

“Family Matters - home building”

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:1-7

Graphics: house, family, home, laughing

Big Truth: Families are important to God, to our communities, to our church, and to us. No matter in what stage you find yourself, family matters are vital to our lives. Sometimes we struggle with our families, but they are still family. Home building allows us to weather any storms for today and tomorrow. Raising children and grandchildren in the faith is our main task. Family finances point our hearts and lives to God’s kingdom work. Discipling our families makes new and stringer disciples of Jesus. Making transitions well leads to peace and joy, as God leads us to new places.

Focus Phrase: Home building prepares our families for today and the future.

1. Introduction

- A. Over the years, I’ve heard many stories and seen lots of pictures of people who built their own houses. By hand! I can’t even imagine! It doesn’t seem as popular to do that anymore, but some still do.
- B. In 1994, Stacy and I had been married less than a year, and were DINKs - dual income, no kids! It was a glorious time in our lives. Mostly, because we could buy whatever toys we wanted. We lived in a small apartment just after we got married, but were feeling like we needed more space.
- C. So, we bought a house. It was a great little Cape Cod-style house set on an acre of land in the country. It had a two-car garage, a nice basement, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a nice kitchen and dining room, and family room.
- D. So, then we had Benjamin and Abigail. And we loved that little house in the country.
- E. But that only lasted about 10 years, before we felt the call to ministry, sold our little house, moved to Little Valley for 7 years, and then moved here to Panama for the last 10 years. (I think I forgot to mention after Annual Conference that we’ve been re-appointed here for another year! Praise God!)
- F. In each house we’ve lived, the space was just a house. But as we built our family, we built a home.
- G. And even though none of us know what tomorrow will bring into our lives, since God doesn’t even guarantee tomorrow, one thing that has been the center of our lives, as it is for all of us, is the profound sense that **family matters**.
 - i. It matters when you’re young and living at home, ready to take on the world. Family means security and boundaries.
 - ii. It matters when you go out on your own, knowing that you have people rooting for you.
 - iii. Family matters if you decide to get married, knowing that two families are becoming one.

- iv. Family matter if you have children, and your family gets bigger.
 - v. Family matters when you raise those children, or maybe nieces and nephews...or the children here at church.
 - vi. Family matters when those kids grow up and get married, and you find yourself with an empty nest after decades.
 - vii. Family matters when there's a death in the family, especially if it's a spouse or close family member.
 - viii. Family matters when you're in the later stages of life and sometimes need to depend on others to help, to bless, and to love...to love and bless in return.
- H. Family Matters.
- I. Families matter to God. Families matter to our communities. They matter to our church...and to us.
 - J. God has a very specific plan for families, and it doesn't depends on how big or small, wealthy or modest, near or far, healthy or a little bit dysfunctional (OK - maybe a lot dysfunctional sometimes :). It depends on following God together.
 - K. For us, over the next five weeks, we'll take a deeper look at how we - as a church, and as members of our families - can keep growing as families...closer to God's plan for our families...deeper in love with Jesus...and more in-tune with the Holy Spirit.
 - L. We just finished a whole sermon series about spiritual habits. Our families are called to engage in those habits. We launched our Intentional Discipleship Plan earlier this year (back in the good ole' days), and our FAMILIES are called to SHIFT together - in worship, in community, in obeying, in openness, in serving, and in sharing.
 - M. Families are the building blocks of God's plan for the world...and it has been since the 6th day of Creation, when God made us male and female for each other...when God created a way for us to have children, if we decide to...to build our families.
 - N. We'll start with Home Building, which is the first step in healthy families. We'll see what the bible has to say about raising children and grandchildren. Then, we'll talk about family finances and family discipleship. Finally, we'll explore family transitions and what happens when our families grow up and out, and God's plan to use us right where we are.
 - O. Let's pray and then dive into our first growth point - home building. It really has nothing to do with hammers and nails, but has everything to do with preparing for today, AND for whatever comes in the future.
 - P. Let's pray...PRAY!

- Q. OK, let's open our bibles and turn to Matthew chapter 7, starting in verse 24. This is the end of what we call the Sermon on the Mount - a series of sermons that Jesus preached to his disciples and the crowds that gathered in and around Galilee, a beautiful region north east of Jerusalem, along the Sea of Galilee.

