. We don’t outgrow the 5th commandment.

Additionally, each year pastor Reid leads us through the parent-child dedication time during the morning service, where we vow as a congregation to do what we can to help raise of the children of our church family in the fear and admonition of the Lord. That means we not only teach them what it means to honor their father and their mother, but we as a congregation also have a duty to fulfill the commandment ourselves by submitting joyfully to the authorities placed over us by God. We don’t outgrow the 5th commandment.

So let’s read John 19:16-27 and see how Jesus fulfills the commandment, and we will spend our time tonight and next week looking very practically at verses 25-27. John 19, starting in verse 16.

So they took Jesus, **17**and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. **18**There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.**19**Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” **20**Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. **21**So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”**22**Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

**23**When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19&version=ESV#fen-ESV-26837d)] But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, **24**so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them,  
    and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, **25**but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.**26**When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” **27**Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

PRAYER

In our text tonight we see Christ, having been beaten, hanging on the cross. And while on the cross Jesus looks out and sees several ladies, one of which is his mother, Mary. Jesus’s father, Joseph, had likely died some time earlier, and Mary is now dependent upon her son to provide for her.

Not only is she going through the agony of seeing her Son murdered on the cross, but she also had the anxiety of wondering who would provide for her, protect her, care for her after Jesus is gone.

Jesus’s solution is to provide for her another provider. He calls to his mother, calling her Woman, which in Aramaic would not have been a sign of disrespect, but a sign of honor, something similar to our word “Madam” or “Ma’am.” He tells her that her new son is Jesus’s disciple, John. And he looks to John and tells him that his new mother is Mary. Jesus is giving the responsibility for Mary’s care to his friend John, and he is honoring his mother by providing for her, even after he is gone. He is fulfilling his duty as a faithful son. Jesus is, in a very clear manner, fulfilling the 5th commandment, which is to honor your father and your mother. And it is this commandment that I would like to consider tonight.

Honor your father and your mother. It’s such a simple command, and it seems so natural, even among pagans. There is something clearly evil, something repulsive, when we see a child disrespecting, dishonoring, or even harming their parent. When we see an evil character in a movie kill their own parent, we are shocked, and should be, because it is the opposite of God’s design, and the opposite of the law that has been written on our hearts.

But the principle in this command extends further than the relationship between children and parents. The principle of honor extends to all relationships between the superior and the subordinate; all relationships between those in charge, and those under their care and supervision. It extends to employers and employees; students and teachers; and citizens and rulers. So let’s look at this 5th commandment from a few different angles.

Tonight we will **examine the duties of children to their parents**. The duties of children to their parents. And these principles apply to all subordinates: employees, students, citizens, anybody that is under the authority of someone else. Next week, Lord willing, I’ll cover the duties of parents, or those in authority, but tonight we will focus on the duties of children, and all other subordinates.

