

HOW WILL YOUR KIDS TURN OUT?

SERIES: PARENTING IN A PANDEMIC | WEEK 4 | 10.11.2020

Question: How will our kids turn out? It may be for those of us who are parents the biggest concern we might feel. I want to stop there a second and welcome those of you who are joining us online. Welcome, we're glad you're jumping on. Those of you out in the porch, under the portico, welcome. And all of you in the room – second service! ["YEAH!" MAN HEARD FROM AUDIENCE / APPLAUSE] Yes! Thank you so much for being part of it. Love having you all down here front and center, it's awesome. So it's great to be with you today.

Hey, I want to share with you just a couple thoughts as we wrap up this series called PARENTING IN A PANDEMIC. I share a couple thoughts with you and then I want to share with you a couple verses on hope. So when you talk about that, wow, it's concerning how your kids will turn out, I want to share with you a couple verses on hope that are going to just really, I think, encourage you today. So, a few thoughts though as we wrap up this series.

We live in a moment where I believe we have the greatest opportunity to build relationships within our home—because we're in our homes—and to capitalize on that and to leverage that moment is just absolutely huge. A couple quick thoughts:

- **Teach and train in your homes constantly.** Your kids, everything they'll ever have to learn they have to be taught and they'll be taught it by someone, and if it's not you it'll be someone else, so make it be you. Here's a saying that I just think is really huge is that what you believe by your 14th birthday is what you'll die believing. That's a heavy responsibility but those are the years when you have the most influence. In your home right now you can use these moments, leverage these moments – could have never been better.
- **Deal with issues early.** There's gonna be a lot of issues that arise in your kid's life, things that you're going to see—behavior issues, character issues, things that they do, things that they say—and the longer you wait to deal with those things the harder they are to deal with; and so the quicker you can get on those things the better. Now one of the things I observed is that sometimes those things don't pop up until later so you get them when they pop up and you jump on them then, but the longer it takes and the later in life that you're dealing with it, when you're getting into the teenage years it's just a lot more complicated to work on.
- **You as a parent – you need a mentor.** You need someone that is a step ahead of you, that you can go to, that you can ask questions on. This thing of raising kids is overwhelming at times and there are questions and there are things and they are scary moments where you're like, "I don't know what to do." And going to social media doesn't get it done, just talking to everyone you can find doesn't get it done, but having that trusted source that you talk to on a regular basis, that you can call, that you know they don't think of you differently because you're going through this, and you know that they're praying for you and they care and they love you.
- **Don't parent alone.** Another issue that I want to throw out to you today is don't parent alone. There are resources that are available that are phenomenal resources and one of them is right here in this building. And that is getting your kids involved in the Kidz Ministry, getting your students involved in the Student Ministries, and being involved in the camps and the retreats and the activities that come up.

I used to be a children's pastor, I later was a youth pastor, and one of the things I would tell parents all the time and your kids are like, "I don't want to go to that retreat," "I don't want to go to camp," "Oh, that's dumb," "I don't have any friends there," "I don't want to do it," "It's not cool." And I just said to

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them, "Don't make it optional, just get them there." Because it's sort of like the stock market, if you pull out for one day it might be the wrong day that you're not in the stock market. And when you send them to church, you never know, that might be the day where they meet that friend of a lifetime; that might be the day where one of the adults there is just that right person that connects with them; it might be the day when they hear a teaching that just works and if they had missed that day they missed that opportunity. So I just encourage you.

Missions trips, you get an opportunity to send your kid on a mission trip, make sure they're on that serving with – even serving with you. I mean, making serving something that's part of your life and who we are and not letting it be optional. I mention this, if you have a junior or senior in high school, send them to [Summit](#) in Manitou Springs, Colorado, for just an incredible two-week time of worldview training, it's huge, it's game changing. I mention that today because I believe in it so strongly. The bottom line is you want your kids to gain a purpose and a passion in life and there's often things you're saying to your kids but then later on when they hear it reinforced with someone else all of a sudden they get it and they move forward.



I even mention this, this Wednesday night we're having a worship night here at the church, David's going to be leading us. [APPLAUSE] You've gotta be here for it. And you know what, bring your kids. You go, "Oh, they've got class tomorrow morning." It's just a Zoom class. They can wake up for it. Bring them here, let them see you worship, let them see you be part of it, let them pray along with you. I think one of the worst things we can do is pull our kids out of this room and them not be part of this. I mean, if they're in class first hour here bring them in here second hour and vice versa, make this part of their lives and make this part of something that you do as a family. Because, again, they're going to get the opportunity to see you worship.