2. Scripture

A. READ Matthew 7:24-27

- B. "Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who build his house on rock." That's what Jesus said.
- i. We know that Jesus said A LOT of things, as recorded in the Gospels, and throughout the bible. Jesus spoke somewhere around 31,426 words recoded in the gospels.
 - ii. But that's not what Jesus is talking about, right? Not really. This parable is a simple admonition from Jesus that those who want to believe in and follow Him, and GROW as disciples, must listen, hear, and act on the words of Jesus.
 - iii. I would contend that Jesus was not only talking about the words that He physically spoke while on earth, but any words spoken by God the Father. I might even go so far to say that Jesus was asking us to hear and act on the words inspired and written by the New Testament writers about Him.
- C. This parable gave the disciples the pathway to learn about and put into action everything that Jesus desired for them, as His student learners. Jesus was building a kingdom-focused, kingdom-growing group of people who did what Jesus said and did.
- D. And since this series and message is about family matters, before we get to the meat of this parable, what did Jesus say about families?
- i. Shockingly, Jesus talks more about priorities than anything else, when it comes to families. I mean, in Luke 14:26, we find Jesus saying this: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple." So much for building a family! But, see, Jesus wasn't tearing down the family or the need to love and nurture families. Jesus was putting it all in perspective...families are important, but I, (JESUS) and more important. And, if the disciples didn't get that priority right, then the families around them would be following false gods and cultural trends.
 - ii. In Mark 10, Jesus said, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not

man separate.” Jesus confirmed the biblical ethic of marriage between one man and one woman as a building block of the Christian family.

- iii. Jesus also lived out the 10 Commandments, including this one from Exodus 20:12, which commands God’s people, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”
- iv. I love this scene in Matthew 19:13-15, “Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.”
- v. Yet, more than any specific teaching Jesus had about families, Jesus’ words always pointed to one thing: love. No matter what the disciples’ families looked like - married, single, parents, kids, young, old - it always comes down to love...love for God and love for others.
- vi. If the disciples loved those in their midst in the ways that Jesus taught them, then whatever their homes looked like, would not only be places of love for each other, but love for God, together.

E. Back to the parable...

- i. Jesus said that there were two men. One listened to His words and put them into action in real life. And the other, heard the words, but did NOT put His words into action.
- ii. The first scenario is like building a house on rock. When the rains come, the house solidly stands, despite everything happening around it.
- iii. The second guy’s life was like a house built on sand. And when the rains came, the house was wrecked because the rains swept it away. And the fall was great, said Jesus.
- iv. A little geography for us this morning. The region in which Jesus was teaching is surrounded by dry desert sand most of the year. The disciples would’ve been able to envision two people building houses during the dry season - one on rock and one on sand. And as long as the dry season lasted, both houses were fine...today was good! Life was good!
- v. Yet, life isn’t always about today. The rains come. The winds blow - physically (meteorologically - is that a word?) and, because this is a parable, metaphorically. Sometimes, the circumstances of our lives threaten to flood us...to blow us around by the winds of strife, job loss, pandemics, bad decisions by us and others, health crises, sin, and selfishness, among other things.

- vi. When everything is good and dry, today is great. But, because today can turn into tomorrow pretty quickly, home building is not just about today, but about what will come tomorrow.
- vii. Jesus' main message to the disciples was that they needed to build every part of their lives on the truth of the gospels (His words), and then build every part of their lives on that rock-solid foundation.
- viii. When they did, today would be solid - filled with joy and peace knowing that God was in control and they could be confident in Him.
- ix. But, even more important, they could continue to be confident that when tomorrow comes and things go south in whatever ways, their lives still hold solid on the solid rock of Jesus.

3. Application

- A. When we focus this down onto our families and homes, we clearly see that **home building in Jesus prepares our families for today and the future.**
- B. Ultimately, we do hear Jesus' words in John 14, when he says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."
- C. We have a kingdom-ready heavenly home, built for us by Jesus himself, ready for us to move into when He returns. That heavenly house is our security and hope now, as believers.
- D. **But we're not there yet!**
- E. The amazing part, though, is that we get to start building a home **here on earth** that looks like our eternal home, so that when we get there, we'll know where to put all our stuff! Just kidding - you can't take anything with you.
- F. If we build our homes and families like our Kingdom homes, then whatever comes our way in THIS life will not shake the solid rock foundation. Our families will weather ANY storm. Our marriages will remain faithful and solid. Our children and grandchildren will find their way to faith, as we pray for them daily. Service, sharing, worship, community, obeying, and openness will be our example and habit.
- G. Let's see if we can get some practical steps to home building Jesus' way. And, remember, this is so your home looks like Jesus' home today, AND for tomorrow, no matter what comes. This is hearing Jesus' words and putting them into action for a rock-solid foundation.

