

Theme: "Is This Home Necessary?"

Text: 1 Timothy 5:4 -- "if any..have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety to home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God."

Proposition: For a christian a necessary home is one in which is developed respect and love for individuals and for God, and in which is achieved an optimistic outlook of faith toward life after death.

Date written: May 6, 1960.

Dates and places preached:

May 8, 1960, 9:30-11:00, Sheridan, Wyo.
May 12, 1963 - Montrose, Colo. 11am

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

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NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

Introduction:

1. About ~~a~~ ^{one} year ago (in early 1959), the western world was shocked to learn of a massive, government-enforced breaking up of families in ~~one~~ ^{one} of the largest of the earth's nations. This social upheaval was ~~and is~~ the establishment in China of massive communes, in which people no longer live together as families. Men are in large dormitories for men only. Women are in similar buildings for women only. Once a week men may visit their wives or women friends. Children are cared for and trained in large groups, with only occasional visits by their parents if they knew them in pre-communal times. The system was first tried in the area of rural village life, where in China family ties traditionally have been strong. Resentment and resistance to the innovation was so strong that for a while it ~~seemed~~ ^{seemed} that the communists had made a serious mistake which might cost them their hold on the land. More recent reports inform us that the hope seems vain that the system of family-destroying communes ~~will~~ ^{will} be abandoned and communism rejected in China. Instead, ~~in the last few weeks~~ word comes from China that the communal system is being established on a large scale in the cities, and that ~~within a year or so~~ ^{our time} probably 9/10 or more of the Chinese ~~will~~ ^{will} be living outside of family groups. This

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

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TEACHER _____
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FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

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intive to those of us who believe the home to be sacred to examine carefully the basis for our belief. We need to ask and to study honestly the question, "Is home life necessary to human welfare?"

Approach the question here by thinking about a few types of homes which demonstrate some of the functions of home, as we normally think of them. As we think of each type or function of home the words of our sermon topic might pop up in our minds, "Is this home necessary?"

1. Homes which obviously are not necessary.

1. An intriguing story of the Old Testament is that of Joseph, a beloved son who by his jealous brothers was sold into slavery. He was bought by a man named Potiphar, who made him a household servant. Joseph was a tall and handsome young man, who very soon became an object of desire to Potiphar's wife. One day when Potiphar was away his unfaithful wife tempted Joseph, but he rejected her. In anger she lied to her husband when he returned, so that Joseph was accused of the wrong intention and cast into prison. Potiphar's home was one in which lived an unfaithful partner to the marriage. Her unfaithfulness caused anger and misery to herself, suspicion in her husband, and injustice to an innocent man. Is this home nec-

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____
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NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

necessary? Of course not! It would have been better that that home had never existed. A home where exists infidelity of one or both partners is an unnecessary one, to say the least. Jesus himself recognized infidelity, or adultery, as the one justifiable grounds for divorce. However, humans are not all bad, as they are not all good, so it may be that one who through weakness slips into infidelity on occasion can effectively reaffirm love for his partner and have a better-than-ever home. The basic fact of christianity is that we can be forgiven and have a new and good life. It is constant and intentional infidelity which we mean when we say that a home of infidelity is unnecessary and intolerable.

2. We return to the story of Joseph for our illustration of another type of home. We look now at the earlier life of Joseph, when he was a youth still in his father's household. Joseph was the youngest of Jacob's sons, child of Jacob's old age, and Jacob loved Joseph more than all of his other children. One sign of this special favor was Jacob's giving to Joseph a coat of many colors, a rare thing in a day when drab and colorless clothing were normal. This coat became a symbol to the other brothers of their father's favoritism for Joseph, so that around it crystallized a strong

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____
Present Absent

NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT _____

AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

A STRONG HATRED OF THEIR YOUNG brother. Joseph did not help matters any, ^{He took} by taking full advantage of his father's special favoritism and protection. He aggravated his brothers seriously by interpreting his dreams to them as signs that they should serve him. He told them once of a dream in which eleven sheaves of grain, representing the eleven brothers, bowed to a twelfth sheaf of grain, which he interpreted as being himself. Another time he told them of a dream in which the sun, the moon, and eleven stars, representing his parents and his family, made obedience signs to a star which was for him. Even his father rebuked him for this one. Because of the unjust and unwise favoritism shown by Jacob to Joseph, and because of Joseph's overbearing pride and spitefulness, the brothers became extremely jealous of Joseph and were hateful to him. Finally when they were all away from home one day they took an opportunity to seize him. The brothers debated if they should kill him. A group of slave traders came by just then, so they sold him instead. He was taken to Egypt and sold.

Joseph's boyhood home might be termed a home of jealousy; strong, passionate, hating jealousies. Only the chance of a passing group of slave traders kept the jealousy from resulting in murder. Occasionally in today's news we hear of family jealousies resulting in even greater violence, so

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
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DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

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the whole families are destroyed. Is a home of jealousy desirable? Is this home necessary? Of course not! An honest attempt to show love equally to all the children in the home, and an earnest effort to set a good example in all things, will serve parents well in preventing a home from becoming an unnecessary home of jealousy.

