Man of the House

## Grace for The Family

## By Steve Viars

**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5-6

**Preached On:** Sunday, May 17, 2015

### Faith Church

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Recently a man named John Blake wrote a commentary for CNN entitled "Lord of the Flies Comes to Baltimore." He was referring to a novel published in 1954 by English author, William Golding, about a group of upper-class English schoolboys whose plane crash-landed on a deserted island and none of the adults survived. Their attempt to build a society without adult guidance and supervision descended into what he called in this article, "tribalism and savagery." Tribalism and savagery. Blake in this article explains that this is not the first time that a similar analogy has been drawn. He speaks also of William Raspberry who was a Pulitzer prize-winning writer for the Washington Post who referred to the exact same novel back in the 1980s and he suggested at that time that part of the explanation for the rise of crack cocaine use in that day was the lack of adult men in urban areas to help young boys and young men develop what he called an internal moral compass, what the word of God would call a conscience.

Well, John Blake, who grew up, by the way, in Baltimore, proposed in his column that the same trend is playing out on the streets of his hometown today. He spoke about Mr. Shields who he said was a quiet man who once stood watch on his front porch just 3 blocks away from where the riot erupted in West Baltimore. He said, "We called him Mr. Shields because nobody dared call him by his first name," and some of us had men in our neighborhoods in my generation just like that. You would have never called him by his first name for a lot of reasons, at least you would have never done that twice. Blake goes on to explain this, he said, "He would step onto his porch at night in plaid shorts and black knit socks to watch the Baltimore Orioles play on his portable television set. He was a steel worker but he looked debonair. Thin mustache always trimmed. Wavy salt and pepper hair touched up with pomade. Cocoa brown skin." Then he said this, "He sat like a sentry watching not just the games but the neighborhood as well." A few paragraphs later he said, "It's surreal to see your old neighborhood go up in flames as commentators try to explain the rage with various complex racial and legal theories, but when I returned to my home this week, the rage made sense to me. There were no more Mr. Shields. The older black men were gone."

Now, we have a congregation with all sorts of nationalities represented here, all sorts of different socio-economic conditions and that's a sign of health, I think, by the way. So I'm sure if we wanted to, we could get a very lively discussion going here in our church family to explain the occurrences in Baltimore and St. Louis before that and even in a country where yet another black man was found hanging in a tree in Georgia this week. There is lots to think about. Lots to talk about in our culture these days, for sure. But I think we would all agree with this: it's noteworthy when even people in our world are concerned about this destructive vacuum that's created by the absence of principled adult men, when the Lord of the flies comes to places like Baltimore.

Now, let's carry that over to the church of Jesus Christ. Last week we studied from the life of Samson's mother and we saw how valuable and important and noteworthy it was that she chose to trust in and follow the Lord even when the sons, the men of Israel, again did evil in the sight of the Lord. We talked about the importance of godly women and well, everything we said about godly women in the home, in the church, in the culture was true. It's equally true that God created men to be principled, loving leaders in the home, in their churches and in their communities. That's one of the reasons, by the way, and there are a lot of them but that's one of the many reasons that I'm so thankful for our church family. We're not perfect by any stretch. You don't have to look any further than the pulpit to prove that assertion, especially when one of our other staff members is speaking. You were getting ready to say that, weren't you? So we're not perfect by any stretch but I have always appreciated the fact that Faith has had and still has a significant number of principled godly men.

There is no question, by the way, humanly speaking that much of that goes back to the philosophy of ministry and just the actions of our former Pastor Goode's emphasis on that particular area of church life. He was what Paul said to Titus in the King James rendering of the characteristics of a pastor, he is to be a lover of hospitality and a pastor is to be a lover of good men. It's unfortunate that in this culture you even have to qualify that, huh? But Pastor Goode focused much of his ministry on discipling men, on the belief that if you get the men of the church heading in the right direction, then a lot of other things are just going to naturally follow suit.