1. Children, **Love your parents**. Love your parents. If Christ commands us to love even our enemies, how much more should we love those who have birthed us, those who have responsibility to care for us, to nurture us, and to provide for us. The command seems simple, but the duty is harder than we think.
   1. One of the effects of the sin’s presence in the world is that Fathers are naturally at enmity with their sons, and sons are naturally at enmity with their fathers. We don’t have to work to be at odds with one another; that’s the easy part. But what we have to work at, and what is commanded of children towards their parents is love.
   2. Love is the starting point for all the other duties too. Without love, you’ll never honor or respect your parents, you’ll never obey your parents, you’ll never be able to submit to them or follow their wishes. Love is the starting point.
   3. And The command doesn’t demand mere outward obedience. Rather, the command requires genuine, heart-level love.
   4. If you love your parents, then you’ll naturally delight in their company. No friend will be as valuable to you as a kind father or mother.
   5. Similarly, if you love your parents, you’ll want to please them. You’ll be eager to give up what doesn’t please them, eager to endeavor in things that bring them joy, eager to remove impediments to your parents’ happiness, and eager to bring about that which makes them smile.
   6. Just as true piety is concerned with pleasing our heavenly father, so too is true family piety concerned with pleasing our earthly fathers and mothers.
   7. Young people especially ought to consider this point well: do you often factor in your parents’ happiness into your decision making? When you’re deciding where to go and what to do, whom to spend time with. Will this purchase please my parents? Will this activity promote my parents’ joy? Will this relationship bring peace and happiness to my parents, or will it bring tension and heartache?
   8. Children, resolve this very day to do nothing that will unnecessarily bring pain or unhappiness to your parents. Resolve to have a spirit of deference, where you want to defer to their wishes and happiness rather than your own. Consider your parents’ interests ahead of your own, and by doing so you’ll be imitating Christ, who we’re told in Philippians 2 considered the interests of others ahead of his own, and thereby proved himself to be the faithful son of the heavenly father, who honored the father in all things.
   9. Love your parents, because it is your duty and because it is your privilege.
2. **Children, Honor your parents**. Honor your parents.
   1. Notice that I did not say obey. I will cover obedience in a minute, but first we must discuss honor.
   2. What does it mean to honor your parents? That word can have a range of meanings, but it boils down to a reverence for them. A heart-level submission to their authority. It means a respect for them. Valuing their wishes and opinions.
   3. And, just like the previous point, this reverence is not merely outward lip-service; the child’s actions should correspond with the reverential feelings of the heart.
   4. When children speak with their parents, there should be an appropriate tone, submissive body language, and respectful choice of words. There is no room for rolling eyes, stubborn and disrespectful tone, unyielding attitude, and arrogant back-talking. All of those things dishonor both your earthly parents and your heavenly father.
   5. And this is exactly the opposite of what we see in the world today. You can turn on just about any tv show today and see the children speaking in a disrespectful manner to their parents. The father is portrayed as the household idiot, the mother is often the real leader and intelligent one who actually keeps the house running, and the children are the ones that talk back and joke on the father. What is pitched as comedic is actually a demonic inversion of the biblical pattern, and the world delights in it. Children, beware about the influence of such negative pictures. We may consider it harmless to fill our minds with such entertainment, but what do you think the effect will be of watching those shows for hours and hours, over the course of years? The effect will likely be a lower respect for your parents, an increased temptation to speak disrespectfully toward them, and a decreased willingness to submit to them and their wishes.
   6. Be warned, scripture reveals the fate of those that choose to disregard God’s creation pattern of children honoring their parents. For example:
      1. Ishmael, we’re told in Genesis 21 and Galatians 4, mocked one good act of his father and mother, was kicked out of his father’s inheritance and proved to be out of the kingdom of heaven.
      2. In 1 Samuel 2 we are told that Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phineas, refused to listen to the wisdom of their father, and the Lord put them do death.
      3. Absalom, King David’s son, was hanged by the Lord in 2 Samuel 18 because of his rebellion against his father.
      4. In 2 Kings chapter 2, we are told a story that doesn’t often get read in children’s Sunday school. God’s prophet Elisha is mocked by a group of boys. The boys are making fun of him for being bald. So Elisha calls down a curse from heaven in the name of the Lord, and two she bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 boys. 2 Kings 2, look it up sometime.
   7. God’s word is very clear that dishonoring your parents is a serious offense, not only an offense against your parents but also an offense against God. Romans 1 lists a long list of sins that deserve death, things like “envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness, gossip, **30**slander, hating God, insolence, and pride.” But the list also includes those that are disobedient to parents.
   8. God takes seriously his fifth commandment, so children must honor their parents.
3. Next, Children **must obey their parents**. Children must obey their parents.
   1. This is related to the previous point, but must be made explicit. Perhaps no duty is more generally acknowledged than this one.
   2. And this obedience must begin early, earlier than most of us even think. The younger you are, the more you need a guide and a ruler.
   3. The Apostle Paul gives us the one exception to this rule when he says, “Children obey your parents in the Lord.” In the Lord. That means, if your parents ask you to do something that would force you to disobey God, then you must choose to obey God rather than man. Honoring your parents does not mean blind obedience, especially if that obedience would cause you to disregard the commands of God.
   4. But, normally, parents will give us commands that are lawful, and we children must choose to obey them. And this obedience from children should be marked with three fruit: it should be prompt, it should be cheerful, and it should be complete.
      1. **Our obedience should be prompt**. As soon as your parents give a lawful command, it should be followed. Delayed obedience is disobedience. If you’re asked to clean your room now and you clean it tomorrow, you have not obeyed. It doesn’t matter if the commercial break hasn’t come yet. It doesn’t matter if you haven’t finished the video game yet. When you’re given a command, you should obey promptly. Our obedience should be prompt.
      2. **Second, our obedience should be cheerful**. Even if we obey our parents immediately, we haven’t fulfilled the spirit of the law if we obey with a disgruntled heart. You may drop what you’re doing and fulfill your parents’ request, but to do so with a sigh of frustration, while rolling your eyes and stomping your feet, is just as dishonoring your parents as telling them an outright “NO.” God commands cheerful, heart-level obedience, and it honors your parents to given them the same.
      3. Or, consider this difficult test of cheerfulness. When you get your paystub every couple of weeks, are you cheerful about submitting to your authorities and paying your taxes? Or do you grumble in your heart or out loud about having to submit to the tax legislation that your God-ordained authorities have put in place?