By the way, this Saturday is a men's event out at the camp. Go online, jump on there, I think it's called [Breakout](#). Go on there and sign up for it and go to this thing, take your son along with you to it. These are opportunities where they see how men do life, how women do life, how your small group does life, how we worship together. Involve them in your life, take them along with you and make them a part of the people that you're around. Introduce them to your friends and let your friends build into their life.



Men's Event - October 27

Someone told me in here before service that when their son turned 13, and this just recently actually, found five or six of the men in this church that they just felt like those would be men would be amazing to have build into his life. And he said, "For your 13th birthday you get five men to build into your life." I guess their son's like [SARCASTIC], "Yay." But it's become something that became an amazing thing because each of those guys took him out for like half a day and spent time with him and did stuff with him and built into his life, and then they had a big party at the end of it. This is a matter of bringing other people in that you respect, that you love, that you trust, and letting them build into your life.

- **Guard your home.** One more thing, guard your home. There are all sorts of forces trying to get into your home that are going to disrupt, that are going to bring evil into your home, going to bring darkness in your home. Satan wants to come in there and break through those walls, whether it's on the screens or through the AirPods or whatever you may be doing, Satan's trying to get his influence into your home and resist that with everything that you've got.

But here's where I started and it's the thing that scares us, but I also want to give you hope through it is that—your kids have free will. Many of us in here know we have free will and at a given point we make

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our choices as to how we're going to respond. How are we going to respond to the Bible? How are we going to respond to the truth? How are we going to respond to God? How are we going to respond to others? And sometimes we do a really good job and respond really well, and other times we respond poorly. And your kids will have free will and they will make their choice.

One of the things that has surprised me over the years as being a pastor I get to see a lot of families, I get a lot to see a lot of parenting, and I get to see a lot of great parents, a lot of great families. And one of the things I've noticed even in great families very often one kid just is exceptional and just walks with Jesus and lives it out and just goes to great heights for the Lord, and the other just walks away. And you go, how is it they're raised in the same home with the same types of discipline, the parent feels like they failed royally, and I just go, "How can that be?" Because at a given point your child will be an adult, they get the opportunity, they get the privilege to make their choices. And so one of the things you want to be doing, we've talked about this along the way, is giving them the ramifications of their choices so that they know when they do make that choice this isn't on me, this is on you and your choices.

But here's what I would say to all of us whether you're dealing with a two-year-old or whether you have a 40-year-old wayward child, whatever it may be—pray, pray, pray. Even if they're doing really, really good pray hard, pray harder, pray hard constantly. Pray for each other, pray for your kids, pray for your family's kids, pray for other people's kids, pray for each other because there is a battle in this world trying to take us away from Jesus. I don't care who you are, I don't care how good the parenting was, there is a battle. But I know that God loves you and He wants to draw you in close, and I just don't want you to be in a place of despair.

So I asked the question: What if there was something that could put families back together again, that could heal hurts, heal up wounds, restore relationships and take away the pain of mistakes and decisions, bad decisions that have been made along the way. I want to read you a verse from the book of Malachi, it's the last book of the Old Testament of your Bible. Malachi Chapter 4, verse 6, it says this:

⁶ and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.¹

– MALACHI 4:6a (ESV)

I don't know about you that's one of those promises, one of those verses, one of those things to look forward to. You're going, "I want that and I want that to happen now. Can that happen now?" One of the things I was excited about, just in random I came across something this week, I think the number was something like 70-72% of young people right now when they say who would they go to in a time of need, like they're trying to figure something out, 70-72% are saying they'd go to their parents. I'll tell you what's crazy about that, in my generation that was absolutely not the fact, 72% would not have gone to their parents. It's awesome to hear that 72% right now would say, "I want to go talk to my mom and dad," "I want to go talk to my parents about those things."

And here's what those of you who are parents need to hear—we're in an incredibly opportune moment to be able to have that conversation with our kids. They don't have anyone at school to go to anymore. They don't have teachers to go to. They're locked up in their home, you're all they've got. And you know what, dad's not traveling, dad's home, mom's home, she's not going to the office, and everyone's not trying to get somewhere else. There's a moment and this is our moment to stop and say, "Hey, we're

¹ Context, vv. 5-6: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

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going to have presence, we're going to be here, we're going to listen, we're going to talk, and we're going to turn off all the stuff that's distracting us and just sit here and have a conversation; talk about hopes and joys and dreams and concerns and problems and just have this conversation. It's something that has been so needed for so long and I'm excited to see that coming back. And so when we read these words turning the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children back to the fathers we want something that's going to make all things right again. We want it made right.

