**Child Abandonment**

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**The Way Church**

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Message Title: Child Abandonment

Message Truth: Newborn Christians should grow and be committed to the Body of Christ. Mature Christians should provide, love, invest and be examples to newborns. Jesus Christ will provide us with peace and will never forsake us.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Titus 2, 1 Peter 2:1-3, 1 Timothy 5:8

1 Peter 4:8-11, Psalm 145:4-7, Isaiah 54:10, Deuteronomy 31:8

Introduction:

If a mother carried her child for 9 months, ate a very nutritious diet, exercised, stayed in very good shape, made every doctor’s appointment, got plenty of rest, took her vitamins and basically did everything the doctor said, gives birth to a beautiful son, stays with him in the hospital, cares for him while in the hospital and then leaves the hospital and carries the child to a church, places the baby on the steps of the church and leaves, would you say she was an awesome mother? Would how well she did through her pregnancy have any impact on your opinion of her as a mother? What would you say about this mother? She would be guilty of child abandonment. To us, she would be a sorry mom. We would ask questions about how in the world could she leave her child. She certainly would not meet our expectations of a mother and her actions leading up to the birth of the child certainly would not line up with her actions after the birth of the child.

Well, I am here to tell you, the church today is guilty of abandonment. We do this very thing; only we do it to God’s children following salvation, newborn Christians. We invest, invest, and invest in people up to salvation, and then we abandon the newborn Christians and let the world have its way. A world ruled by a ruler the Word of God describes as a roaring lion, who seeks whom he can devour, **1 Peter 5:8** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

The result is a full lion, and a bunch of so called Christians pointing fingers and making statements about how they can’t believe Billy Bob or Sally Sue could fall for such sinful things. We have taken the instructions from Jesus Christ regarding discipleship and made salvation the end product. However, Jesus sees it, and has always seen it as only the beginning.

In many ways we are just like the mother described earlier. We are great during pregnancy; however, we are awful at being a mother. Then again, many of us are not even good during pregnancy. We are like the mother who does crystal meth when she is pregnant. We could care less about the pregnancy and we certainly don’t care about the child that has been entrusted to us. To this mother, the child means nothing and she is going to do whatever she wants to do, when she wants to do it. At all costs, even at the cost of her child. We do the same thing in the church today, when God’s commands and His Words mean absolutely nothing to us. We know what His Word says regarding teaching others and being an example, we just don’t care. We would rather teach them to do what they want, when they want to do it. Instead we teach, Jesus is not important, church is not important, the Word of God is not important, prayer is about food, and relationships were made to be broken. We teach living a life that reflects the scriptures is a bit fanatical and really Jesus has no business interfering with our lives. We teach little league ball is way more important than church and church activities, watching T.V. is more important than reading the Bible as a family. We teach a family devotional time is just something preachers say from the pulpit and has no real meaning. We teach attending anything you can think of is far more important than Bible study. We teach getting mad and saying whatever you want is perfectly ok. If you go too far, then just apologize, and if they don’t treat you right, then they have forgiveness problems. We teach our children and our young mothers and fathers that pursuing a dream is far more important than serving God. You see these little ones we have been entrusted with will take what we have taught them and they will expand on it ten fold. Then what, broken homes, adultery, drugs, sex outside of marriage, lying, cheating, stealing, cursing, and the list goes on and on. You say, I didn’t teach these things, Jesus says, you pointed them in the direction and gave them the keys to car with a turbo charger, waved good-bye and failed to take a single ounce of responsibility. One small problem with your theory is Jesus will not listen to your words at the day of judgment. He will simply look at your actions. I am very sorry, but you don’t get to tell Jesus what you caused He will show you what you caused. People are watching you, they are seeing your actions. They may be listening, but they are doing a great deal more watching. Now I will agree, if they would read the Bible they would realize what they are seeing is not ok and does not line up with the Word of God. They would understand, they will be held accountable for their actions and they would read a scripture, which ends with the very harsh words, depart from me you workers of iniquity, for I NEVER KNEW YOU! But who is going to teach them the importance of the Bible and the necessity of the Word. You workers of iniquity? I don’t think so, you will avoid that teaching at all cost. Where are you men and women of courage? Where are you teachers of righteousness?

The scripture says we should do things a little differently. Scripture says we should teach and teach appropriately. Titus chapter 2 says we should teach. Men should teach, women should teach, young should teach. The bottom line we should be teaching and discipling.