      4. Our obedience in **ALL** things ought to be out of a heart of joy and cheerfulness, because obeying our parents and our authorities cheerfully is honoring to our heavenly father as well. Our obedience should be prompt and our obedience should be cheerful.
      5. **Third, our obedience should be Complete**. Don’t raise your hands, but how many of you have had this conversation: the parent walks into the room and says to the child, “I thought I told you to clean this up.” The child responds, “I started to, but…” And then frustration ensues. The problem is that the parent expected complete obedience, expected the child to follow through on the command, but the child got distracted by something else, and would up, even unintentionally, disobeying. Incomplete obedience is disobedience. Unless we are providentially hindered, we ought to obey our parents’ wishes through to the end of a task.
      6. A couple of caveats here:
         1. Notice I said providentially hindered. If I was asked by my parents to rake the leaves in the yard, but I dropped what I was doing half way through to help our elderly neighbor get out of her burning house, that is a justifiable reason to not complete my raking chore. But, if I only half-way finish the job because I was distracted by playing on my phone or riding my bike, that is disobedience.
         2. Another caveat, especially for parents: the expectation of complete obedience needs to be appropriate to the age of the child. I’ll address this more next week, but I don’t expect my 3 year old to be able to do as good of a raking job on the front yard as I would a 17 year old.
      7. So, Children ought to obey their parents, and that obedience should be marked with promptness, with cheerfulness, and with completeness. That is what obedience should look like.
      8. Children ought to love, honor, and obey their parents.
4. Children **should submit to their parents**. Submit to their parents. And this principle is especially important applied to other realms, like citizens submitting to lawful authority, and employees submitting to employers.
   1. In this category I am specifically thinking of matters that are in the realm of preference or prudence; that is, matters that are not necessarily moral law, but become moral law for those under someone’s authority.
   2. For example, every home has some sort of rule, some sort of expectations, or patterns that tell us what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not acceptable. So let’s apply this principle of moral law.
   3. Is it moral law to make your bed every day? Is it a sin not to make your bed in the morning? Not necessarily. However, if your mother asks you to make your bed every morning before you come down for breakfast, then it becomes a matter of moral law for you. For you to not make your bed becomes sinful because you are dishonoring your mother’s wishes, and dishonoring your mother dishonors your father, who is her head, and dishonoring your parents dishonors your heavenly Father. Do you see the connection? How matters that are not necessarily moral law become moral law? How not making your bed, which isn’t necessarily a matter of sin, becomes a matter of sinful rebellion?
   4. As long as the command from the superior, like our parents, doesn’t cause us to sin, then we should submit to the command.
   5. Another example: As long as the command from the civil magistrate doesn’t cause us to sin, we ought to submit. 1 Peter 2:3 tells us to “be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution,” and then later he specifically tells them to “Honor the Emperor.” Peter told the churches to submit to and honor the Roman Emperor, an emperor that was persecuting them!
   6. In our country, we may not agree with the logic of some legislation, so we vote to change it; but, until it is changed, we should submit in all things lawful to the leaders that God has ordained be over us, just like children should submit in all things lawful to the parents that God has ordained be over them.
   7. Within households, one of the most beautiful and pleasant sights is to see children that honor their parents and joyfully submit to their parents’ instructions. And conversely, one of the most unpleasant and grotesque sights is to see children disobeying their parents, running amuck, angering their parents, arguing with their parents, and generally rebelling against their parents, and thereby rebelling against God.
   8. Children, hear me clearly when I say that submitting to your parents’ lawful commands is good for your soul, and honors the Lord. Be humble enough to realize that they have lived longer than you, they have more wisdom than you, and they have your best interests at heart. They are trying to train you for godliness, not merely for behavior.
   9. Young ones, Consider these warnings from proverbs about the fate of children that rebel against their parents, and Adults likewise apply these principles to anyone that is in authority over you, at work, in the government, whomever:
      1. Proverbs 20:20 says that “If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.”
      2. Proverbs 30:17, “The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.”
   10. In short, the wages of dishonoring your parents is death, and if you continue in that pattern of rebellion, you will head toward death. If you continue to break the laws of the land, if you continue to do whatever you want, if you continue to argue with and rebel against your parents, you will sprint headlong down the path of pain and suffering that leads to death.
   11. Children, be warned that rebelling against and dishonoring your parents is not the cool path, is not the path that leads to happiness, but it is the path that brings only pain and suffering.
   12. But, children, hear me today tell you that there is another way. There is a better way, there is a way of happiness and joy and peace, and it doesn’t begin with you trying harder to be a better child. It doesn’t start with you trying harder to submit to your parents. The better path begins with you seeing that you aren’t a perfectly submissive child, that you’ve sinned against your parents and against God, and that God has provided a way for you to be forgiven.
   13. God has provided a way for you to be completely washed of the guilt of your rebellion, and a way for you to become a faithful son and a faithful daughter. That way is Jesus Christ. God sent his son to live a life of perfect righteousness, and His son Jesus did exactly that. Jesus lived a life that completely honored his father. He lived a life that was completely submissive to the will of his father, even though it cost him his life. The bible says in Isaiah 53 that it was the will of the Lord to crush him, and Jesus, for the joy set before him willingly endured the cross. That is faithful submission.
   14. Even more than that, Jesus willingly bore the punishment that we sinful children deserved. Jesus took every blow, every whipping, every painful bruise, every shameful joke and all the ridicule, all the dishonor that our sins deserved, and he bore them on the cross and then buried them in the grave.
   15. That’s the good news for rebellious children like me and you. That’s the gospel. That Christ has provided a way for any that would come to him to be forgiven and made righteous.
   16. And even more, when we come to faith in Christ, we are given a new heart, we’re born again this gospel says, and we’re given the very spirit of Christ that writes God’s law on our hearts. The commandment to honor our parents, the very law that provoked our sinful hearts to rebel, that law will become something that we love, that we strive to do. By the holy spirit’s help, we will labor to be a faithful son or daughter, a faithful citizen and employee that seeks to honor those in authority over us.
   17. We’ll begin to pray for our civil leaders, we’ll begin to speak kindly to our teachers, we’ll begin to honor and submit to the wishes of our parents, we’ll begin to faithfully fulfill the commands of our employers, not merely because that’s in OUR best interests, but because that’s what the Lord commands, and that’s what honors the Lord.
   18. We must submit to the authorities over us, children to their parents, employees to their employers, citizens to magistrates.

