

I want to welcome all our guests. You have come at a great time, because over these last few weeks we've been opening the Scriptures, as well as studying history, to talk about revival, and we really have been making room for God to move. Last week, we shared the opportunity to embrace a lifestyle of revival by helping children in need in Kenya. Last week, we sponsored over 440 children. I saw several small business owners decide to sponsor five to ten kids for their company; I saw many families sponsor one for each kid, or one for each grandkid. I saw college-age students sponsoring a child. One couple from our church, who gave me permission to share this, suffered a miscarriage two weeks ago. There was a great deal of pain and heartache. At church last week, they said, "We are so sad we won't be able to meet and raise our child, but in honor of our precious baby, we are going to help take care of a child in need." The mother is already signed up to travel to Kenya to serve the needs there and meet the little girl they now sponsor. So beautiful. I thank God for the good things happening and for the children sponsored.

Last Sunday after church, the Hamel family went to Chipotle for lunch. Keren and the younger kids sat at the table as Hudson and I went through the line to order food. As I was placing my order, I was telling the lady behind the counter how much my son Hudson loves their rice. I was going on and on about how their rice is his favorite. To facilitate this cute little moment, I asked Hudson, right in front of her, "Son, what is your favorite thing in the world?" Of course, I expected my five-year-old to pick up on context clues and say, "Chipotle rice." But instead, he yelled, loud enough for the entire restaurant to hear, "My favorite thing in the whole wide world is GOD!" I needed that moment as a dad. Over the past few weeks I've had my fair share of parenting mistakes—not prioritizing enough time with the kids, raising my voice out of anger and frustration instead of responding with patience and grace—so when my son gave that answer I felt that maybe we're doing *something* right.

The last several weeks as our prayer room has been open, I've been in it almost every day. There are probably 500 or 600 prayers written out by people. I've read and prayed over so many of them. One of the most common themes that people are praying for right now is for God to move in the lives of family members. When a revival happens, it's not just that individuals or churches see a change, it's not just that society experiences renewal—revival transforms families, as well. Jonathan Edwards was the American preacher who historians say contributed most significantly to the First Great Awakening, which resulted in 80% of the population in the US making faith decisions and worshiping in churches. When that revival happened, it didn't just happen in society at large and in churches around the country. It happened in his own family. He had eleven children. Even though he was such an in-demand speaker and had a prominent national ministry, he made it a point to have dinner with his family nearly every night, to be available to talk with his wife and kids for an hour, and then to pray a blessing over his kids before bed. A few hundred years later, his family tree includes a vice president of the United States, three US senators, three governors, thirteen college presidents, sixty doctors, sixty judges, sixty-five college professors, and over one hundred pastors. Revival didn't just hit the city—it hit his family and he got to be a part of a generational legacy. Everyone here who loves God and is a part of a family wants to be a part of something like that. It's not only about a mom and dad and their 2.3 young kids. This is about our entire households—moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, aunts and uncles, and even friends who you love like family. When revival happens, it creates such a massive wave that the ripples always spread over and touch the lives of those closest to us.

When the gospel came to a man in Philippi, he asked the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" Such a wonderful question: How should I respond to the good news?

Paul replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. . . .then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. (Acts 16:3-34)

Did you see how many times the household was mentioned? You and your household. All the others in his house. All his household were baptized. His whole household. When revival happens, entire households are changed, and that is our hope and prayer, that we would experience entire households—family members and extended family members—brought closer and closer to Jesus.

To help us see how central this is to God’s heart, I want to center our time today in Deuteronomy 6. It’s hard to put into words how important and central this part of the Scriptures is to the Jewish people. The verses that we are about to read have been quoted twice a day (in the morning and in the evening) every single day, by every devout Jew for the last 3,000 years. The Jewish people have said these are the most important verses in the entire bible, and so they quote them over and over and over again.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

I love how simple and straightforward this passage is. What does God ask of us? Two things:

- Love God with all that you are and all that you have. God is not looking for religious activities and pious posturing. He wants to get at the core of our life. He wants us to have a passionate love for him. This is personal revival, when we grow more and more in our love for and devotion to God. I fell in love with Keren when we were dating. I’ve continued to grow more and more in love with her as the years have gone on.
- Incorporate God into your family’s everyday life. God didn’t just tell us to love him with all our heart, mind, and strength, and say, “As long as you believe in me and you love me, that’s enough.” He also said, “I want you to always be thinking about and talking about all that I’ve done.”

Let’s look at those words again: “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Do you see how practical this teaching is? God is not saying, “If you want to show me that you love me, you have to stay at church all day on Sunday.” God is not saying, “In order for your family to experience a revival you have to do a three-hour Bible study on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday night.” That’s the exact opposite of what God directs. He doesn’t tell us we need to add religious activity on top of our already busy lives; rather he says we should incorporate him into our everyday lives. Whatever you are doing, draw attention to God. Do it “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” These are just normal things you do. We all sit down to eat meals. We all drive from one place to the next. We all lay down to sleep, and then seven or eight hours later (or four

hours if you have young kids), we wake up. God says, “While you are doing those routine, everyday things, incorporate me into the fabric of your life.”