- H. I found a great resource from Marisa Boonstra in her book called *9 Steps for Building a Godly Home*, and I couldn't say it any better, so I'll share her steps and expound on them.
- i. First, **Worship God Together** without any rivals. There are many things we COULD and sometimes DO worship, but no matter what family make-up you have, worship God together. If you're single, worship with your family if you are nearby, or a church family. If you have kids, or parents, worship with them. Don't let anything get in the way of worship with others...it's where you'll hear Jesus' words, and be able to put them into action.
 - ii. **#2 Practice Biblical Love** Biblical love is a sacrificial love. It's a love, according to Jesus' words, that is exhibited by laying down your life for others. It's patient and kind, doesn't keep record of right and wrong. It's not boastful or rude or arrogant. Practice THAT kind of love in your home.
 - iii. And, **Make the Bible the center of wisdom** Read it at home, together with kids and parents, or whoever is there. This goes back to our spiritual habit of study and our intentional discipleship milestone of openness & obedience.
 - iv. **#4 - Commit your family to biblical worldview** Honestly, there have been as many different worldviews as there have been years on the calendar. However, the Word of God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. From divine design to God's providence and provision, to Jesus' work on earth, and the presence of power of the Holy Spirit, to Jesus' return and eternal triumph, commit yourself and your family to a biblical worldview. Politics, society, culture, and all other man-made worldviews will eventually fail, but the word of God remains.
 - v. **#5 Teach Each Other The Word of God** Talk about what you're reading in your study and devotions. Get into a Sunday School class or small group. Our Sunday School leaders are planning some all-ages, family-oriented Sunday morning learning events coming up. What a great way to teach each other the Word of God!
 - vi. Here's one: **Fill Your Home with Praise and Worship** "Hey Alexa, play praise and worship music!" "Hey Siri, play worship music!" It's that easy. We are blessed to have the Family Life Network on our area, 90.9 FM. Fill your home with worship music, in whatever form you prefer!
 - vii. **#7 Decorate With Reminders of God's Promises** A couple years ago, Stacy and I realized that our house didn't really have scriptural artwork. We're trying to build the symbols in our house to remind us of God's love and grace. It might be subtle, but a cross to remind you and the family, or a bible verse, can be powerful reminders.

- viii.#8 **Pray with and over your children** I would add grandchildren to that, as well. Never stop praying. In fact, start praying for children and grandchildren even before they come...and after they are grown with kids of their own. Pray WITH and OVER your children and grandchildren.
- ix. #9 **Model joyful service and hospitality** A family that serves together builds a solid foundation for today and tomorrow. I love when I see families serving together at church, or in the community. Parents and grandparents, give kids the opportunity to increase in a life of service, and welcome people into your life together.

4. Conclusion

- A. One of my favorite hymns is On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand. Maybe we can sing the first verse and chorus?
- B. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand
- C. Families matter to God, to our communities, our church, and us! God wants our families to build homes that are filled with love - like the love Jesus has for us.
- D. When we do, no matter what comes our way, home building prepares our families for today and the future.
- E. Your homework this week is to think about the make-up of your family. List out your family members...and begin by praying for each one. Then, try some of the things we listed out this week.
- F. I love our families and all the ways they are growing healthy and strong in Jesus' name!
- G. During the last song, I would've invited anyone who wanted to to come up front and pray together...individuals, spouses, families, big and small. Instead, if you're here today, think about your family, wherever they are. If they're next to you, then maybe scooch a little closer. If they're somewhere else, bring them all to mind as we pray. Offer them up to the Lord, pray a blessing over them, and then after worship, call, text, or somehow tell them that we prayed for them today. Build a home wherever you are on the solid rock of Jesus.
- H. Let's pray and offer up our families and our homes to the Lord!
- I. PRAY!