Now, I want to spend the rest of the time tonight addressing several practical issues that arise when dealing with relationships of authority and submission.

1. What do I do if someone in authority over me is asking me to do something sinful? What if my parents, or my teacher, or my boss is asking me to do something that I think is wrong?
   1. First, If you think they are unaware that it is wrong, then we can try to humbly remind them of God’s word. For example, if your employer asks you to do something related to the business finances that you know if illegal, you humbly let them know that such an act is forbidden by law. If the person in authority over us is ignorant of something, then the way to honor them is to remove their ignorance by humble instruction.
   2. But, if they are aware that what they are doing or what they are commanding, then we must obey God rather than man, as Peter says in Acts 5:29. We must not commit sin, even if our human authority tells us to. It is never right to try and keep the 5th commandment by breaking the first four.
   3. Seeking to fulfill the 5th commandment and honor those in authority over us may mean, depending on the situation, that we have to disobey our immediate authority, and go to a higher authority. If your immediate supervisor is asking you to break the law, then you might need to go to management with the issue. If your parent is in unrepentant sin or asking you to sin, then you need to involve someone in authority over them, like a pastor or maybe even the police. Like I said above, honoring your parents does not mean blind obedience, and sometimes to honor those in authority we must go against their wishes, for their own good and for God’s glory.
   4. Children, these issues can be very complex, so if you are ever in this kind of situation where you think your parents are in unrepentant sin or if someone is forcing you to sin, please seek the wisdom someone older than you that can help, like a pastor or a teacher or somebody. The 5th commandment is not an excuse for those in authority to abuse those under them; indeed, it is the opposite, as I will address next week. The 5th commandment assumes faithful service by those in positions of authority.
2. A second practical observation for children as it relates to the 5th commandment: the relationship between children and parents changes as they age. Or, to put it differently, children honor their parents in different ways as they grow older.
   1. So, as a two-year-old child, what is expected is direct and immediate obedience. When I tell my two-year-old to put on a jacket before he goes outside, I am not open for a debate about it. He will submit, and he doesn’t need to know why I told him to put a jacket on. Because Daddy said so is sufficient.
   2. But, when that same child is 13, a wise parent will not enforce the same kind of obedience. I still expect the 13-year-old to obey, but by that age I want the child to see the reasoning behind my decision. Unlike the 2-year-old that must obey merely because daddy said so, the 13-year-old is learning to think and reason, and a wise parent will help them to reason wisely. You need to put a jacket on because the forecast is for cold weather today and I don’t want you to get sick. Parents aren’t doing their children any favors if they haven’t thought them to think, but only to blindly obey, by the time the children move out of the house.
   3. Furthermore, when the child is an adult, honoring their older parents takes on whole new forms. Honoring their older parents may mean helping them physically, helping them with their finances, helping them make decisions. Indeed, as parents approach the end of their life, the children honor their parents by taking care of them in many of the same ways that the parents took care of the children at the beginning of their lives.
   4. Children, you may be called to change the diapers of your ailing parents one day. You may be called to feed them, or to bathe them, just like they did for you when you were a baby. Indeed, if your parents’ mind begins to fail, you may actually be forced to disobey their own wishes for their own good.
   5. For example, Your father with dementia might demand that you give him the car keys, but a faithful son will honor his father in that moment by disobeying him, and not giving him the car keys.
   6. I say all this just to illustrate the point that faithful obedience to the 5th commandment will look different as children age, and we should not merely equate blind obedience with fulfilling the command.