My two oldest kids are only three and five years old, but they can both quote nearly 100 Bible verses. We don't drop them off at a class where they learn that; we say one or two Bible verses at night before bed, and then when we are in the van, and they are strapped into their seats and can't run away, we go over them. We've done that most days over the last few years, and now they are written on our kids' hearts. They have entire chapters of the Bible memorized, simply by incorporating God into our daily rhythms. These are things anyone can do. Psalm 145:3-4 says, “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” This is our responsibility as parents and grandparents, to tell those coming up after us how great God is and all he has done. But it's not in classroom form; it's incorporated conversationally into our everyday lives. 3 John 4 says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” Your kids must make their own choice if they are going to follow Jesus. But the single greatest thing you can do to incline them toward faith is to constantly talk about how wonderful God is and allow them to see the change he makes in your own life. That's how revival can sweep through a home.

This is perfect for spouses, as well. It is certainly possible for God to bring revival in the life of only a husband or only a wife. I've seen it countless times, but it is always God's desire for a husband and a wife to experience this revival work together. Ephesians 5:31 says “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” In the spiritual realms, God sees a husband and a wife as one flesh, as one unit. He doesn't want to see one running an ultra-marathon and the other one running the couch potato marathon; he wants to see them walking in stride spiritually.

Some of you love the Lord, but your spouse is not a believer, or maybe they believe, but they are not engaged in faith in a meaningful way. I know that is a hard road to walk. Perhaps the challenge for you today is to pray for your spouse, to not give up hope and to ask God continually for him to do a fresh work of grace in their life. But for others, you and your spouse are both believers, and it would be so natural to say, “God, I don't only want you to do a work in my life, and I don't only want you do to a work in my spouse's life; I want you to do a work in our lives, together, in both of us!” One of the most natural ways you can set the stage for that is to take a few moments and pray together. This is something that Keren and I have started doing together more frequently. Not necessarily every day, but several times a week, sometimes when we are getting ready for bed, sometimes when we are preparing for the day, sometimes when we are driving in the car, we say a prayer together. It's usually just a minute or two, thanking God for my wife, asking for God to meet her needs, bless her, provide for her, heal her, use her. Saying out loud that we want God to be at the center of our marriage and to be glorified in our marriage. The impact we have already seen by simply including prayer into the rhythms of our life is undeniable. You can do the same thing. No one has to go to seminary for that. Grab your spouse's hand or give them a hug and say a simple prayer. It takes a little courage to get started, especially if it's not something you are in the pattern of doing, but what we have personally witnessed is that incorporating God in the rhythms of your life can be an absolute game changer. If your spouse is not a believer, or not engaged, maybe you can't pray with your spouse, but you can pray for them.

In all the times I've read through the Bible, two undeniable truths stood out to me: The heart of God the Father is beautifully displayed when parents lavish love on their children. The relationship parents have with their kids and kids have with their parents is supposed to be a living picture of God's love for us. Second: The gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully displayed when a husband and wife love and respect each other. Something about the love, passion, commitment, protection, and exclusivity of the marriage relationship is supposed to be a living picture of the way Jesus loves us. But here's an additional truth: Because God works so powerfully through the family, the family is where the enemy most frequently

attacks. Satan knows what happens when a family is entire on fire for God, loving one another, serving one another, living on mission with one another, and he will do whatever he can to stop it and tear it apart.

I saw a video this week which was unbelievably sobering. It was a real event that happened in Asia. A husband and wife were in their car in a wildlife park. They got into such an intense argument in the car that she got out and walked around the car to yell at her husband. As they were bickering, a tiger pulled her away. (The woman sustained serious injury, but she did survive.) The scene was alarming and traumatic, but it shows in real life exactly what is happening in the spiritual realms.

We must draw a line in the sand and say that by God's grace, we will not let that happen in our marriages, in our families, and with our kids! Joshua 24:15 says, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." We are going to love God, we are going to incorporate God into everything we do, and we are going to let God do such a dynamic work in our relationships that instead of being on the defensive against the enemy, we flip the script, we move the offense, and our family is going to start claiming ground for the kingdom of God. Maybe that is the mission God is calling you today. One time an earnest pilgrim asked Mother Theresa what could be done to bring the greatest happiness to the world. This was her response: "If you want to bring happiness to the world, go home and love your family." This is where we want revival to start. This is the most important work we are called to.

Proverbs 13:22 tells us, "A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children." Some have taken this verse as an encouragement to leave a financial gift behind to their family members, so kids and grandkids get financial resources when you are gone. Leaving behind a check is fine; there is nothing wrong with that. But far and away the greatest inheritance you can leave the people you love is the legacy of a person fully committed to God. Money comes and goes. People can get jobs and make their own money. But a godly mom, a godly dad, a godly grandmother, a godly grandfather, a brother who prays, a sister who prays—that is a treasure beyond compare.