Next week we're going to be starting a new series in the book of Matthew called JESUS IS KING and in the Kingdom there's coming a day when all things will be set right again. We live in this moment where the Kingdom has come and yet it is not quite yet, and so we're going to begin to wrestle this out and figure this out. When this verse was written here in Malachi the Jewish people were in an interesting situation. They had come back from captivity, a horrible time, and they had this hope and this promise that things were going to get all better and things were going to be really moving forward up and to the right. They get their temple rebuilt but it's not what it once was, and all of a sudden they find that in their country they are in they have all sorts of pestilence, they have drought and there's hunger, and they're looking at being occupied by a foreign occupier. And they're looking at the world going, "This isn't what we saw coming." And it's up against that background that this verse is written, that the prophet speaks these words. I find that helpful because if you think about it, we're at a time where we're like, "This isn't what we expected," "This isn't how things were supposed to be," "This isn't how my senior year of high school was supposed to be," "This isn't what we were expecting this time last year for this year," "This wasn't what we had written down in our goals on January 1." And yet we find ourselves here.

Unfortunately, the people felt very far away from God in this time. They thought things were about to get better and they weren't. Now what I want to do in that mention this to you, this same verse is listed in Luke Chapter 1. And so if you're following along in your Bible or you're taking notes, write down Luke Chapter 1, verse 17, because there this verse is fulfilled but it's 400 years later. And when you're reading the Bible and you go from Malachi to Matthew, even though you know there's 400 years in-between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, between this verse in Malachi where people were going through religious motions but it wasn't like deep in their hearts, to Matthew where Jesus arrives on the scene, 400 years is a long time. And it just feels like is it ever going to come? Is God's promise ever going to come? And I recognize that for many of you in your life and in your family, in wanting to see things restored and brought back together, you're asking the question, "When, how long am I going to have to wait?" That's why I said there at the beginning just pray, pray, pray. In fact, if you have your Bibles open to Luke Chapter 1, I'm going to start reading in verse 13. An angel shows up to this priest by the name of Zechariah and says this:

13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,

- LUKE 1:13a (ESV)

We're talking about an old man here, a couple that had not been able to have children. And the angel reminds us in the midst of this discussion, "*your prayer has been heard.*" You think about the people that were struggling in Malachi 400 years before, the ones who *were* willing to pray out to God, "God, change something, make something right." And the prophet has to come and says there's coming a day when the hearts of the fathers will be turned back to their kids and vice versa, there's coming that day it seems like, wow, it's not going to happen. Zechariah has been praying all his life that they'll have a kid. Some of you are struggling with this series because you're like, "I don't have a kid and I keep coming

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every week and I hear about having a kid. I don't know if I like that feeling." And yet we hear here the angel saying you've prayed and you've prayed and you've prayed and God has heard you. God hears. I even love the name *Zechariah* and the meaning of the name Zechariah, "God remembers." God knows His promises. God knows His promises to you. He remembers you. He hasn't forgotten you. He loves you. He says, hey, listen:

and you shall call his name John.

— the son that you're going to have —

¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and

— and I'm going to jump down here and it says:

he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

— and listen to verse 16:

¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah,

— he wasn't Elijah, he goes in the power of Elijah. Listen, here's the words we saw back in Malachi:

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

– LUKE 1:13b-17 (ESV)

Here's this guy John, John the Baptist, who comes with the power of Elijah to do one thing: Introduce the people to Jesus. The desire is to let everyone know here is Jesus, here is the Savior of the world. He needs to become more, I need to step back. When we love someone we want to introduce them to the ones we love, and that's what John would do. He would cry out as one crying out in the wilderness, that's what Isaiah Chapter 40 says, introducing people to the One who is soon to come.

³ A voice cries:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

– ISAIAH 40:3 (ESV)

I read those words "*turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,*" and to turn the hearts of the disobedient, and you think of that word "disobedient" and all sorts of things come to your mind. In the original language there's a couple phrases that come along with that I thought were interesting: "those who could not be persuaded," we get that, some of you have a kid that's in that boat; "someone who will not believe;" and then another phrase, "to speak to them as someone who's obstinate and stubborn," they learned that from you and only Jesus can turn that around. You see, we are each dealing with the results of The Fall, sin has affected everything in creation, sin has infected all of us, and sin has affected our world.

