



CELL GUIDE 2015

Theme	Jubilee – Year of Family
Topic	Our Precious Children
Speaker	Dr Dan Brewster
Date	23 rd & 24 th May 2015

Message Summary

The Child in the Biblical Perspective

We live in a world where children, even in the midst of material prosperity, are subject to spiritual poverty; a world that provides children with so much to live with, but so little to live for; where unwanted children are seen not only on streets where they are abandoned, but also in the lives of those who choose not to have them.

This sermon reminds us that there is a godly, biblical perspective of children which we must recognise. Children are a heritage and reward from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). We are to teach them and tell them of the power and wonders that the Lord has done for us (Psalm 78:4) so that they might grow up to be godly offspring that God seeks (Malachi 2:15).

The World's Perspective vs God's Perspective

1. The World's Perspective of Children

The materialistic worldview today means that children are sometimes thought of as liabilities instead of precious gifts. With the rise of consumerism, it is harder for families to be content and parents are tempted to seek wants instead of needs. **This leads to the increasingly common family structure of both parents working full-time to meet those material desires. This means** more kids are finding that they grow up with so much to live with, in the gifts that their parents buy for them, but so little to live for, as there may not have been sufficient opportunity for parents to impart values, purpose, and meaning to their lives.

The empty churches in places across Europe provide a glimpse of what could happen here if Christians and the church neglect caring for children and do not rise up to disciple them as precious gifts that God has given unto us.

2. God's Perspective of Children

As we seek to better understand the place of the children in God's eyes, it is worth remembering that, when the disciples were discussing on who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus responded by placing a child in their midst (Matt 18:2).

God requires us to teach His laws to our children and to tell them of the wonderful things He has done for us so that all these may be passed from generation to generation (Psalms 78:3-7) as we produce the godly offspring that God seeks (Malachi 2:15).

We are reminded that there are many verses within the Bible that make reference to children. Most of these can be organised into how God treats children, how God would like us to treat children, and how godly children can make an impact on those around them.

a. God hears and cares for children

In Genesis 21:17-20, God provides us a glimpse of the great care and concern he has for children. The Bible explicitly mentions that God heard the cries of the child, Ishmael, and responded by sending his messenger to his mother, Hagar.



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Tracing the narrative, we see that although raising a child can be frightening and challenging, God tells us not to be afraid, for He hears the cries of the children. Instead of being paralyzed by fear, we are called to lift up children and lead them to God, for God has a great plan for them.

As we trust in God, He leads us to the resources that we need to raise a child. He promises that even through the brokenness of our children and the challenges they face, God will be with them.

b. Caring for children can lead others to the truth of God

In 1 Kings 17:7-24, we see how caring for children can help to lead others to God. The widow of Zarephath only recognised the truth of the LORD's word when Elijah healed her son.

It is important to observe that God, through Elijah, was performing miracles every single day in the plain sight of the widow. Daily, the jar of flour was not used up, and daily, the jug of oil did not run dry. Yet there was no discernible response, no change to her previous attitude of despair and resignation. In fact, when her son fell ill and died, instead of remembering the miracle of flour and oil that sustained their lives, the widow immediately accused Elijah of killing her son.

It is only when she witnessed her son's life returned to him that the widow of Zarephath finally confessed that Elijah was a man of God and that the word of the Lord was truth.

c. We are called to raise children that they might lead others to God

Finally, in 2 Kings 5:1-19, we have the story of Naaman's servant girl. Though she was young, she showed great knowledge and faith in the power and goodness of the God of Israel, determining not only that God would be able to heal Naaman, but also, more importantly, that God would be willing to heal those who would seek Him.

Through the faithful raising of such a Godly offspring by her parents, her declaration of her knowledge of God and faith in God were able to lead others to God and bring glory to His Name (Psa 8:2).

3. Who is speaking up for our children? Who will advocate for them?

As we reflect on the biblical perspectives on children that have been revealed to us, it is worth asking ourselves what we will do with these truths. In a world run by adults, children lack a voice. They need someone to speak up for them, to be their advocate.

Who will speak to stop affluence and materialism from crowding out our children? To give our children the time and attention that they deserve, to correctly recognise the true, biblical value of children in God's perspective, and to turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents (Malachi 4:6).

God is asking, "Whom shall I send?"

Questions

What are some of the biblical perspectives of children that you have learnt through the sermon? Which of these speak most to you? Why?



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The world sometimes treats children as liabilities hindering us from fulfilling our own desires, as nuisances to be avoided, or even as things to be used. What are some of your own views of children? How do your views measure up against biblical perspectives in God's Word?

The speaker spoke of the need for children's advocates. What is one thing that you can do in the next month to be a godly advocate for children?



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