

In worship, the people of God listen to his Word that they may serve him all during their lives. Today is a Christian Family Sunday, somewhat more than just a Rally Day service. Christians most of all, must know how to perfect their beliefs, and then respect the Word Christ has given us. The formula for Christian Education is considered as to two-fold: 1) Seeking God's truth. 2) Responding to God's will.

Whether it is at home, church, or Sunday school, we are commanded to have a commitment to learning. This is demanded of all who profess themselves to be Christians. It is commanded of all parents who commit their children in baptism. The educational ministry of the congregation involves all the members. Each of us has several roles: learner, teacher, supporter, administrator, helper. The active commitment is for all of us. Paul wrote to Timothy: *do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, as one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth.* 2 Timothy 2:15.

In the book, **The Cost of Discipleship**, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: *only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.* I doubt that there is one among you who questions the necessity of family life, its makeup, and its fundamentals. Christ blessed families. He did so at the wedding feast; he did so in noting the importance of the role of each person in the family: some had to be labourers and others to be comforters. Christ believed in the family structure and the importance of children. Christ showed time and patience for children. He showed them to be equal to all members of life, and forbid that they be shoved into the background. Listen to his commandments: to the adults: *Do not forbid the little children to come unto me.* He commanded, expecting adults could learn to have the simple truth, in love and trusting obedience, as a child, that there was no other way for eternal life with him. I believe that this refers to all his teachings, that as a child believes what s/he is told, because s/he knows nothing to be the alternative. This is what we must do, to be able to turn from our sinful ways.

There is an old saying that I am sure many of you have heard, *the family that prays together, stays together.* Stop. Look around you. Yes, it is easy to say of someone whom you know, their marriage is or was a shambles; that one of the partners is or was not a true part of the marriage, holding up his or her end. How easily it is often said of the children of a broken home, *it's too bad, but oh well.* Oh well what? Take a second look at the broken homes you know, how many of them where a

family? How many of them were regular attenders at worship? How many of them had their children in Sunday School regularly? But more importantly, how many of them ever had Jesus Christ in their homes? In their hearts? Jesus Christ can be found in church, but Jesus Christ is not a convenient doormat that is there solely to wash up with once a year. Christian families participate in the church's education and public (global) family worship. To some I have been told that it is like a refuelling stop from week to week. Irregardless, no matter what church means to you as an individual, unless you take Christ home with you, and make him a part of the family circle in your home, you are not a practising Christian. If you are not a Christian, the sin of denial, Christ taught, is death in the fires of hell, the fiery furnace of eternity.

Christ's Word reinforces the commandment: *Honour thy father and thy mother that your days may be long upon the earth, where he has put you.* Children are told to honour mother and father. This means to respect their wishes. This means to obey the rules of your parent's home, even when you become an adult. You may not always like what mom and dad tell you to do, but God has given them a job to do, to raise you to be a good adult. It is important for children to pray for direction for themselves, but they ought also to pray for their mothers and fathers too. Pray that mom and dad might have God's help.

I was visiting a farm one day where I met a 14-year-old boy who was driving one of the big tractors. In talking to him he told me that he enjoyed helping his dad get the work done, because his dad could not drive two tractors at once and that by helping him, they could get more work done quicker and then they would be able to go to the movie as a family. I believe that this is Jesus' message to us today. I believe that this is the message that Paul tried to teach to the new churches. It is the message for each Christian. Once we know what the work is, we have a duty to pitch in and help get the job done. Paul taught that *all who believe are priests and apostles in Him who called us.* Christ said that we are not to hide ourselves from others. We are not to put our light in Christ Jesus under a bushel. To do so is to deny Jesus Christ. To deny Jesus is an unpardonable sin, and the wages of sin is death, eternal separation from God. God in his Son Jesus Christ, has given us Good News and brought us into His family as his people. God, in his Son Jesus Christ, has called us to a new life and given us the commandment of love to fulfil.

God and his Son Jesus Christ, has called us to grow and mature in our understanding of his Word and all it demands of us in our daily life. God in his Son

Jesus Christ has called us to teach one another in the fellowship of the church and to reach out to others with the Good News. Therefore, as Christians:

This we acknowledge with grateful hearts.

This we accept depending upon his gracious guidance.

To this we commit ourselves praying for the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, with joy and thanksgiving.

We accept this task praying for God's enabling and sustaining strength. Amen.