3. We turn to another part of the Old Testament, the little-known book of Habakkuk, for a thought about a third type of home. Habakkuk reveals the prophet as having deep concern about the violence which the warriors of Chaldea are visiting on his people, and that it seems that God has forsaken him and his people. He begins a watch on a city tower, determined to stay there until he receives a message from God. The message comes as a vision, in which God referred to the warring transgressor in these terms: "He transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and keepeth unto him all people:". We would spotlight the two adjacent phrases of this Scripture: "he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home." The Scripture is pointing to excessive pride as being the driving motive of a cruel, warring, unjust, drunken, acquisitive

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____
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NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT _____

AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

209 -
essor.

a. Pride, learned and developed at home, causes such a man to go out from his home to do all sorts of damage to others, on both large and small scales. We could spend lots of time today pointing to modern-day pride developed at home which causes all sorts of damage.

b. We Yankees might look at the southern white man's home-grown pride that he is superior to the black man, and say that here is an illustration. It's safe to look at others' sins, not half so uncomfortable as to think of our own. Let's turn a bit closer home, however.

c. How about the pride that some of us get in our reputations? ~~xx~~ A person once told me that his reputation was better than mine. I wouldn't argue with him a bit on that point. I would say that if we act primarily to protect our reputation we are living defensively as a rule, not constructively. Too much emphasis on one's own social, financial or religious standing indicates undue pride (or may be, perhaps, a sign of lack of self-confidence! ?). I have known many families whose chief drive seemed to be to be respected, not to serve. But respect

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
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DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

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AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS xxx

gained sometimes by power, wealth or position which may have been gained unjustly. ~~Some~~ A person driven by too much pride can become a Hitler, a Mao, a gangster, or a deeply-entrenched crooked political leader. He can also be simply a small-scale snob, who considers himself, his standards, his mental ability, his spiritual life, to be better than anybody else's; and who shows this attitude rather plainly.

d. We find excessive home-grown pride in our institutions at times too. Those which should be service institutions, like the church, are sometimes more motivated by pride than by a desire to serve people. "We've got the biggest budget, the finest building, the most members, the oldest organization, the least debt, the smoothest preacher," and so on, we may say. We may have, too, but even if all these should be true, pride and the things we accomplish when driven by it, makes poor achievement for an institution that would do the work of the meek and humble Christ.

e. To the question, "Is this home necessary," about either a family or a church home in which too much pride exists, we would have

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE: _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

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AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

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NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

reply, "No, it is not necessary."

4. Most of us would think of home as being at least a necessary place for the satisfaction of the needs of the body, such as the need for food, or shelter, or for other physical attention. In Chapter II the New Testament's I Corinthians has an instance in which the apostle Paul dealt with a church problem by pointing to the home. The problem was that a lot of deadbeats were coming to the church observance of the Lord's Supper because they were hungry. The Lord's meal was then being observed as a real meal, provided for the people and the service by the deacons. These offenders to whom Paul referred came early so that they could grab the best food. They usually left too little for anybody else, or at least ate all the best food. About this Paul wrote, "Wherefore brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home." Referring to home as a bodily filling station, we might ask, "Is this home necessary?" Then we remember military life, college life, restaurants, or Red China's communes, and we know the answer: "one can eat about anywhere. To share fellowship and love at home over the table is wonderful, but the home cannot be justified simply as a place to meet bodily need."

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

Present

Absent

NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT _____

AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

Present

Absent

NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT _____

AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

so much the physical safety as the safety and security of knowing the folks there love you, no matter what. Is this type of home necessary? It is to the human spirit. As we mature and grow ^{older} ~~older~~, we find that our faith provides this type of security in the assurance of God's love. A communal system can never give the personal, enriching, secure love which a monogamous home at its best can provide.

2. A home is a place where people are treated with respect for them as individuals, where each adult and each child counts. We all need this respect, to have a place where intervals of time are made possible when our mental and spiritual defenses can be relaxed because we know folks there aren't attacking our personalities.

3. Home is a place of happiness. There is the famous wartime story of the newly-married young man with a 1-A classification who gave his local draft board religious reasons for not drafting him. His reason was straight from the Bible, where in Deuteronomy 24:5 is written, "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken." The Re-

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

Present

Absent

NUMBER OF PUPILS PRESENT _____

AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

NUMBER OF VISITORS PRESENT _____

NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

World Standard Version of the Bible more accurately translates it "he shall stay at home for a year and be happy with the wife whom he has taken." Happiness is hard to come by. Most people would see that a good home provides life's happiest experiences. Is this type home necessary? It is if individual worth and happiness has values, which we believe they do. You don't find many happy people in large-scale group living projects, do you?

4. Home is a place in which the love of God is most effectively taught. Point to a home in which the parents earnestly and industriously seek to lead in the practice of private and public worship of God, and the chances are extremely high that the children grow up with a deep religious conviction too. If regular worship at church has priority with Dad over painting the house or going fishing, you can almost bet safely that Junior will give worship the same priority when he grows up. Are homes necessary in which Christ is considered the head of the household? ~~xxxxxx~~ They are for most of us, if we are to experience the saving power of Jesus. Most of our homes don't measure up in this regard as much as we would like, but most of us at least make some effort to have godly homes. The communal system, on the

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

Present - Absent

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AMOUNT OF COLLECTION _____

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NAMES OF NEW MEMBERS

is based on a philosophy which says that there is no God!

5. Home is a place which can give a foretaste of joys so great that the best we can say about eternal life is to describe it as a home. Is such a home necessary? We often speak of "heaven" as "our eternal home." As the goal of living heaven is a powerful incentive to good. An earthly home which demonstrates love and cooperativeness well ~~xxxxxx~~ just some of the time is a realistic view of the substance of eternity, if we are to believe our Bibles.

Conclusion:

1. We would conclude by saying that a christian ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ home is one in which is developed respect and love for individuals and for and in which is achieved an optimistic outlook of faith toward life after death.

2. As a verse from today's Scripture states about widows, so might well be stated about home: "if any.. have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good before

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
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DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

TEACHER _____

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE RECORD

DATE _____

CLASS NAME _____

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