**Titus 2** **Qualities of a Sound Church**

*But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:* ***2****that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;* ***3****the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—* ***4****that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,* ***5****to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.* ***6****Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,* ***7****in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,* ***8****sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.* ***9****Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,* ***10****not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.* ***11****For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,* ***12****teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,* ***13****looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* ***14****who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.* ***15****Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

Continuing with the example of motherhood, what would you say to a mother who was caring for her newborn, and after about a half of a bottle she burped the child and then began to break off pieces of a T-bone steak to place in the child’s mouth. Would you sit there and think wow what a great mother, she is really preparing her child for the real world. I hope you wouldn’t take a picture, and post it on all of the social websites and call her an idiot. I hope someone would say ma’am, you cannot feed a newborn steak. Now our attention here is going to leave the mother and go to the newborn because we have serious issues with the mother, we need to discuss in a minute. First, can we look at the baby. He is not ready for meat. He needs milk. And he will need milk for quite sometime. He is going to need to be fed. It is a progress, a process if you will. At first, the baby is held and fed. Then we progress to propping the bottle up just right, but keeping a close eye, because chances are the bottle is going to fall. Eventually, we move to helping the child hold the bottle. Finally, the baby can hold the bottle himself and we begin to shout.

Let us make this connection with teaching those around us who have surrendered to Christ. We first have to stay close, hold them and feed them the Word of God, teaching them the meaning and understanding of God’s Word, but mainly teaching them the importance of The Word of God and the absolute necessity of His Word to our relationship. They will not get everything. Nevertheless, we must be presenting the Word, teaching it, writing it, living it as they progress. We have to expect the bottle will fall out some; we will have to gently help them begin to feed themselves. Eventually, they will feed and hold the scripture as an integral part of their growth. Along the way we move from milk to a combination of milk and baby food. Eventually, we move to solid food and a regular diet. Parents play different roles along the way. First, we feed them. You know it’s a mess, food everywhere they constantly spit it out. Good moms, get into the rhythm spoon in the mouth, wipe, wipe, right back in the mouth, wipe, wipe, right back in the mouth, and then another dip in the jar and the battle continues, in the mouth, wipe, and wipe right back in the mouth. Eventually mom surrenders the spoon to the child, then man what a mess– food is in the hair, inside overalls, mashed potatoes in the ear. But the child is growing and gaining some independence. The child is learning to feed himself.

Feed himself, yes, fixing his own plate, certainly not. The child is not ready to step up to a 350-degree stove and fix their own plate. We still don’t place a 120-degree bowl of soup in front of them and say take off. No, we fix their plate and put a little ice in certain things to cool them down, when we know it is ok, then we give them the plate. Finally, we get to a point where we say dinner is ready fix your plate. The child has advanced to a point where they can fix their plate and sit down and eat, but that did not happen in a day. It takes time and investment. It takes hard work and great expectations.

We must be the same way with children of God. We can’t expect a new Christian to be dissecting the Word of God and knowing every letter of the Bible any more than we can expect an infant to eat steak. We can’t expect them to be perfect any more than we can expect a baby to never lose grip of their bottle. We can’t expect a baby Christian to handle everything in their lives clean and neat any more than we can expect a child just learning to use a spoon not to get food everywhere. We can’t expect a baby Christian to know what to read and how to study any more than we can expect a small child to fix their own plate.

I will tell you what we can expect, we can expect a newborn Christian to grow and mature. We can expect them to grow stronger in their faith and to trust in the Word of God. We can expect them to eventually fix their plate and eat their meal and even wash the dishes. We can expect them to be devoted to the body of Christ. To assemble with us and to lock arms with us as we grow and mature through the Word of God.

1. Expectations of newborn Christians.

A. Growth

**1 Peter 2:1-3 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**

B. Commitment

**Proverbs 18:1 A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.**

But let me tell you what newborn Christians should expect from a mature child of God. They should expect you to walk worthy of your calling. They should expect you to provide for them spiritually, love them like a brother, invest in them like Jesus and be an example to them so they can become teachers.

2. Expectations of mature Christians.

 A. Provision

**1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever***.*

B. Love

**1 Peter 4:8-11 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

C. Investment

**Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.**

D. Demonstration

**Psalm 145:4-7 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. 5 I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works. 6 Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness. 7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, And shall sing of Your righteousness.**

What we can expect from Jesus? Everything, and more things than I can list in this sermon. However, there are two things I would like to leave you with today.

3. Expectations from Jesus.

 A. Covenant of Peace

**Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.**

B. He will never forsake you.

**Deuteronomy 31:8 And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”**

Church, I must confess to you we have talked about a discipling program and have done nothing with it. I tell you that in 2014 we will not only do something with it, but it will abound and abound greatly. We will disciple each other. I tell you this, in the months to come, I do not believe many of you will be comfortable under the direction and teachings of this church. You are going to be required to become intimate with the Word of God. I would venture to say a very low percentage of the people in this church actually study the Word of God. I am not talking about reading a daily devotional; I am not talking about reading over a verse. I am talking about reading the Bible to gain understanding and direction. I am talking about the Bible being the driving force in your life. The teaching will be hard, the demand will be great, it will push some of you away, and I cannot do anything about that. However, some of you will develop a hunger and a thirst for the Word of God and God will use you to make a difference in the Kingdom of God. I don’t have time, is no excuse. I don’t understand, is no excuse. We will dive in, study hard, and surrender continually. Get on board, or get on board, leaving is a stupid option, we have work to do.