Now, we talked about godly women last week so I understand what I just said has to be balanced but I think he was right. That's why, for example, we have husbands and wives serving together even in our children's ministries because we think it's healthy for even young children to see husbands along with their wives teaching the word of God so it's not just the women who are interested in teaching the Bible to children or it's not just the women who are interested in praying for the missionaries. It's not just the women who are interested in studying the word of God. It's good for me even before the first service to walk through our Eastside campus to get mic’d up and go through a series of children's ministry classrooms where I see men and women already that early in the morning sacrificing and serving and setting up, preparing to teach children the word of God. You see, some churches are like the Walton's TV show for anybody who is old enough even to know what that would mean, where the ladies and the children go to the church house on Sunday while the men folk stay home and cut wood or go hunting. I'm glad it's never been that way here and, by the way, I hope you don't ever take that for granted.

Also, in that same line of thinking, one of the greatest gifts that this church family gives to your pastors every year is how serious you take the matter of electing godly, faithful deacons that we then have the privilege of working with so closely together. I am very thankful for the many men who have served in that office with honor for decades. I'm very glad for some of the younger men who are now serving alongside them in that way. That's one of the reasons I have great hope for the future is what I see in their lives. I'm also very glad for a number of others, godly men who are waiting in the wings or who are serving in whatever way they think God has called them in all sorts of ways. So even if the Lord of the flies has come to Baltimore, thankfully it hasn't come to Faith Church.

But we should always have this passage of Scripture running through our minds, always, "Don't be conformed to this world." Or else the habits that lead to Baltimore come here. That's the point of that. "Don't be conformed to this world." Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold because I understand that what I'm about to say from the word of God on this topic is going to be contrary to what many people believe in our world. I get that and honestly, I want to say this as sweetly as I can: I don't care. I am getting so weary of people saying to me, "You know, you're going to be on the wrong side of history." That's what the mayor of Sodom said to Lot. I am not particularly interested in being on the right side of culture, the right side of history. My job is to teach the word of God and so we're not going to let the culture squeeze us into its mold, whether it's talking about the role of women and the value and blessing of them last Sunday, or whether we're going to talk about the role of men this morning. We're talking about the man of the house. A husband and a father of grace.

With that in mind, please open your Bible now to Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5, that's on page 152 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you. We're coming down now to the end of this series we've been doing the last several weeks entitled "Grace for the Family." By the way, next Sunday we're going to be celebrating Memorial Day as a culture and so we're going to spend some time remembering next week as we think about what does it mean to be a gracious citizen. And because I'm going to be traveling this week, I've already prepared that message too. I'm way fired up about that one too. So it's kind of hard when you've got one in the hopper because you've got both of them going through your brain. I hope that you will plan to be with us next Sunday because that is a very, very important subject and bring some friends along with you as we give honor to whom honor is due and then ultimately we think about our Lord and Savior who sacrificed supremely so that we could be spiritually free. Then, by the way, just in case you're wondering, after that we're going to be starting a summer series on the patriarchs. So we're going to go all the way back to the book of Genesis and we're going to talk about what God's grace meant for and through them.

Now, here's the nutshell summary of what we're talking about this morning: the transformed Gospel of Jesus Christ makes it possible for men and for women, for children, to live out their roles in the kind of harmony and effectiveness that's consistent with our original design. That's what it is. You see, the home, the church, even the community doesn't have to be like the Lord of the flies because of the Lord of heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ is powerful enough to call and to grow and to direct godly principled men.

Let's see how he does that from this marvelous passage and I'm going to read beginning in Ephesians 5:15 and what I want to ask you to do is to carefully follow the logic, the argument of the text. Now, you've been listening attentively to what I have been saying thus far, thank you for that, when we open the word then our attentiveness is even ratcheted up further, right? So this is not the time to think about lunch. It's not the time to think about anything other than what is God saying to us. That's how we are renewed in the spirit of our minds and not conformed to this world. So please pay careful attention to the flow of thought in this text. Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 15, Paul says,

"Therefore be careful how you walk," amen to that, huh? "Not as unwise men," who would want to be one of those? "But as wise, making the most of your time," why? "Because the days are evil." Any question about that? "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife," anything unclear about that? "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her," why? Now please follow very carefully why, "so that He might sanctify her," there it is, "having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," don't you love that? "That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband."

