

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Wrath of God and Your Children **Revelation 6**

Keywords: Revelation, prophecy, End Times, Judgment, Kingdom of God, Cross, Evangelism, Leading Children to Christ

PowerPoint Presentation included: None

SermonAudio Blurb: In light of last week's sermon on the beginning of the Tribulation I made it a point to emphasize the reality and inevitability of the coming wrath of God and the seriousness of speaking the gospel to one's children. This raised some questions about how to bring the gospel to one's children and when is it proper to consider their baptism. This sermon is designed to help answer those questions.

I. Introduction.

- A. Explanation of the purpose and goal of sermon. Questions on when to bring a child for baptism. How to know if they believe? How to talk to them without manipulating their words and claims?
- B. Our family is the one place where the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to abound.
 - 1. If both parents are Christians then your children should be utterly immersed with what it looks and sounds like to follow Jesus by faith.
 - 2. If you are speaking to non-Christians one thing that should stand out is how so many literally are ignorant of the most basic aspects of the Christian faith.
 - 3. But for a child with Christian parents this cannot be.
- C. Today I want to try to give some practical and biblical advice on how you might bring the gospel to bear on your children.
- D. Background:
 - 1. Last week we read several passages regarding the coming judgment of God upon all who do not believe/trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and salvation.
 - 2. Along with those passages we saw Jesus making a strong and repeated statement about the serious need to persevere to the end in Matthew 24:6-21.

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3. As one man told me last week, “Parenting is hard.” And it is. It is likely the hardest thing you will ever do. And that task is one that takes a minimum of 18 years just to prepare them to leave in a Christ honoring way into this world.
- E. Repeatedly I have reminded you that the primary goal in parenting is to raise godly children into adulthood. Everything else is subordinate to this goal.
- F. The challenge can be in how this is done and this is because as parents we tend to fall into one ditch or the other rather than walking down the middle of the path.
 1. On the left is the tendency to affirm saving faith in your child because they in some way stated that they believed in Jesus.
 - a. This is the world I grew up in, where at very young ages children were urged to pray to have Jesus come into their hearts.
 - b. In other traditions you find this via the act of baptism for the infant. In that act there is the declaration that they are now saved.
 2. On the right is the tendency to be so suspicious of too quickly affirming their faith that you make it almost impossible for them to convince you.
 - a. Often this flows out of the right knowledge that salvation is something God does on our behalf rather than something we must do. Unfortunately it becomes a bit twisted.
 - b. This can lead to actually creating a heart that is really bent toward works because the child is working so hard to prove his faith.
- G. Evangelizing our children seems like a natural thing but it is often filled with misconceptions and assumptions that end up doing everything but evangelizing.
 1. We can assume that the kids will want to trust in Jesus Christ and therefore approach it quite lazily.
 2. We can also be so timid in evangelizing our children that all of the sudden we find them almost grown and there is still no appreciable spiritual growth. Sometimes this comes from not wanting to somehow force them into the Christian faith.
 3. This all means we want to avoid the peril of assuring children that they are saved when they are not and, on the other hand, discouraging children who seem to express a desire to trust and follow Jesus Christ.

II. Pitfalls.

- A. Setting the bar too low.

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1. We can, in our efforts to see our children trust Christ, end up making things so simplistic that the essence of the gospel is lost.
 2. The gospel is not that Jesus loves you and wants you to be in heaven with him.
 3. It is not that Jesus died so that you could go to heaven.
 4. It involves the grasping of certain truths.
 - a. Good and evil. Sin and disobedience. Right and wrong.
 - b. They need to understand punishment.
 - c. Know what forgiveness means.
 - d. Repentance.
 - e. What it means to obey and follow someone.
 - f. What does trust look like?
 - g. Resurrection and death.
 - h. The person of God, the Trinity.
 5. If this list seems long then you should ask yourself what part of it should you remove? Too often we tend to oversimplify without meaning to.
 6. Honestly, if you have biblically derived conversations with your children then all of these will be part of those conversations.
- B. Setting the bar too high.
1. Obviously the opposite problem.
 2. Your child does not need to be a theologian to be saved.
 3. Your child does not need to know every subtly regarding the gospel.
 4. Having said this, understand that if they are participating in our SS classes they are being taught very well. Add to this your own teaching and it should not be a shock to find they understand quite a bit about God and the gospel.
- C. Pressuring/manipulating them to confess Christ.
1. This is often done in group settings where emotions are high and peer pressure is felt.

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2. But it can be through leading questions as well. “Don’t you want to be in heaven with Mommy and Daddy?”
 3. Getting them to say the “Sinner’s Prayer.” Here is an example from Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU): “Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be”
- D. Making them a legalist.
1. In an effort to see marks of salvation, often called “fruit” parents can end up making salvation a work rather than a gift of grace.
 2. Hypocrisy in your own life is a sure way to create this as they hear one thing and see another.
 3. We are saved by grace through faith, not works. Don’t confuse this.
- E. Give Contradicting Messages.
1. What you allow to enter into your child’s mind. Does it diminish God and the gospel?
 2. How you live both in work and play.
 3. How you view church and the members of the church.
 4. How biblical is your personal lifestyle? Does grace abound in your home?

III. How To Point Children to Christ.

- A. Children don’t believe passively anymore than anyone else does.
1. Jesus Christ called people to repent and believe.
 2. Apostles called on people to repent and believe.
 3. No list of specifics or length of time is given before baptizing “just to be sure.”
 4. So let me ask this question, when was the last time you asked your child what they believed. How about what they reject?
 - a. Did you refuse vague “I don’t know” type answers?

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- b. Can you tell your spouse, your friend, or your elder what specifically is rejected by your child?
 - c. As they grow older how often do you actually confront their world view?
 - d. Be aware of the temptation to claim to not be a Christian so that they might remain in sin. That is not a way to continue in sin in a Christian home.
- B. Selected bible passages.
- 1. John 3:16.
 - 2. John 8:30-31.
 - 3. Acts 4:12.
 - 4. Romans 1:16.
 - 5. 1 Peter 3:13-16.
 - 6. 1 Peter 2:24.
 - 7. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
 - 8. Ephesians 2:8-10.
- C. Take advantage of the ordinances as they are times in the life of the church where the child is directly pointed to Jesus Christ.
- D. Credible/believable statements of faith.

IV. Conclusion.

- A. What about the idea of regeneration/a new heart?
- B. Where do works come into play?
- C. Be clear about how absolute the gospel demand is, no other gods, no other ultimate commitments.
- D. Do not downplay the cost of following Jesus Christ and make sure you show and explain that He is worth that cost.
- E. Especially with children in a Christian home, there is no prayer you pray to become a Christian.

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1. What makes you a Christian in reality is a secret work of God in regeneration.
2. What makes you a Christian outwardly is a testimony of conviction of the truth of the gospel.
3. Questions?

V. Benediction/Doxology.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Small Group Questions

- **Summer Break**