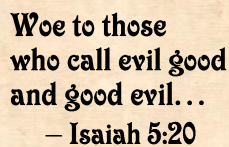
That's why we're dealing with, I mean, what happens to children in our world today is just horrific. We hear a lot about sex trafficking, I think it's even way beyond anything we hear. This subject of abortion, of just killing babies, of the abuse of children and of wives in our world. These things that are a result of sin placed onto mankind. And when we read of this, the disobedient, something has happened in the

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hearts of mankind where we each have this choice, this response. We can choose to follow Jesus and be obedient to him and live life the way He made it to be lived; or we can be obstinate and stubborn and disobedient and non-believing and we can just take that sinfulness and lock into it and live it to its fullest. And you know, that's the choice that each of us has to make. And so when you're raising kids you want them to see both of those choices, you want them to see what the results are if you go down those paths and to be able to set a stark difference between the two of these.

Now I oftentimes hear this, I call it a dismissive statement, when you talk about sin I get this real quick once over, "Aw, Pastor, no one's perfect." And what's meant by that is there is a sense in saying that that says I want to wave off this subject of sin. I don't want to admit that it's an issue. By the way, if you can somehow make this sin issue not be an issue, where what is wrong is right or what is wrong is just fine,



**Woe to those
who call evil good
and good evil...
— Isaiah 5:20**

that's your choice. If you can take that out of the sin category, then we don't need a Savior. And so that's why there's the quick, "Oh, no one's perfect, no one's perfect"—and that's why we need a Savior. And that's when Jesus cries out to each one of us and says, "I AM." And that's when we say, "I need You." And that's what we want to set our kids up and our families up to, that's what this verse means when he says he's going to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children because when they meet Jesus that begins to change things. When

Jesus changes your relationship with God by making it right through what He did on the cross, He will change your other relationships with each other, with your family, with your kids. And that's why when Malachi prophesies this, he looks forward to the time when Jesus hangs and dies on the cross to reconcile us to Himself to make us right with God. Now listen, if you've never been there that's why you can't get your kids there, that's why you can't get that relationship right with your kids. If you're there, you need your kids to get there.

I mentioned a minute ago in the book of Malachi there's this sense that the people were just going through the motions with God. They knew about God but they weren't taking it very seriously. I think we've come out of just recently a time period where we were so busy taking care of ourselves and meeting our own needs that that was where we were as a country, as a nation, as a church. And I believe right now God is calling us back to saying, "I want you to meet Me." It's what John the Baptist does. I want you to meet my friend; I want you to meet Jesus. And when we love people we want our loved ones to meet those people.

Let me tell you about a friend of mine, his name's Eddie, I've talked to you about Eddie before. Eddie was Best Man in my wedding. We were really close friends. We did everything together for a bunch of years. And Eddie's one of those guys when you get to know him he's just, he is a big person, not only in stature, just, he lives life really loudly and you just get to know him. The moment he walks into a room he lights up a room. He has this these sayings and these statements that he makes and when you get to know them you'll hear them and you'll hear them as answers to your questions that you ask him, things you want to talk about, he has these things that he says back to you every time. And after a while you get to learn what the answers are to some of the questions you're having and it's just, they're like "Eddie-isms."

And so when we moved as a family to the West Coast, we started having kids, my friend Eddie moved to New York City, and so we were separated by the distance of the country and so we weren't able to spend time together anymore. But as the kids were growing up I found myself quoting Eddie often. We'd be talking with the kids and I'd say, "Well, remember what Eddie would have once said," and so they would almost repeat it before I would say what Eddie said because I had told them what Eddie had

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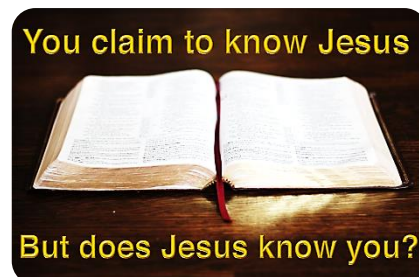
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said in this situation so many times. And so they had heard for years all my little Eddie-isms and things about Eddie and they felt like they knew Eddie inside and out.

When we moved here I said, "You know what, Eddie lives in New York City, we're close to New York City. Let's catch the train, let's head up to New York City and meet him." We went and we went downtown and we met him on one of the street corners downtown and we were going to spend the day with him. And as we met up with him there on the street corner there's those guys standing there with the signs telling you to get on the double-decker buses and I'm normally too cheap to buy those things, but for some reason I just started negotiating with the guy there on the corner telling him how much I'd pay and he took me up on it. And moments later all of us are jumping on the double-decker bus with Eddie and, this was pretty cool, it was a good way to see the whole city and to sort of be a tourist here for the day and the kids will be able to be with Eddie.