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Aren't you glad for the word? Wow, what a great passage of Scripture. We are talking this morning about the man of the house, a husband and a father of grace and let's think now about 3 characteristics from this text of a man who lives and who leads well. First of all, he's a man who values sanctification. I think the epistle of Ephesians is the kind of book that could be read profitably by followers of Jesus Christ about once a month and I would really recommend you to find times where you can read a book like Ephesians in one sitting so you could follow the entire flow of thought. Unless you fuss at me about that, that's the equivalent of watching like one goofy half hour of television. Most can find time for that in one sitting, right? So aren't you thankful for a pastor who encourages you to do some other things? Yeah, you're loving me. I appreciate that.

Now, you saw, Paul is comparing a husband's relationship to his wife and family to what? Yeah, to Christ's relationship to the church. With this entire book, if you think about the flow of thought in the entire book, explains, is founded on the power of the Gospel, the transforming message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and Paul is driving to this point: a principled man has been positionally sanctified, he is being progressively sanctified and on that foundation, he's seeking to have a similar effect on his wife and his children. So it's not just a matter of a man loving his wife or loving his children, his love is a sanctifying love.

I recognize that's a mouthful for sure so let's back up and get a running start at how does this passage get us there. Well, there are reasons why a godly man values sanctification. One of them is because of the challenging days in which we live. "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." There is a carefulness here. Just like we saw last week when we were talking about godly women and Samson's mom, there is a concern about avoiding the ways of an unwise man. Who wants to be that, huh? And the corresponding desire to grow in biblical wisdom. There is also an urgency to all of this, isn't there? Wanting to make the most of your time. Did you do that this week? Because the days in which we live our evil.

Many have made the observation that part of what's breathtaking in these days is that our culture is more like that of first century Rome where and when the church was born and where and when epistles like Ephesians was written than ever before. Now, that's not surprising. Bible believing Christians are not expecting culture to get better. We're expecting it to get worse. "In the last days, perilous times shall come," and we're going to talk about that much more next Sunday, Lord willing. But the hope and the joy is that you can be sanctified. You can be set apart from all of that. That's what the word "sanctify" means. Christ is powerful enough and the Gospel is comprehensive enough to make you a godly man, a man who is wise beyond your years.

Also because of the power of the Holy Spirit. That's where verses 18 and 19 fit into this. "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." What a great analogy. The theme is control. "Don't be controlled by chemicals in the blood stream but instead, be controlled by the Spirit of God," and so, yes, these are fascinating times culturally but this is not a time for people in Jesus' church to hang their heads in misery and despair. Here's why: "You are from God," John said, "little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." So here is what that means: anybody who would say, "Well, it's impossible to be a godly man in this culture," or "It's impossible to be a godly man because of whatever baggage I bring from my past into this equation," do you realize that depreciates the power and the potential efficacy of the Holy Spirit of God.

Also this: he values sanctification because of his thankful and his submissive heart. Watch the argument of the text, he's always giving thanks. He's a wise man. That's why we've been worshiping the way we have this morning, to draw our affection and to cultivate our affection for our redeeming Savior. You may have seen the Pew Research Project that was published this week. CNN ran something on it and a number of other news outlets ran something on it about how millennials are not going to church as much as previous generations and fewer and fewer people are self-identifying as Christians. CNN seemed like they were pretty happy about that. Well, if you just drill into the statistics, here's what you'll find: what you'll find is that's not true across the board. Evangelical churches are growing or at least holding their own. What's happening is liberal churches are dying and Catholic churches are shrinking and I'm not pounding on my chest about that, I'm just saying get beyond the articles and actually do some research on what the facts are suggesting. And in that article, it was interesting because one of the persons, of course, everybody's got an opinion on what churches are supposed to do to grow. Many of them would say, by the way, "Well, you need to just jettison ideas from the word of God like the one that we are studying this morning because the culture is not going to like that." Well, that's what the liberal churches already did and look where that got them. But another thing in this article was somebody said, "Well, church is just boring." Church is just boring. Really? Singing about the cross work of Jesus Christ is boring to you? Here's today's news: it's not a problem of the cross being boring, the problem is people are boring. That is the issue. I had a man recently say to me, "Well, what has God ever done for me?" I'll tell you what I told him and I probably shouldn't have but I said, "If I were God, I'd kill you right now and you would never have reason to ask that question again." But how incredibly blasphemous.

