

The New Season Disciplining Sons

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In the end of the age, the alienation that occurred at the beginning of the age of man, will be healed; the hearts of the fathers will be restored to the children and the children to the fathers, sin alienated man from his Father. Fatherlessness has become the scourge of the age, but God promised He would send the spirit of Elijah and He would restore the hearts of the fathers.

Human fathers who represent the Almighty God our Father, in nature and in character, are being assigned to households of faith in the body of Christ. A household of faith, Paul spoke to that in his message to the Corinthians. The household of faith has to do with those to whom God assigns the new believers for maturity, this is not the same as a church or institutional functioning, this is more the idea of a family with a father who has a number of families under his rule. So that father has a household, in the sense that a household is comprised of a number of families. Now obviously there's a limiting factor. Since this is not an attempt to mass produce, by word alone, a result, but instead it is meant to introduce the culture of the kingdom through the means of a father then fathers must be available to their sons. So the folly of trying to do this in large happenings is easy enough to see that this is not what God is doing.

Jesus had twelve disciples, the early church met in homes within a city and Paul warned against the development of an identification with a spiritual father to the exclusion of seeing the rest of the body of Christ. He was not denying the reality of spiritual fathers, what he was doing was stating that though you belong in the household of a spiritual father, you are also part of the greater expression of the body of Christ in that city. So literally, the body of Christ in a city is comprised of two basic functionings; one is the church in the city, which is the broad picture where all the households of faith see themselves working together as one expression of the body of Christ. And this isn't just about coming together to do a project; you could have multiple groups, totally different, varied in their understanding and functioning, coming together to do a project. All manner of people do this, very diverse groups of people of varying interests may come together to support a particular program or project. And if the body of Christ does that, it does not by itself prove it's the one body because the body of Christ is not diverse in the

sense that it has a wide range of different emphasizes because the body of Christ in any city is informed by the Holy Spirit; it's the Holy Spirit who tells the body what the Head is doing and all the members respond in their various capacities to what the Head is doing.

So for example, when there's a new season, the whole body changes to that season and some do not say, "Well, we like the old season but hey, we will meet with you to do a protest about abortion or we'll meet with you in support of a political candidate," or something like that. No, that's not how the body of Christ is meant to operate within a city, it is meant to function as an entire body functions under the rule of a head. The intention of God was to bring everything in heaven and on earth under one Head, namely Christ. Look at this from Ephesians. In Ephesians chapter 1, the following is said speaking of Christ God raised Him up and seated Him in heavenly realms. Verse 21, "Far above all rule and authority," that's Ephesians 1:21, "all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the age to come." Verse 22 says, "And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be Head over everything for the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way. We must not forget that Jesus prayed to the Father that everyone who listens to the word of the apostles whom You are sending out, that all of them would be one as He was in the Father and the Father was in Him, that they may be one so that the world would know that Jesus came from the Father."

So the functioning of the body of Christ, in every city and in the world, has to function in this orderly reflection of the oneness of the Head, not in the haphazard, every man doing what is right in his own eyes, every emphasis that anyone dreams up and is functioning in today. What we have today is not the functioning of the body of Christ, and the obvious result of that is the world has actually barely disguised contempt for the church. So I'm not speaking about households functioning together as some kind of a conjoined effort to look at a project or to oversee and function in a certain program or project. I am talking about an organic functioning of all the parts of the body in a city. But the arrangement of these parts, if you start speaking of the parts not as parts of a human body but as the citizens within the kingdom of God as members of the body of Christ, then you are talking about individuals who together form the body of Christ in a city. Their governance and their functioning must reflect the truth that Christ came from the Father. The only way that it can do that is for all of them to be one.

So the question before us is: how can a people function together as one while belonging to spiritual authorities...while under spiritual authorities that are different? What I mean is, that the household of God is arranged under the headship of Christ but it has spiritual fathers assigned to people to raise them up, to function as one in the body that the thing that God means to do when He says, "to put all things under His feet, all things in heaven and on earth." It says, "God place all things in heaven and on earth under His feet." Then

it goes on to say that the things that are in heaven and on earth that are under the feet of Jesus are as follows, “For this reason,” this is Ephesians chapter 3 verse 14, “For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family, in heaven and on earth derives it's name.”