And so, I gotta tell you, I don't think the kids saw one site that day, all they wanted to do is get to know Eddie. And they just sat there and talked to Eddie all day long and there was this given moment that was just, I'll never forget it in all my life, my daughter turns to me, looks at me with this huge smile on her face and she goes [POINTING AT EDDIE], "It's Eddie!" Like, you were right, you were right, he is just like you said he was. She's sitting there asking him questions just like she used to ask me, and he's giving the answers that I always gave saying, "Eddie would say," and he's giving these answers exactly like Eddie would say. And she was like, "I feel like I knew him, but now I know him." And she just, I mean, my kids that day they just lit up because the Eddie that they had known as this friend of dad's, this mythical individual, this guy highly quotable, is now their friend and they're sitting there with him and they're just all jazzed because *they're* friends with Eddie.

It just hit me as I was looking at this this week, I realized that what happens in a lot of our lives and our homes, and even in your life, is that very often our relationship to Jesus is He's highly quotable, He's very "churchy" to us, it's good stuff. He's a good teacher. He's God but we've heard about Him being God and we know He's God and we heard He forgives us of our sins. We hear that He loves us. We know that He died to save us from our sins that He rose from the dead to give us power. And we've heard that and we repeat that and we like that, it's good stuff, it's even why we're here today, while we're watching online.



But something changes when all of a sudden we get in that moment, and whether it's on a double-decker bus or in the living room of our house or right here in one of the chairs or in your living room today online, out there in the portico where you're wrapped up in your blanket right now trying to stay warm, where all of a sudden you meet Jesus for real, like personally, like face to face, and you meet Him and you get to know Him personally. And you look to that person who's been telling you about Jesus and you go, "He does forgive. He heard everything I did and He forgave me. He loves me. He accepts me right where I'm at." That's Jesus! And my hope for you, my prayer for you is that that's how you'll meet Jesus. And my hope that you'll have with your own kids is when they hear you talk about Jesus and train them on Jesus that there will be a given moment in their life where they will personally get to meet Jesus, where He'll be more than just a bunch of correct answers and good quotes but He'll all of a sudden be their personal Savior.

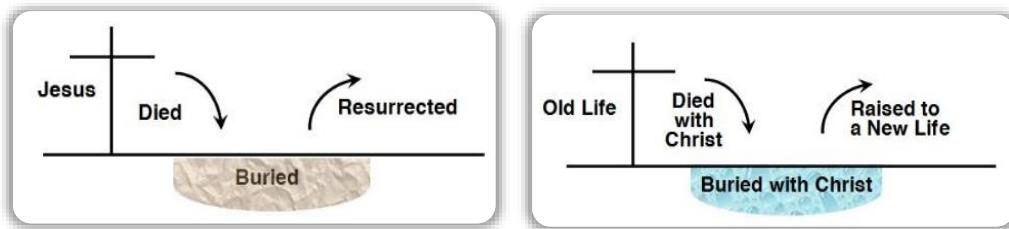
John the Baptist came to introduce people to his friend Jesus. We as a church want to be a people that introduce you to our friend Jesus. And not just so you have a little better life or a little more moral

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behavior, a little bit better activity or a better crowd of people to hang with, but that you'll know Jesus, the God of the universe who came to die for you, who loves you, that you'll know Him personally, and He'll transform who you are.

I want to introduce you today to some people that want to get baptized. They have met Jesus personally and it is so welling up within them that they can't wait to show it publicly through baptism. In fact, one of these people here has been begging, I mean, way back during COVID, there's like, "I gotta get baptized!" We're like, "I don't know how to baptize you in this time." And they've kept on telling us, "I need to get baptized! I need to get baptized!" And we're so excited, today we had a whole bunch of people first hour, a bunch of people here second hour, to be able to baptize them because what they want to say is, "It went beyond just knowledge; I trusted Jesus, He changed my life." And when they go into the water today what they're doing is shouting out a picture to you of the Gospel that when they go under that water it's as if they were dying with Jesus, they're connecting with Him in that way. When they're coming out of the water they're rising to new life, to a new life of following Jesus.



And so I'm really excited today, especially on the day we talk about John the Baptist, he baptized for repentance. This baptism, Christian baptism, is about shouting out Jesus has changed my life and I want you to know it. I'm going to ask Pastor Mike right now to share these testimonies of those and then I'll have the opportunity to baptize them.

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