And do you understand that you decide what you're going to love? You decide what's going to thrill your heart. You decide what you're going to be passionate about. Friend, we're talking about a man, we're talking about a man whose heart is thrilled that Jesus saved him. Whose heart is thrilled that he has been sanctified. Whose heart is thrilled with the cross. But that is a choice that every man makes. You see, what that means, when you have a man like that, tie it to leadership. That erases the pride. That erases the domineering spirit. That's what leads to the submissive heart that qualifies and directs his leadership. Every one of these words in this text is worthy of careful consideration and reflection.

Also because he understands that his marriage and his family are to be a picture of Christ's relationship to the church and Paul is very specific about what that means. Please follow carefully the argument and look for the purpose clauses, words like "so that." "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her," why? "So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." Now, here's what that means: you could call that leadership with a purpose. You could call that leadership which is seeking to get oneself and a group of people to a different place. Getting oneself and a group of people, your family, to a better place which meant he's been positionally sanctified first himself.

You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, it's one way of saying that there has been a definite time where he has admitted his sin and placed his faith and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. There are all sorts of ways of describing that decision made at a point in time to become a Christian but the way that Paul selects here is that of being washed by the water of the word. Don't you love that? What a great way to describe what it means to become a Christian, being washed by the water of the word. In other words, a man who has not done something about his own sin couldn't possibly lead somebody else out of theirs. Washed by the water of the word.

We're getting ready for our son Andrew's graduation open house which, of course, means there is quite a honey-do list going on right now for my Honey and for her Honey. Many of you have been to our house. You know that we live on a ravine which has a lot of trees and trees can be nice but they're also just dirty, do you know what I mean? So our decks and our driveway and our sidewalk, they really needed to be power washed but with my schedule and maybe my laziness, we just decided this time around to hire a company to do that. We did. I'm admitting it. So my wife, Chris, puts out a message on Facebook asking for recommendations of somebody who could do that job well. Somebody put us on to a young man who did a fabulous job. Do you know what it's like when somebody actually comes the day they say they're going to come? And works hard. This guy did an absolutely fabulous job, in fact, neither one of us could believe it when he was done. It's like, "Is this my deck? Am I at the right house?" Well, that's what the power of the shed blood of Jesus Christ is able to do for every person who repents and believes. You realize the moment you make that decision, you are power washed and you needed it. That's right.

"For he rescued us from the domain of darkness." Think about it: "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." That's what it means to be positionally sanctified and now he is being progressively sanctified. That's what Jesus meant. We could talk about this from all sorts of passages but here's a fascinating one. When Jesus was having this conversation with Peter about whether or not he needed to wash his feet. Do you remember this? John 13:10, "Jesus said to him, 'He who has bathed,'" in other words, has been saved, has trusted Christ, has been washed by the water of the word, "'needs only to wash his feet.'" You see, a godly man understands the place and the power of both: positional sanctification, the moment he trusts Christ and progressive sanctification to continue to change and grow and here's a man who is thankful for both. He's thankful for his salvation where he was sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise the moment he believed and he's thankful for ongoing progressive sanctification where he is becoming more and more like Jesus Christ each and every day. And it's on that foundation that he understands his role is to lead his wife and his children down that same path. You see, that's the way in which husbands are to love their wives and their families, to be busy about the matter of growing spiritually and then purposely and proactively helping others to do the same.

Now, I think this would be a good time to pause and ask some questions, wouldn't you? To be sure that we're applying this well. Let me talk to the men first of all. Have you placed your faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you know that you know that you know that you're on your way to heaven? By the way, Blake over at Faith West, if you're listening right now, that one was for you. Do you know that you know that you know that you're on your way to heaven? In other words, have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Have you been positionally sanctified? If not, we would urge you to make that decision right now. We would invite you to place your faith and trust in Christ so you're not only a man but you're a Christian man.