So what is in heaven and on earth that's under the headship of Christ? The body of Christ of course. The things in heaven and the things that are on the earth, that God intends to place under the authority of Christ, He intends to place all things but particularly the Body. Now how does He do that with the body? Well with the body, He gives the body into the keeping of spiritual fathers, patriarchs who are the heads of spiritual households and it's these patriarchs who join the body together as one household in a city. When they do this, these patriarchal fathers, though they may function in different locations as apostles, when they're functioning in a specific location leading a household, they largely do that in the role of a father or an elder. Paul speaks of himself and says, “I who am also an elder,” and John refers to himself as, “The elder to the beloved elect lady.”

So to the household, you function as a spiritual father who is an elder or a patriarch over that household. Now you may have the additional function of going about the earth, raising up the house of God; when you go trans locally, then you function as an apostle. The grace that goes with you is the apostolic grace. So Ephesians 2:19 puts it this way, it says, “Built upon the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the Chief Cornerstone.” Here it is, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,” verse 20, “built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the Chief Cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the LORD. And in Him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God dwells by His Spirit.”

So the body of Christ expressed in any one location is foundationed upon the apostles and the prophets, Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone. The apostles and the prophets will come to a city, they'll raise up the household of God in that city. Now in Corinth, where they did that, the result was that some of the Corinthian brethren were saying, “I am of Paul,” because Paul was one of the apostles who came to that city to build. So Paul said, “Be careful how you build in a city (if you're an apostle), be careful how you build in a city because number one, you cannot lay a foundation upon another mans work because the foundation that is already laid is Jesus Christ. And where an apostle has labored before you and those people have now come to be related to that apostle who built, then you have the privilege of watering. So he said, “I, Paul, planted, and Appollos watered but God granted the increase.” And he speaks of this also in the metaphor of a building, he said, “As a wise master builder, I laid the foundation. I didn't lay another foundation other than Jesus Christ; He's the Cornerstone of the foundation. But as an apostle, I laid a foundation as a wise master builder and another has come to build on it.” But you should

take heed how you build, because in Corinth, the way that the building was done, did not produce the household of God, unified in it's identity and in it's function. So Paul had to write to them to correct them, warning them that failing to discern the body of Christ was the reason that some were weak and sick and some died prematurely. And he rebuked those who said, "I am of Paul," meaning, "I follow Paul." He said, "No, everyone follows Christ."

The government of God, arranged by households...Paul had a household of faith in Corinth, so did Apollos, so did Peter. There were people who identified Paul as their spiritual father, Apollos as their spiritual father, and Peter as their spiritual father. Paul himself said to the Corinthians, "I became your father in the LORD," I Corinthians 4. So it's clear that one has a spiritual father but the fathers build the household to reflect the truth of the family of God. These fathers who build a household in this way, building together with the other households, are actually building up the house of God, the inheritance of God, within a city. If everyone builds according to his own way of doing things, then he's not taking heed how he builds. And if he builds in a way that detracts from the overall building up of the household of God, then he's building with wood, hay, and stubble as opposed to building with gold, silver, and precious stones. This is the same letter to the Corinthians, detailing this fact.

If you're a pastor, do you want to know how it will be whether you are building with wood, hay, and stubble or gold, silver, and precious stones? If what you do is build up the household of God so that it's raised up to be one body of Christ in that city and you're not leading away disciples after yourself to your thing...you see, your thing could be the good thing in your mind, that's why there has to be an apostolic foundation; the foundation is not pastoral, the foundation is apostolic because the apostolic foundation lays out a foundation that builds up the body of Christ, that builds up the household of God in a city.

So if what you're doing is not apostolically foundationed, you yourself will be saved but then the day comes when the work that you did is to be judged, you will suffer the entire loss of what you built with your life. Because if what you built is other than the house of God that He was building in a location, if you built anything but that, you're building uselessly. Even Paul went up to Jerusalem to check with the other apostles to see whether or not he was running in vain. He said, "Its necessary that I abide by the things I teach, otherwise I myself might become a castaway." None of this has to do with whether or not he was going to be saved, none of this has to do with whether or not the people you work with are saved, the people who reflect your work are saved. No, it's a given, if they received the LORD Jesus Christ, they receive salvation; they're not going to hell. That's not the point, the point is whether or not your works built up the body so that it came to be the expression of the fullness of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Because the intention, in the body, is to show the relationship between God the Father

and the LORD Jesus Christ, the Son of God; this is what Jesus prayed for. That's the foundation that you cannot redo, Jesus is the cornerstone, He is the foundation upon whom the house is built. So when the house is finished, what it will show is the glory of God and the glory of Christ. Meaning, that the people of the body of Christ will have been disciplined to display the character of God the Father and to reflect the nature and the life of the LORD Jesus Christ.