I’m going to close this sermon with a biblical warning related to the fifth commandment, and a biblical promise related to the 5th commandment.

First, for those that are not believing in Jesus Christ tonight, know that you stand condemned before God for your violations of the 5th commandment. You have failed to honor your parents, you have failed to honor your employer, you have failed to honor everyone who has ever been in authority over you. You are a lawbreaker and worthy of judgement, according to the bible. Deuteronomy 27:16 speaks very clearly to your state: “Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother.” You stand under the curse of God, which means that you will not only have pain and suffering in this life, but you will stand under the eternal wrath of God in hell, where all of your sins will merit for you everlasting pain, suffering, and death.

But, the bible also makes a biblical promise to us: if we confess our sin to God, and look in faith to his Son as our savior, then we can be forgiven. That is the promise of God that is extended to any that would come to him. If you would believe that Jesus is the Christ, that this man hanging on the cross in our text tonight was the Faithful son who fulfilled the 5th commandment in our place, that he perfectly honored both his heavenly father and his earthly parents, then you too can be forgiven, you can have the curse removed from you, you can have given to you the righteousness that Christ displayed on the cross. You can be seen by our heavenly Father as a perfectly faithful son, because Christ’s righteous deeds are counted to you and because your sinful rebellion have been taken by him.

Come to Christ this day, children and adults, and taste of his forgiveness, taste of the goodness of the faithful son who perfectly honored his father, so that you too can be made in to a faithful child who honors your father and mother.

PRAYER

**Closing Song- 420- Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy**

Come ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and pow'r.

**Benediction - 2 Corinthians 13:14-** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all