If you have already done that and many of you have, then I would ask you this: as you make plans for this summer, where does the matter of your own ongoing sanctification fit into your priority structure? In other words, what books are you planning on reading this summer in order to grow? How do you intend to draw closer to Christ the summer? What are the areas that you are especially going to work on in your own progressive sanctification?

Then thirdly, man, husband, father, do you value the sanctification of your wife and your children? If so, in what specific areas because don't do this in a fuzzy way because that's not how growth works, in what specific areas and in what specific ways do you plan to lead them in the coming months? And you might want to spend some time either with a small group leader, with a Point Man group leader, with an ABF teacher, with a deacon, with a pastor, who can help you articulate that growth plan for the summer; help it become more specific if you need help with that or to provide some kind of loving accountability for you in that particular way.

Then I would ask the wives and the children's this: do you really want to be loved in this way? Do you really want to be loved in this way? Some people don't want to be led by anyone. Do you realize that? In fact, ladies, you might want to ask yourself, "Am I easy to be led by my husband?" Children, you might want to ask the exact same question, "Am I easy for my father to lead me?" In fact, this is a great book to be making this point because do you realize what happened to Paul in Ephesus? Read Acts 19, he was trying to provide spiritual leadership and some people became unglued. Unglued. In fact, by the time the text is over, they're essentially with their fingers in their ears saying, "We don't want to be led spiritually by you. Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is Artemis!" They are stark raving mad. They are not going to let anybody lead them, at least a lead them closer to Christ. So you ask your husband or your father or other men in the church who are responsible for whether they are providing loving principled leadership, no question about that but you have to decide if you value sanctification enough to humble yourself and be led.

There are plenty of opportunities for repentance all across the board. No question about that. By the way, some of you are thinking about getting married someday. Do you want a little advice from an old guy? If you're a young lady, let's start with you, here's what I would be asking: is that man capable of leading me spiritually? Not, "Is he hot? What does he look like in a tank top?" You want to find out is he a man of God and is he mature spiritually and does he have the guts to lead you when you need it? Because you do need it. Everybody got that? We all need it. So what you ought to be asking is: is that young man a godly young man? Listen, he could be as ugly as all get out. He can be as ugly as all get out but the question is: A. Is he godly? And B. Is he courageous enough to lead me even when I don't feel like being led? You find a guy like that, hug him and don't let him go and if you're dating a guy who's not like that, tell him your pastor said you are breaking up today. I'm leaving town so feel free to come over to the church house.

Young man, you ought to ask the young lady you're dating: is there any evidence that you really want me to lead you spiritually? I'll try to do it sweetly. I'll try to do it sensitively. I'll try to do it lovingly but if you're dating a young girl and she cuts some sort of drama queen fit every time you try to lead her spiritually to the point that you're afraid to do it, break it off until you grow spiritually and she grow spiritually so that you can put together a Christian marriage. Listen, "But she so hot!" Yeah, she's going to be a hot mess. Now, I have some notes here. Maybe I ought to try to get to them.

There is so much more in this passage. We don't have time to address all of it by far but I realize if I leave it right there, you might say, "I'm frustrated because I need some more specifics." Well, that's why I read into Ephesians 6 so let's talk about that a bit. We're talking about a man who values sanctification and he also values obedience. Now we're talking especially about his parenting tasks. It's amazing how brief and forthright this section of Scripture is but many of us would say that if these simple principles were consistently followed in the power of God by men and women and children, the impact on the average home, church and community would be dramatic.

"Children, obey your parents." Boom. There it is. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." And that means that the man of the house is growing in obedience himself and then he's leading his family to do the same. In fact, that's one of the tests of how well we're doing as a family is how carefully and how joyfully and how consistently we're obeying. Obeying the Lord. For the goal of helping everyone become more like Christ, I mean, I'm not talking for a second about being obedient so that we can be saved by our works. Of course not. This isn't just behaviorism or moralism. The goal is that each family member would be so in love with their redeeming Savior they would want to grow. They would want to become more like Christ. That's what Paul meant in verse 4 of Chapter 6, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up," the man of the house has a positive goal in mind for his family, a proactive goal in mind for his family: greater and growing Christ-likeness on the part of everyone in the family. What was one of the chief characteristics of our Savior? Obedience. Obedience. Have this attitude in yourselves which is also in Christ Jesus "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by," what? "Becoming obedient to the point of death." What did Jesus pray in the garden? "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