If what you build does that, then you will not build something to yourself. The people who are assigned to you are not your people, they're still the LORDS people, even though they look at you and God has in fact assigned them to you as your spiritual children. That's what Paul was saying. So on one hand, in his Corinthian letter, Paul absolutely, flatly decries the division in the body of Christ, but on the other hand he acknowledges that he has a household among the Corinthians of people who are described by him as his sons. Because that's what God is doing, God is raising up sons; they're God's sons but God assigns the care of His household to men who are spiritual fathers and gives them households within His household, within His holy nation. Another way of saying it is 'His household', all of the households together are 'His household'.

So the pattern is that of households and families and over the house of God, the one Head is the LORD Jesus Christ but the household of God is both in heaven and on earth. On the earth, the household of God, the one household, is divided into many 'households', each of which is meant to bring forth, in smaller focus, in smaller point, the one household. Otherwise you would have a Pope over the household of God, you would have somebody who is the earthy father over all the household of God and such a thing is blasphemy. The one Head over the family in heaven AND on the earth, is the LORD Jesus Christ, that's what the Scriptures say. Anybody who pretends that it's otherwise has taken a position that belongs to Christ and they are contending with Christ over His divinely appointed position. And I do not care who it is or how many millions of people or hundreds of millions claim to be under that kind of head, it is still the wrong configuration and it's still a usurpation of a title that truly belongs only to Christ.

But having said that, this household in the earth is obviously geographically divided by the cities of the earth in which the households lie and within each city there are fathers who function to bring the body of Christ together in that city; God assigns them a portion of His household, and their portion is called a household as well. It's their household, meaning God's assigned them to it but the functioning of that household is designed to produce a unity among all the households representing the one household of God. Now within those households - Paul's household in Corinth - within those households are families and the families need to now be taught the order of God, and the one who teaches them this order, the one who trains them up as sons of God, is their spiritual father and such a figure, historically/biblically, is called a patriarch. The responsibility of patriarchs is to bring sons to maturity.

Now there's a process by which this occurs, a son is brought to maturity through the various stages of sonship; the natural teaches us the spiritual. In the natural, the Scriptures say that you were given the Spirit of sonship. Now when someone is born again the Scriptures say they're given the power to become a son of God, even to those who call upon His name. "As many as receive Him," John 1, "He came unto His own, His own received Him not, but as many as receive Him, to them He gives the power to become the sons of God." Now does that mean that when you're born again that you're not a son of God? Is there a contradiction? Because Romans 8 says, "You did not receive a Spirit that makes you again a slave to fear but you received a Spirit of sonship by Whom you cry 'Abba, Father'".

So the moment you're born again, you are a son of God because you cry out, "Abba, Father." If somebody is your father then you're a son to that person. It says, "You received the Spirit of your Father." So, the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, confirms your sonship, it doesn't confirm that you're provisionally a son, it confirms that you ARE a son. Yet John says in John 1, "He came to His own and His own received Him not, but as many as receive Him to them He gives the power to become a son of God." So are you a son when you are born again or have you just been given the power to become a son? The answer is: both are true, both things are true because when he refers to the word 'son' in that passage what he's talking about is a reference to the term 'huios', which means to be a fully mature son, to be a fully mature son, one who is capable of handling the affairs of the Fathers house.

By contrast, when you're born again, at the moment you're born again you're a child, you're a newborn in fact. Hebrews refers to it this way in Hebrews 6, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow by it." So you should desire, when you're a newborn baby in the LORD, newborn and that's the word 'nepios'; a child is born but a son is given. When you're a newborn you should desire milk, but there's a time...Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said in I Corinthians, "When for the time you ought to be teachers, you still have need that someone teach you again the elementary things." You are born as a child, you are to mature into sonship, and the one who does that is your father in the LORD and the way he does it is to disciple you into sonship. When that work has been accomplished, you yourself are capable of becoming a father, having a household to which you will bring order.

So the next time I want to speak about the process by which children become mature sons. And we'll look at that the next time, I hope you'll join me for it. God bless you, I'm Sam Soleyn and I'll see you again. Bye bye.