What does this mean? When a husband and a father chooses to be obedient to the authorities in his life, he's choosing to be like Christ and when he leads and guides and expects and holds his children accountable to be obedient, he's helping them become like Christ. By the way, as I was thinking about the summer, as you're thinking about the summer, I'd certainly encourage you to have your children under the teaching of the word of God from other children's workers in your life to help you help your children love to obey God. I was telling the men of faith yesterday that I remember a conversation early on in the ministry, it was just about this time of year, where a young husband and father walked up to me on a Sunday morning and said, "Listen, we'll see you in September," and I assumed he and his family took a job somewhere else in the summer or something. So I asked him about that and he said, "Well, we take the summer off from church." So, of course, I laughed. I assumed he was making a joke, "Surely that guy is joking." Have you ever been in one of those situations where one person is laughing and the other isn't? He said, "We're so busy. We like to do camping. We like to do other things so we'll see you in September." Taking the summer off from God.

What would you say about that? There is a fool. I don't know how else to say it. There is of fool. There's a foolish man who does not understand the days in which he is trying to lead his family. And for no other reason, you ought to be in the church house because it is commanded. Now, I come to church for 100 reasons more important than that but surely you want to have yourself and your family under the teaching of the word of God because God commands you to and if you're going to be a disobedient man, you cannot expect your family to be anything other than that. In fact, we ought to understand that what we do in moderation, our children are going to do in excess and I hope will choose to be obedient men. And let the children's workers help you help your children obey.

Also from this text, using his twin parenting tools, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up," here you go, twin parenting tools, "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." If you still have children at home and this is age appropriate, I would encourage you to have this conversation with them if you haven't recently. Talk to your child, first of all say, "Now, who do mommy and daddy want you to be like?" And your child ought to know the immediate answer to that question, "Well, they are hoping, you're hoping that I will be like Jesus Christ." Then I would encourage you to ask them, "What are some specific and practical ways that you have done that?" Because you want to make this as precise as possible. Then I would encourage you to ask your children, "Well, what tools has God given mommy and daddy to help you become more like Jesus?" To which they ought to know, they ought to know it early on, "Well, teaching and discipline." Then you could say, "Well, what are some ways recently that daddy and mommy have taught you?" And they ought to be able to think, "Well, yeah, Tuesday night you were teaching me this. And on the way in the car Wednesday evening, you were teaching me here. Teaching me there. Teaching me there." "Oh really, what are some ways recently that mommy and daddy had to discipline you?" "Oh yeah, it was that. And it was that. And then it was that." Then I would encourage you to ask your kids this, "Which tool do you like the best? Teaching or discipline?" You're likely to get, "Teaching." Then you could ask, "Well, why would mommy and daddy ever have to use discipline?" "It's because I wasn't responding wisely to your teaching." "What's the lesson there, Johnny? What's the lesson there, Jill?"

You see, the goal here is to transfer truth across the generations so that young people grow up into being adults and they don't need our discipline anymore because they have chosen biblical convictions for themselves and that's the point of this chart, the numbers at the bottom are the age of the child. Obviously when we start with little babies, we're not doing a whole lot of teaching. We have a whole lot of correction, discipline, control. That's why you put your babies in jail, those bars, right? But they don't need that when they are 16, do they? Don't answer that. That's one of the delightful things is when young people, the truth has been transferred across the generation and now they are living that way as a young adult. Using the terminology in the CNN article, to go from being helped by Mr. Shields to becoming the next generation of Mr. Shields.

Now, I realize you might say regarding obedience, "But it's so hard. My flesh wants to do the polar opposite." Well, what's our theme this year? "Finding Grace." It's not easy to exercise the kind of leadership we're talking about this morning and it's not easy to follow the kind of leadership that we're talking about this morning which is why it has to be done in the context of grace. What a great opportunity when I'm struggling as a man, when others are struggling and following that for us to join arms and draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. And what kind of Savior will we find regarding this matter of being obedient? Here's an unusual verse, Hebrews 5:8, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." You might say, "How could that be? Jesus was omniscient. How in the world could he have learned anything?" And we believe the answer is in the sense of learning experientially which means when a wife or a father or a child says to the Savior, "It's hard to obey," the response you will receive is something akin to, "I know that. I can relate to that," Jesus would say. "Have hope because in me it's possible."

That's why the verse prior to the one we've quoted so many times this year, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses." Listen, I am fully cognizant of the fact that a number of people who are hearing this message are not going to like it. I do get that. My hope is: A. It's based on Scripture. My job is to preach the word. Preach the word. B. The average person who comes here wants that. But it's a struggle, isn't it? It's a struggle which is why many of us would be helped but go to the throne of grace because we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

Well, one last idea from this text: he's also a man who values honor. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother." You see, principled men understand that if young people grow up developing obedience and honor for their parents and other authorities in their life, a lot of other things are going to just naturally fall into place. So that's why this man shows honor for the authorities in his life. It always starts with the example he sets. So the way he talks about his boss at work, it's honorably. The way he talks about our President, our other government officials, is with honor. The way he talks about and deals with the police and judicial authorities is with honor. The way he talks about his pastors at church is with honor. Even in the context of disagreement, disappointment, he honors them. Why? Because he understands that the authority in his life was placed there by God himself. He understands that the example he is setting in those areas is being followed by others. As I said, he understands that what we do in moderation, others are going to do in excess so he's a man who honors the authorities in his life and then he works to create an atmosphere of honor with husband and wife in the home.

So what does that man do? He is sure that his kids honor mom. So, here's what that looks like. The kids would never think about complaining about a meal. Never. What kids are taught early on by dad is, "If mama cooked it that way, that's the way we like it today. Mom, I've been praying all morning I'd get some burnt toast. I haven't had it that way in a long time. Since yesterday. Thank you, mama. Thank you, mama." And I do think, by the way, I think it's wise every so often for a husband to say or a daddy to say to his kids not, "Don't talk to your mother that way, don't talk to my wife that way." Your kids need to understand that if mama says to take out the trash, his next words are, "Yes ma'am," and you ought to hear a pitter-patter of feet on the floor. And he knows that if I don't do it that way, the pain that I'm going to experience with daddy is not worth whatever joy I just had in being disobedient to mama. You see, daddy is creating a culture of honor for mom.

Mom is doing the same thing for dad which is why if mama got home from work first or if mama doesn't work outside the home, when daddy comes home from work, that's a high time where the kiddies are told, "Listen, get your stuff cleaned up. Dads coming home. The man of the house is about to come home. You don't want this mess here when the man of the house gets home, do you? Get yourself lined up at the front door. When daddy comes in, put that videogame down. In fact, put that in the trash before you take it out and line yourself up at the front door and you thank your daddy for working today. You thank your dad for being such a hard-working man. Thank your dad for making it possible that we can have food on our table and a roof over our head." In fact, I went to Bible college with a fellow who is a pastor today and here's the way it was in his house. His mom taught them, the sons, that when daddy comes home, you be there and you take his shoes, he was an executive at GM, you take his shoes, each son did it a different day of the week, you take his shoes back to the bedroom and you shine them and you get them ready for his next day's work as a way of honoring your father and acknowledging his great diligence in this home.

Well, so much more could be said about this but listen, it may be true that the Lord of the flies has come to Baltimore. That may be true but the Lord of heaven has come to the church, huh? And one of the many blessings that he bestows is faithful, principled men. May his tribe increase.

Would you stand with me for prayer?

*Father in heaven, I thank you for words that are just so contrary to the culture in which we live. They almost sound like a foreign language anymore. But Father, thank you that they are your words and thank you for the many who are here today who would say, "And I believe it and I'm trying to live it." Lord, for any of us who would have some adjustments to make in order to get into the role that you have clearly outlined for us in your word, Lord, I pray that you would do that and thank you that you are so powerful that you have blessed this church and blessed this community with so many godly men. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.*